Digital Assessment Literacy and Teacher Identity in Technology-Mediated Language Education

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ABSTRACT

The demands of technology have not only altered how we teach and how we assess but have also increased the need for digital assessment literacy. Digital assessment literacy enables instructors not only to choose and design digital assessments but also to evaluate their pedagogical and ethical implications. Although previous research has examined assessment literacy, teacher identity, and agency, their relationships in technology-mediated language assessment warrant further conceptual integration. This review attempts to synthesize existing literature around digital assessment literacy, teacher identity, and technology in language teaching. Drawing on targeted literature searches and comparative conceptual synthesis, the article proposes the Digital Assessment Identity Framework, comprising digital assessment competence, critical-ethical judgment, and professional identity agency. It positions situated assessment decisions as a link between these dimensions and the enactment and negotiation of professional identity, offering a basis for further research and teacher professional development.

Keywords: digital assessment literacy; teacher identity; technology-mediated assessment; teacher professional development

Introduction

Digital technologies have changed how language teachers design assessment tasks, collect evidence of learning, and provide feedback. Learning management systems, digital portfolios, automated writing evaluation, and learning analytics offer new ways of assessing language performance. Yet these tools also raise questions about what constitutes valid evidence of learning and how that evidence should inform assessment decisions. A platform may efficiently record students' responses or generate feedback, but its outputs do not necessarily capture the complexity of language use. Teachers must still determine whether the evidence is relevant to the intended construct and whether the resulting decisions are fair and educationally meaningful.

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These responsibilities call for more than technical proficiency. Language assessment literacy involves understanding assessment purposes, task design, interpretation, validity, and the consequences of assessment decisions (Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008). Xu and Brown (2016) extend this understanding through their Teacher Assessment Literacy in Practice (TALiP) framework, which positions assessment literacy within teachers' beliefs, professional knowledge, and working contexts. More recently, Estaji et al. (2024) proposed a framework for Teacher Assessment Literacy in Digital Environments (TALiDE), drawing attention to the knowledge, cognition, and contextual factors involved in digital assessment. Together, these frameworks establish that effective assessment depends not only on what teachers know but also on how they exercise judgment in practice.

Assessment decisions are also connected to teachers' professional identities. Teachers' understandings of their roles influence how they interpret assessment requirements, respond to learners, and exercise professional responsibility. Looney et al. (2018) conceptualized teacher assessment identity in relation to teachers' beliefs, professional dispositions, and perceptions of their responsibilities as assessors. In language education, Dao (2021) examined the assessment identity of a Vietnamese university EFL teacher, illustrating how professional experience and working conditions shaped assessment beliefs and practices. These studies suggest that assessment cannot be understood independently of teachers' professional self-understanding. Digital assessment adds another dimension to this relationship, as teachers must negotiate their responsibilities alongside technologies that increasingly structure assessment procedures and the evidence available for decision-making.

Although existing scholarship offers substantial accounts of assessment literacy and teacher identity, the relationship between these constructs in digitally mediated language assessment warrants closer theoretical attention. TALiP explains the situated nature of assessment literacy, while TALiDE extends this perspective to digital environments. Research on teacher assessment identity, meanwhile, establishes the significance of professional beliefs, roles, and contextual experience. More recent studies have examined these relationships in technology-mediated assessment. Shao (2023) explored the relationship between online assessment practices and assessor identity, while Lee and Jeon (2024) investigated teacher agency in ICT-supported classroom-based language assessment. These contributions offer important insights into the identity-related and contextual dimensions of digital assessment, but also point to the value of bringing assessment literacy, professional judgment, and agency into closer conceptual dialogue. In particular, further conceptual explanation is needed of how assessment competence, critical-ethical judgment, and professional agency interact when teachers design tasks, mediate feedback, interpret digital evidence, and respond to institutional requirements. The issue is therefore not whether assessment literacy and teacher identity are related, but how their relationship can be explained through situated decisions in technology-mediated language assessment.

