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DEVELOPING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' DIGITAL PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE BASED ON THE TPACK MODEL

Omonova Maftuna Shermatovna
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Pedagogical Sciences, Acting Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages at Faculty of Philology at Alfraganus University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

Digital learning environments have changed the professional requirements placed on English language teachers. Technical familiarity with platforms is insufficient because effective digital teaching depends on the purposeful coordination of language content, pedagogy, technology, learner needs, and assessment. This thesis examines the theoretical and methodological potential of the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework for developing teachers' digital pedagogical competence. The study applies theoretical analysis, comparison, synthesis, and pedagogical modelling to foundational and applied research on TPACK and English as a foreign language instruction. The results show that competence development should be organised through contextualised lesson design, technology-supported language tasks, reflective practice, collaborative experimentation, and multidimensional assessment. The framework enables teachers to select digital tools according to linguistic objectives rather than technological novelty.

KEYWORDS: TPACK, digital pedagogical competence, English language teacher, technology integration, professional development, reflective practice, language teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Digitalisation has expanded the resources available for teaching English, including learning-management systems, interactive platforms, corpora, multimedia materials, automated feedback tools, and virtual communication environments. Access to these resources, however, does not automatically produce effective instruction. Teachers must understand how technology changes the representation of language content, classroom interaction, task sequencing, and assessment. Mishra and Koehler conceptualised this integrated professional knowledge through TPACK, which combines content, pedagogical, and technological knowledge with their intersecting domains [1]. The framework is particularly relevant to English language education because language learning requires authentic input, interaction, productive practice, feedback, and sensitivity to learners' linguistic and sociocultural differences.

Digital pedagogical competence may therefore be understood as the teacher's ability to design, implement, evaluate, and improve technology-supported language learning. It includes informed decisions about why a tool is needed, which language skill it develops, how learners will use it, and how outcomes will be assessed. The purpose of this thesis is to determine how the TPACK model can guide the systematic development of this competence.

The study employed theoretical analysis, comparative interpretation, synthesis, and pedagogical modelling. Foundational TPACK research, assessment studies, digital competence frameworks, and investigations conducted in English as a foreign language settings were examined. The analysis focused on lesson planning, resource selection, communicative task design, feedback, differentiation, and reflective practice. The findings were synthesised into a methodological sequence for teacher professional development.

The analysis shows that TPACK connects digital competence with the specific content and methods of English language teaching. Content knowledge includes phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, discourse, pragmatics, language skills, and intercultural communication. Pedagogical knowledge covers scaffolding, interaction, differentiation, formative assessment, and learner autonomy. Technological knowledge concerns the possibilities and limitations of digital platforms, mobile applications, multimedia resources, electronic corpora, and intelligent systems. Their integration allows teachers to transform a digital resource into a meaningful language-learning environment rather than use it as an isolated addition.

Competence development should begin with learning objectives instead of platform choice. A video becomes methodologically valuable only when its linguistic complexity, speech rate, cultural context, listening purpose, tasks, and feedback procedures correspond to learner needs. Likewise, a collaborative writing platform contributes to learning when planning, drafting, peer response, revision, and reflection are organised as connected stages. This principle changes professional training from tool-centred instruction to problem-centred design.

Teachers develop TPACK more effectively when they design, test, and revise technology-supported activities rather than receive decontextualised demonstrations. Professional development should involve authentic situations in which teachers identify a language-learning problem, compare technological alternatives, construct a task, implement it, and analyse evidence of its effectiveness. Research involving preservice EFL teachers shows that TPACK assessment can reveal both satisfactory competence and domains requiring further development [4]. Reflective-practice research also demonstrates that reflection during, after, and before subsequent action helps teachers convert classroom experience into improved technology integration [6].

Assessment should combine self-report instruments with performance-based evidence. Questionnaires can identify teachers' perceptions across TPACK domains, whereas lesson plans, digital materials, classroom observations, learner products, assessment records, and reflective commentaries demonstrate applied competence. Evaluation criteria should address technological appropriateness, linguistic accuracy, pedagogical coherence, accessibility, learner engagement, feedback quality, and the teacher's ability to modify instruction. Schmidt and co-authors' validated assessment instrument confirms the usefulness of examining the interconnected TPACK domains while evaluating future teachers' professional knowledge [2].

TPACK is valuable not as a fixed inventory of separate skills but as a situated model of professional reasoning. Its domains become meaningful when teachers coordinate them in relation to a particular group, language objective, institutional context, and technological environment. This interpretation corresponds to the original view of TPACK as complex and context dependent [1]. It also responds to Graham's observation that clearer definitions and boundaries are required when the framework is used for research and assessment [3].

Professional development based on TPACK should be continuous because technologies, language-learning practices, and learner expectations change. Short technical workshops are insufficient when separated from curriculum content and classroom experimentation. A stronger model combines guided design, peer collaboration, mentoring, implementation, and reflective analysis. DigCompEdu complements this process by relating digital teaching to professional engagement, resource creation, assessment, learner empowerment, and learners' digital competence [5]. In English education, these dimensions support authentic communication, multimodal literacy, responsible information use, and inclusive participation.

The TPACK model offers a theoretically grounded and methodologically practical framework for developing English language teachers' digital pedagogical competence. It shifts attention from simple tool use to the purposeful integration of technology, language content, pedagogy, assessment, and context. Competence develops through contextualised design, practical experimentation, collaborative reflection, and performance-based assessment. Teacher education and professional development programmes should therefore integrate digital technologies into language methodology courses and classroom practice rather than teach them as an independent technical component. This approach strengthens teachers' capacity to create interactive, differentiated, and pedagogically justified digital learning experiences.

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