Chapter 13
Applying a Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge Framework in Ethiopian English Language Teacher Education

Berhanu Abera
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

ABSTRACT

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) has emerged as a useful frame for instructional technology-enhanced education. This chapter addresses the existing literature on technological pedagogical content knowledge framework and of teacher education in Ethiopia in general and English language teacher education in particular. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, interviews, classroom observations, and documents. The results revealed that the existing literature failed to demonstrate the application of TPACK in English language teacher education in the country. The technological pedagogical content knowledge of classroom English language teachers was also found to be low. Classroom teachers applied their pedagogical content knowledge while teaching English language through televised instruction like the conventional instruction. They were seldom observed applying their technological pedagogical content knowledge. Finally, based on the results and the conceptual framework of TPACK, implications for the Ethiopian secondary school teacher preparation programs are outlined and further studies are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

There are clearly many knowledge systems that are fundamental to teaching, including knowledge of student thinking and learning, and knowledge of subject matter (Mishra and Koehler, 2006). Historically teacher education has been focused on the content knowledge while general pedagogy was an added course, treated in isolation of the content, with emphasis on general pedagogical classroom practices independent of subject matter (Jimoyiannis, 2010; Veal and MaKinster, 1999).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7918-2.ch013

By the mid-1980s, the emphasis of teacher training had swung almost completely toward pedagogy, leaving content knowledge ancillary to teaching methods (Shulman, 1986). Scholars also proposed the integration of content and pedagogical knowledge in teacher training. Shulman, for instance, argues that it was not enough to teach content and pedagogy as two separate. And he proposed another competent of teacher education, the pedagogical content knowledge, which constitutes the intersection of content and pedagogical knowledge. After the use of instructional technologies in the teaching-learning process, scholars projected knowledge of technology (technological knowledge). The advocators of such type of thought claim that new technologies have changed the nature of the classroom or have the potential to do so. Technologies play a critical role in the ways of representing and formulating subject matters. Thus, knowledge of technology becomes an important aspect of overall teacher knowledge (Mishra and Koehler, 2006). It is upon this logic that the relatively new framework of technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) is built, adding the new component of technology to the mix (Mishra and Koehler, 2006; Cox, 2008; Schmidt, et al, 2009).

The proponents of the TPACK framework argue that effective technology integration for teaching specific content or subject matter requires understanding and negotiating the relationships between three components: technology, pedagogy, and content. The framework incorporates the relationships and the complexities between all these three basic components of knowledge. TPACK does not consider these three key elements in isolation, but rather in the complex relationships in the system they define, as Jimoyiannis (2010) asserts. At the intersection of the three knowledge types, seven components are included in the TPACK framework as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The components of the TPACK framework (taken from http://www.tpack.org/)