This article addresses that question through a conceptual analysis informed by a focused narrative review of scholarship on language assessment literacy, digital assessment, and teacher identity. It aims to examine the identity-related demands of technology-

mediated assessment and develop a framework explaining the relationships among digital assessment competence, critical-ethical judgment, and professional identity agency. The proposed Digital Assessment Identity Framework treats these dimensions as interrelated aspects of professional practice rather than independent competencies. By bringing assessment literacy and teacher identity into closer theoretical dialogue, the article seeks to clarify how digital assessment practices both depend on and may reshape teachers' understandings of their professional roles. It also considers the implications of this perspective for language teacher education and professional development.

Review Approach

This article adopts a conceptual approach informed by a focused narrative review of literature on assessment literacy, teacher identity, and technology-mediated professional practice. Rather than seeking exhaustive coverage, the review brings together theoretical and empirical scholarship to examine how teachers' assessment knowledge, professional judgment, and agency relate to identity work in digital assessment contexts. This approach draws on Snyder's (2019) discussion of literature reviews as a means of knowledge development and Jaakkola's (2020) account of conceptual research through theoretical synthesis.

The review draws on foundational scholarship identified during the development of the manuscript and subsequent targeted literature searches. Search terms combined concepts such as "digital assessment literacy," "teacher identity," "assessor identity," "teacher agency," and "classroom-based language assessment." Relevant records were checked against publisher websites, journal archives, DOI records, and academic repositories. Priority was given to peer-reviewed studies published between 2016 and 2026, alongside earlier works of theoretical significance. Sources were selected for their relevance to language assessment, professional identity, agency, and the institutional or technological conditions shaping assessment practice. Studies concerned primarily with technological performance, without a clear connection to these areas, were not prioritized.

The selected literature was examined through comparative conceptual synthesis, focusing on how different research strands explain assessment knowledge, professional judgment, identity, and agency. The analysis considered their theoretical contributions, differences in emphasis, and relationships requiring further conceptual integration. Particular attention was given to studies examining assessor identity and teacher agency in technology-mediated language assessment (Shao, 2023; Lee & Jeon, 2024). Table 1 summarizes the main research strands, distinguishing their established contributions from the questions informing the proposed framework.

Drawing on this synthesis, the Digital Assessment Identity Framework brings together three interrelated dimensions: digital assessment competence, critical-ethical judgment, and professional identity agency. Situated assessment decisions provide the analytical focus for examining how these dimensions relate to professional identity enactment and negotiation. The resulting propositions are theoretically informed and remain open to

empirical examination. Given its selective scope, the review does not claim systematic coverage of the literature.

Theoretical Foundations

Digital Assessment Literacy in Language Education

Assessment literacy has long been recognized as part of teachers' professional knowledge. Assessment literacy can generally be understood as a teacher's ability to create suitable assessment tasks, interpret learning evidence, give feedback, and appropriately respond to assessment results. In language education, these responsibilities require knowledge of the constructs being assessed and the principles of validity, reliability, fairness, and washback (Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008). Assessing writing or speaking, for example, involves judgments about meaning, interaction, and communicative effectiveness that cannot always be reduced to discrete scores.

Xu and Brown (2016) reconceptualized teacher assessment literacy through their Teacher Assessment Literacy in Practice (TALiP) framework. Rather than treating assessment literacy as an isolated set of skills, TALiP situates assessment knowledge within teachers' beliefs, professional identities, and sociocultural contexts. This perspective recognizes that assessment decisions emerge from the interaction between teachers' knowledge and the conditions in which they work. It also provides a basis for examining why teachers may interpret and implement the same assessment requirements differently.

Digital assessment literacy, however, goes beyond the understanding of technology. It requires teachers to consider how digital tools influence task design, feedback, and the interpretation of learning evidence. Estaji et al. (2024) extended TALiP through the Teacher Assessment Literacy in Digital Environments (TALiDE) framework, developed from a scoping review of 63 publications. Their synthesis identifies knowledge, cognition, and contextual factors as interrelated components of digital assessment practice. Importantly, TALiDE recognizes teachers' agency and the institutional conditions that shape assessment decisions.

Digital platforms yield different types of assessment evidence. These include quiz results and completion rates as well as submission histories, time on task, auto-generated comments, similarity scores, and participation logs. These can help teachers pinpoint learning barriers and adapt their teaching. However, these data are not self-explanatory. For instance, a similarity score cannot establish academic misconduct, just as task completion cannot establish language proficiency. Teachers must interpret such evidence against assessment purposes and learners' actual performance.

TALiP and TALiDE therefore offer substantial accounts of assessment literacy as situated professional practice. What requires closer attention is how teachers' decisions within digitally mediated language assessment contribute to the enactment and negotiation of their professional identities. This question shifts the emphasis from identifying assessment competencies to explaining how teachers exercise, challenge, and understand those competencies in their assessment roles.

Teacher Identity in Technology-Mediated Language Education

Teacher identity is a valuable approach for studying digital assessment because it shifts the focus to how teachers understand their roles, responsibilities, and place in the teaching profession. In language teacher education, identity is not viewed as a stable and personal attribute. It is understood as fluid, shaped by the teacher's experiences, beliefs, and feelings; the institutional context; and the teacher's interactions with students and colleagues (Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Yazan & Lindahl, 2020). These perspectives suggest that professional identity develops through teachers' engagement with the demands and relationships of their work, rather than through individual beliefs alone.

Assessment is one area in which such identities become visible. Looney et al. (2018) conceptualized teacher assessment identity in relation to teachers' beliefs, dispositions, and understandings of their responsibilities as assessors. In a narrative inquiry involving a Vietnamese university EFL lecturer, Dao (2021) similarly illustrated how professional experiences and working conditions shaped assessment identity and practice. These studies establish a connection between assessment and professional identity, although they do not specifically explain how digital assessment technologies participate in this process.

Professional agency provides a further perspective on how teachers respond to changing assessment demands. Priestley et al. (2015) conceptualized teacher agency as an ecological achievement, arising through the interaction of past experiences, present conditions, and future orientations. Agency, therefore, concerns teachers' capacity to act within particular circumstances rather than their possession of professional knowledge alone. In a recent Vietnamese study, Ho (2026) found that EFL teachers' engagement with digital technologies was shaped by their experiences, available support, and professional aspirations. Although the study examined technology integration more broadly, it indicates the importance of contextual conditions in understanding teachers' professional decisions.

Teaching and assessment tools that use digital technology can help teachers structure and organize teaching and learning, provide feedback, and store learning and teaching. However, these tools can and do alter the way teachers perceive and experience their work. When teachers use automated feedback, digital rubrics, or learning analytics, they must decide how much authority to give technological outputs and how to reconcile institutional expectations with their own assessment judgments. Such decisions may reinforce existing professional roles or require teachers to reconsider their responsibilities as assessors. The relationship between identity and agency is therefore central to explaining how teachers negotiate digital assessment practices, rather than simply adopt or reject assessment technologies.

Technology-Mediated Assessment as Situated Practice

Digital assessment takes place within institutional and technological conditions that shape how teachers assess learning. Assessment platforms are not simply channels through which existing practices are delivered. Their design influences the tasks teachers can administer, the evidence they can access, and the feedback they can provide. Understanding digital assessment therefore requires attention to the

relationship between teachers, technologies, and the settings in which they work.

A sociomaterial perspective provides a basis for examining these relationships. Fenwick (2010) argues that professional practice and learning cannot be fully understood by separating human activity from the material arrangements through which it occurs. Applied to language assessment, this perspective directs attention to how digital platforms, institutional procedures, and teachers' decisions jointly shape assessment practices. For example, an LMS may make quiz scores and completion rates readily available while offering less direct evidence of interactional competence or the development of written arguments. What teachers can readily observe may consequently influence what they prioritize in assessment.

This perspective differs from approaches concerned primarily with teachers' technological knowledge. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006) explains how technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge intersect in teaching. Although useful for understanding technology integration, TPACK does not directly address how assessment technologies participate in teachers' professional identity negotiation. A sociomaterial perspective instead highlights the conditions under which teachers exercise professional judgment, including the possibilities and constraints created by digital systems.

These conditions do not determine teachers' actions. Lai and Jin (2021) found that teachers' professional identity orientations were associated with different approaches to technology integration, suggesting that technological practices also depend on how teachers understand their professional responsibilities. In digital language assessment, teachers may accept, adapt, or question platform-generated evidence according to assessment purposes, institutional expectations, and their judgments about learners' needs. The relationship between technology and professional identity is thus better understood through situated assessment decisions than through technology use alone. This provides a basis for examining how assessment competence, critical judgment, and professional agency operate together in particular educational contexts.

Critical Synthesis and Conceptual Gaps

The literature reviewed in the preceding sections offers complementary perspectives on assessment literacy, teacher identity, and technology-mediated professional practice. Xu and Brown (2016) and Estaji et al. (2024) conceptualize assessment literacy as more than technical knowledge, emphasizing the influence of professional beliefs, judgment, and context. Research on assessment identity similarly recognizes that teachers' understanding of their professional roles develops through assessment experiences and interactions within institutional settings (Looney et al., 2018; Dao, 2021). Sociomaterial and ecological perspectives further draw attention to how professional practices are shaped by technological resources, institutional arrangements, and opportunities for agency (Fenwick, 2010; Priestley et al., 2015). Together, these perspectives provide a basis for examining digital assessment as both a professional practice and a context for identity development.

More recent empirical research has examined these relationships directly. Shao (2023),

studying six EFL teachers in China, identified different forms of assessor identity and showed how these were associated with teachers' online assessment practices. Lee and Jeon (2024) examined how two primary school English teachers in South Korea exercised agency when using ICT to support classroom-based assessment. These studies demonstrate that identity and agency are already recognized as important aspects of technology-mediated assessment. Their contributions also suggest the value of bringing assessment literacy, professional judgment, and identity-related processes into closer conceptual dialogue, rather than treating them as separate concerns.

The issue addressed in this article is therefore not the absence of research linking assessment practices with teacher identity. Rather, it concerns how existing perspectives can be brought together to explain the relationship between teachers' assessment competence, critical-ethical judgment, and professional agency in particular assessment situations. As summarized in Table 1, the reviewed literature provides relevant but differently focused accounts of these concerns. The proposed Digital Assessment Identity Framework draws on their complementary insights to examine situated assessment decisions as a point at which professional knowledge, judgment, and agency are brought into practice, with potential implications for identity enactment and negotiation.

Table 1.

Critical Synthesis of Literature Informing the Digital Assessment Identity Framework

Research strand / Key sources	Established contributions	Conceptual issues requiring further attention	Implications for the proposed framework
Assessment literacy in digital environments (Xu & Brown, 2016; Estaji et al., 2024)	Assessment literacy integrates knowledge, judgment, professional beliefs, and contextual factors, including those specific to digital environments.	How these components interact through particular assessment decisions to inform identity enactment warrants further explanation.	Digital assessment competence and critical-ethical judgment
Teacher assessment identity (Looney et al., 2018; Dao, 2021; Shao, 2023)	Assessment identity develops through professional experiences, beliefs, and working conditions. Online assessment can involve different assessor identity positions.	The relationship between digital assessment decisions and identity negotiation requires further conceptual integration.	Professional identity enactment and negotiation
Professional agency in technology-mediated assessment (Priestley et al., 2015; Lee & Jeon, 2024)	Teacher agency in ICT-supported language assessment reflects the interaction of professional beliefs, prior experiences, technological affordances, and contextual conditions.	How assessment competence and critical-ethical judgment contribute to situated agency remains a useful question for theoretical development.	Professional identity agency and situated assessment decisions

Sociomaterial perspectives (Fenwick, 2010; Lai & Jin, 2021)	Professional practice is shaped through relationships among teachers, technologies, and institutional arrangements.	The implications of these relationships for assessment-specific professional judgment need closer articulation.	Institutional and technological conditions
Digital feedback and ethical assessment (Carless & Boud, 2018; Dau & Lam, 2026)	Feedback requires interpretation and learner engagement, while AI-mediated assessment raises concerns about feedback quality and academic integrity.	The exercise of professional responsibility when evaluating multiple sources of digital feedback requires further examination.	Critical-ethical judgment and feedback mediation

Digital Assessment Literacy as Teacher Identity Work

The previous sections suggest digital assessment literacy becomes inherently linked to teachers' professional roles when they engage with technology-mediated assessment. Understanding digital assessment literacy strictly as a set of competencies narrows the focus to teachers' abilities to use digital platforms, create assessment tasks, and analyze assessment data. These competencies matter, but they do not fully explain how teachers exercise professional judgment when technological possibilities conflict with pedagogical priorities. Drawing on the preceding theoretical synthesis, this section examines four areas of assessment practice in which teachers' professional responsibilities may be reinforced or renegotiated.

The first concerns teachers' roles as assessment designers. Digital assessment systems tend to facilitate creating and/or managing quizzes, LMS-based short-answer items, and automatically scored interactions, whereas assessment practices such as speaking assessments, process-oriented writing assessments, peer assessment, and portfolios require thoughtful, intentional assessment system design. The relative convenience of particular formats may influence assessment choices, even when those formats provide limited evidence of the intended language abilities. Teachers must therefore decide whether to follow the options readily available on a platform or adapt them to accommodate more meaningful assessment tasks. Such decisions reflect not only assessment knowledge but also teachers' willingness and capacity to exercise authority over assessment design.

The second shift takes place from marker to feedback mediator. In digital spaces, feedback is often fragmented through a range of sources. As a result, feedback may come from teachers, peers, rubrics, feedback generators, learning platforms, and/or writing support tools. The challenge is not simply managing these sources but judging their relevance and helping learners use them effectively. In the context of language learning, feedback is only useful if the feedback is understood and acted upon by the learner. Carless and Boud (2018) emphasize the importance of learners' capacity to interpret and use feedback. In digitally mediated assessment, teachers also need to evaluate feedback generated outside their direct control. Accepting, modifying, or rejecting automated suggestions becomes an exercise of professional judgment, particularly when feedback on linguistic accuracy conflicts with the communicative purpose of a task.

A third shift addresses teachers as data-informed decision-makers. With digital assessments, teachers can access numerous data points, such as quiz scores, timestamps, records of submissions, participation data, similarity scores, and progress indicators. Digital data, however, do not necessarily constitute evidence of learning. For example, task completion does not necessarily indicate learners' understanding. Interpreting such records requires teachers to distinguish observable platform activity from defensible evidence of language development. It is important for teachers to interpret classroom digital data contextually and in conjunction with their knowledge of the task and individual learners. Estaji et al. (2024) identify assessment-related knowledge and contextual considerations as important components of assessment literacy in digital environments. From an identity perspective, the issue is how teachers retain responsibility for assessment decisions when institutional systems increasingly organize and present evidence on their behalf.

The fourth shift is from tool user to ethical professional. Digital assessments lead to questions of ethics and teacher identity. Teachers are required to consider whether all learners have equitable access to the necessary technology, whether digital surveillance is appropriate, the ways learner data are held and utilized, and how decisions about assessments are justified. These concerns become professionally consequential when teachers must balance institutional requirements against fairness, learner privacy, and the validity of assessment interpretations. For instance, a similarity report may warrant further examination but cannot, on its own, establish academic misconduct. Teachers' responses to such situations reveal how they understand and exercise their ethical responsibilities.

These four areas are closely connected rather than separate stages of professional development. For example, designing a digital writing assessment may involve selecting suitable evidence, interpreting automated feedback, protecting learner data, and negotiating institutional requirements within the same task. Digital assessment literacy can therefore be understood as identity work insofar as teachers use assessment knowledge and judgment to enact, maintain, or reconsider their professional responsibilities. The conditions enabling these decisions, and their implications for professional identity, provide the basis for the framework developed in the following section.

A Digital Assessment Identity Framework

Conceptualizing Digital Assessment Identity

Existing scholarship provides a basis for understanding assessment literacy as situated professional practice. Xu and Brown (2016) locate assessment literacy within teachers' knowledge, beliefs, identities, and working contexts, while Estaji et al. (2024) extend this perspective to digital assessment environments. Research on teacher assessment identity further shows how teachers' professional experiences and responsibilities shape their assessment practices (Looney et al., 2018; Dao, 2021). More recent studies have examined assessor identity in online assessment and teacher agency in ICT-supported language assessment (Shao, 2023; Lee & Jeon, 2024). Building on these perspectives, the proposed Digital Assessment Identity Framework examines how teachers'

engagement with digital assessment may contribute to the enactment and negotiation of professional identity. Its purpose is not to introduce another inventory of competencies, but to explain how assessment knowledge, judgment, and agency are exercised together in practice.

The Digital Assessment Identity Framework consists of three interrelated dimensions: digital assessment competence, critical-ethical judgment, and professional identity agency. These dimensions are not described as a checklist of skills that are independent of one another. They represent analytically distinct yet connected aspects of teachers' professional assessment practice.

The first dimension is digital assessment competence. This encompasses teachers' ability to select digital assessment tools, design digital assessment tasks, facilitate submission, grading, and feedback, interpret assessment results, and align assessment with language learning goals. It also includes recognizing the limitations of digital evidence in representing language performance.

The second dimension is critical-ethical judgment. This is teachers' ability to assess whether a digital assessment practice is valid, fair, accessible, transparent, and responsible. More specifically, it involves evaluating the quality and consequences of assessment evidence, questioning technological outputs, and justifying decisions that affect learners. While competence concerns the knowledge and capabilities available to teachers, critical-ethical judgment concerns how those capabilities are applied to particular assessment decisions.

The third dimension is professional identity agency. Drawing on the ecological conception of teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2015), this dimension refers to teachers' capacity to act on professional commitments within the opportunities and constraints of their working environments. In digital assessment, such agency may involve adapting assessment procedures, challenging automated judgments, or negotiating institutional requirements. It is distinct from professional identity itself, which concerns how teachers understand and position themselves in their professional roles. Professional identity agency thus refers to how teachers exercise agency in ways that reflect their understanding of their roles and responsibilities as assessors.

Situated Assessment Decisions

Situated assessment decisions provide the point at which digital assessment competence, critical-ethical judgment, and professional identity agency intersect. Competence enables teachers to understand assessment tasks and interpret evidence; critical-ethical judgment guides their evaluation of possible actions; and agency concerns their capacity to act on these evaluations. The dimensions are interdependent but do not constitute a fixed sequence. Their relationship becomes evident when teachers face assessment decisions that cannot be resolved through technical procedures alone.

Consider a teacher evaluating automated feedback on an L2 writing task. Assessment competence is required to determine whether the suggestions address the intended writing construct. Critical-ethical judgment informs decisions about their relevance, fairness, and potential consequences for learning. Teachers exercise professional

identity agency when they accept, modify, or challenge the suggestions, particularly when institutional expectations constrain professional discretion. Such decisions may affirm existing professional commitments or generate tensions that prompt teachers to reconsider their responsibilities as assessors. These decisions become matters of professional identity when teachers begin to question what they are responsible for, how much authority they have, or which assessment practices they can justify.

The three dimensions are shaped by context. Systems and institutional policies, the culture of assessment, available infrastructure, classroom size, workload, teacher preparation and training, learner needs, and technology accessibility shape the extent to which digital assessment literacy evolves. These conditions also influence whether teachers can act on their assessment judgments. Similar professional knowledge may therefore lead to different decisions under different institutional and technological arrangements.

Figure 1 presents the framework's central relationships. The three dimensions inform situated assessment decisions enacted through task design, feedback mediation, evidence interpretation, and ethical decision-making. Through these practices, teachers may maintain, question, or renegotiate their professional identities. Their subsequent understanding of professional responsibilities may, in turn, inform later assessment decisions. The relationship is therefore iterative rather than strictly linear, and identity change is not assumed to follow automatically from technology use.

Conceptual Propositions

The relationships in Figure 1 give rise to three propositions about enacting digital assessment literacy and its implications for professional identity.

First, digital assessment competence provides a basis for informed assessment decisions, but its enactment also depends on critical-ethical judgment and opportunities for professional agency (P1). Teachers may have the knowledge to evaluate digital evidence without sufficient discretion to act on their judgments. Assessment competence must therefore be considered alongside the conditions under which professional decisions are made.

Second, engagement in technology-mediated assessment practices may reinforce or reshape professional identity through teachers' exercise and negotiation of assessment responsibility (P2). Decisions to accept, modify, or question technological outputs may affirm professional commitments or expose tensions between pedagogical values and institutional expectations. Such experiences may contribute to identity negotiation, although changes in professional identity are not inevitable.

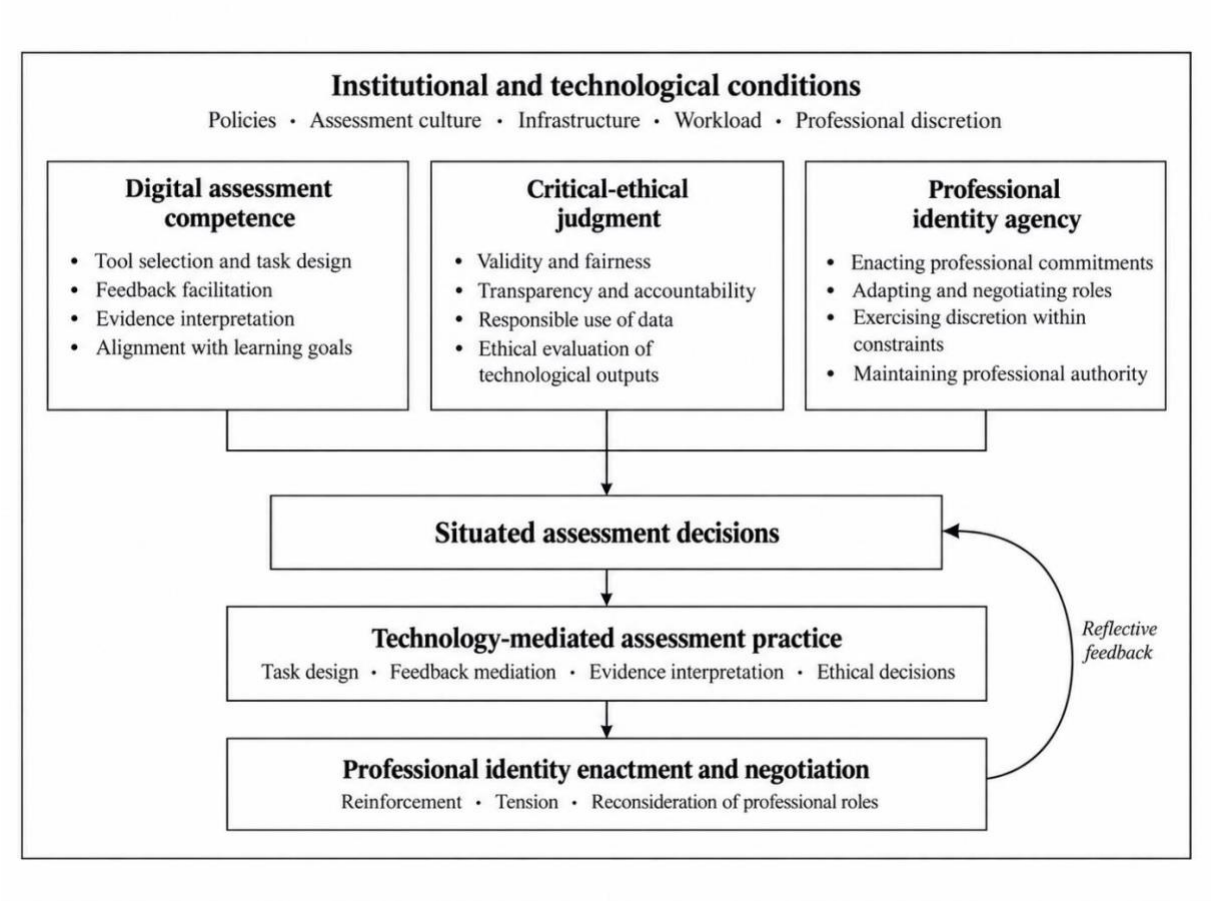
Third, institutional and technological conditions shape how digital assessment competence, critical-ethical judgment, and professional identity agency are exercised together (P3). Assessment policies, available resources, and professional discretion may enable or constrain how teachers respond to digital assessment demands. These conditions help explain why teachers with comparable knowledge may approach similar assessment situations differently.

Together, these propositions specify the framework's explanatory focus rather than

empirically established relationships. They provide a basis for examining how assessment decisions relate to professional identity across technology-mediated language education contexts. Their applicability, particularly where teachers have limited assessment discretion, requires further empirical investigation.

Figure 1.

Digital Assessment Identity Framework



Discussion

Theoretical Contributions

The Digital Assessment Identity Framework contributes to existing scholarship by offering a more integrated account of the relationship between assessment literacy and teacher identity in technology-mediated language education. Xu and Brown (2016) established the situated nature of assessment literacy, while Estaji et al. (2024) extended this understanding to digital assessment environments. Building on these perspectives, the proposed framework places particular emphasis on how teachers' assessment knowledge, professional judgment, and agency come together in situated assessment decisions. Its contribution lies not in identifying these elements as new, but in examining their relationship to the enactment and negotiation of professional identity.

This contribution also needs to be considered alongside recent empirical research. Shao (2023) examined how online assessment practices relate to teachers' assessor identities, while Lee and Jeon (2024) explored teacher agency in ICT-supported classroom-based

language assessment. These studies have established important connections between digital assessment practices and teachers' professional roles. The present framework complements this work by bringing assessment competence, critical-ethical judgment, and professional identity agency into a common analytical perspective. It offers a basis for examining how teachers negotiate assessment responsibilities across different technological and institutional settings, rather than focusing on a particular group of teachers or assessment context.

A further contribution concerns the distinction between assessment competence and the exercise of professional judgment. Teachers may possess the knowledge required to evaluate automated feedback but have limited authority to modify assessment procedures. Conversely, opportunities for professional discretion do not necessarily ensure that teachers interpret digital evidence appropriately. These situations suggest considering competence, judgment, and agency together, without treating them as interchangeable. The framework therefore extends existing discussions of assessment literacy by making the relationship between these dimensions and professional identity a more explicit focus of analysis.

The framework is intended as an explanatory perspective rather than a model of established causal relationships. By locating the interaction of its three dimensions in situated assessment decisions, it provides a basis for examining when and how digital assessment practices may reinforce or reshape teachers' understanding of their professional responsibilities. The proposed relationships remain open to empirical investigation and refinement.

Implications for Teacher Professional Development

Professional development cannot be limited to the teaching of digital skills. Teachers need support in deciding when, why, and under what circumstances they can and should use digital tools in language assessment. The proposed framework suggests that such development should address three connected concerns: assessment competence, critical-ethical judgment, and the opportunities teachers have to exercise professional agency.

Rather than focusing primarily on platform functions, professional learning activities could involve examining authentic assessment cases. For example, teachers might compare automated feedback with task-specific writing criteria, discuss the interpretation of similarity reports, or evaluate whether LMS-generated data provide sufficient evidence of learning. These activities would allow teachers to justify assessment decisions, recognize the limitations of digital evidence, and consider the consequences for learners.

Professional development opportunities also need to foster collaboration and be systemic. Teachers need opportunities to plan together, analyze assessment criteria together, and discuss evidence and feedback. However, collaborative learning is unlikely to be sufficient where institutional policies leave teachers little room to exercise informed judgment. Institutions should therefore provide clear assessment guidance while allowing teachers appropriate discretion to adapt digital practices to learners' needs. In this sense, developing digital assessment literacy involves not only strengthening teachers' knowledge but also supporting their professional responsibility

in assessment decisions.

Conclusion

This paper argues that digital assessment literacy in language education should not be limited to teachers' ability to use digital tools. Drawing on scholarship in assessment literacy, teacher identity, and technology-mediated professional practice, it has proposed the Digital Assessment Identity Framework to explain how assessment knowledge, critical-ethical judgment, and professional agency intersect in situated assessment decisions. The framework emphasizes how teachers' engagement with digital assessment may reinforce or reshape their understanding of professional responsibility.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the paper draws on a focused narrative review rather than an exhaustive or systematic examination of the literature. The conceptual synthesis is therefore shaped by the selection and interpretation of relevant studies. Second, the proposed framework has not been empirically validated, and the relationships among its dimensions remain theoretical. Third, the extent to which teachers can exercise assessment judgment and professional agency may vary across institutional settings, particularly where assessment procedures are highly standardized or technological decisions are centrally controlled. These conditions may affect the framework's applicability and require further investigation.

Future research could examine how teachers interpret digital assessment evidence and negotiate professional responsibilities through longitudinal studies or classroom-based qualitative inquiry. Comparative research across institutions and assessment contexts may also clarify how policies, technological affordances, and professional discretion influence these processes. Such investigations would help refine the proposed propositions and establish the conditions under which the framework offers a useful explanation of assessment-related identity work. Ultimately, understanding digital assessment literacy requires attention not only to the tools teachers use, but also to the professional judgments and responsibilities through which assessment is enacted.

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