0.22633/rpge.v29iesp1.20477

Revista on line de Política e Gestão Educacional
Online Journal of Policy and Educational Management

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EDITORA IBERO-AMERICANA

MANAGING ENGLISH TEACHING BASED-COMPETENCY APPROACH FOR HEALTH STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITIES IN THE SOUTHERN REGION OF VIETNAM

GESTÃO DA ABORDAGEM DE ENSINO DE INGLÊS BASEADA EM COMPETÊNCIAS PARA ESTUDANTES DE SAÚDE EM UNIVERSIDADES DA REGIÃO SUL DO VIETNÃ

GESTIÓN DE LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS BASADA EN UN ENFOQUE DE COMPETENCIAS PARA ESTUDIANTES DE SALUD EN UNIVERSIDADES DE LA REGIÓN SUR DE VIETNAM

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How to reference this paper:

Dang, N. T. V., Bui, D. T., & Dang, N. N. W. (2025). English teaching based-competency approach for health students at universities in the southern region of Vietnam. *Revista on line de Política e Gestão Educacional, 29*(esp.1), e025042. DOI: 10.22633/rpge.v29iesp1.20477

Submitted: 19/05/2025
Revisions required: 13/06/2025
Approved: 30/06/2025
Published: 31/07/2025

ABSTRACT: This study investigates the key determinants of teaching effectiveness (TE) and their impact on English language competency outcomes (CO) among healthcare students in Southern Vietnam. The study treats teacher competence (TC), curriculum relevance (CR), learning resources (LR), and the students' motivation as direct effects; it hypothesizes the moderating effects of institutional support (IS) and the mediating effect of TE. The results using PLS-SEM on data from 450 students verified that all independent variables directly affect TE and thereafter positively influence CO. The IS moderates some relationships, while TE mediates all core pathways. Theoretically, the study presents contributions for ESP literature and, practically, for curriculum design, instructional policy, and institutional development in healthcare education.

KEYWORDS: Teaching effectiveness. English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Healthcare education. Competency outcomes. Institutional support.

RESUMO: *Este estudo analisa os principais determinantes da eficácia do ensino (EE) e seu impacto nos resultados de competência em língua inglesa (RC) entre estudantes da área da saúde no sul do Vietnã. Consideram-se como efeitos diretos a competência docente (CD), a relevância curricular (RCu), os recursos de aprendizagem (RA) e a motivação dos estudantes. Hipotetiza-se ainda o efeito moderador do apoio institucional (AI) e o efeito mediador da EE. Os resultados, obtidos por meio de PLS-SEM com dados de 450 estudantes, confirmam que todas as variáveis independentes influenciam diretamente a EE, que, por sua vez, impacta positivamente os RC. O AI modera algumas relações, enquanto a EE media todos os caminhos centrais. Teoricamente, o estudo contribui para a literatura em inglês para fins específicos (ESP) e, na prática, oferece subsídios para o desenho curricular, políticas instrucionais e desenvolvimento institucional na formação em saúde.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Eficácia do ensino. Inglês para Fins Específicos (ESP). Educação em saúde. Resultados de competência. Suporte institucional.*

RESUMEN: *Este estudio investiga los determinantes clave de la efectividad docente (ED) y su impacto en los resultados de competencia en el idioma inglés (RC) entre estudiantes de salud en el sur de Vietnam. Se consideran como efectos directos la competencia del docente (CD), la relevancia curricular (RCu), los recursos de aprendizaje (RA) y la motivación de los estudiantes. Se plantea la hipótesis de efectos moderadores del apoyo institucional (AI) y un efecto mediador de la ED. Los resultados, obtenidos mediante PLS-SEM con datos de 450 estudiantes, confirmaron que todas las variables independientes afectan directamente la ED, que a su vez influye positivamente en los RC. El AI modera algunas relaciones, mientras que la ED media todas las rutas principales. Teóricamente, el estudio aporta a la literatura sobre inglés con fines específicos (ESP) y, en la práctica, ofrece contribuciones para el diseño curricular, la política instruccional y el desarrollo institucional en la educación en salud.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Eficacia docente. Inglés para fines específicos (ESP). Educación en salud. Resultados de competencias. Apoyo institucional.*

Article submitted to the similarity system

iThenticate

Editor: Prof. Dr. Sebastião de Souza Lemes
Deputy Executive Editor: Prof. Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz

INTRODUCTION

In the context of global professional environments—particularly in health fields, where there is a direct impact on patient outcomes and the quality of care—english language proficiency has assumed paramount importance (Basturkmen, 2019; Hyland, 2022). Due to globalization and the expanding global healthcare industry, health professionals need to be proficient in English for patient, professional, and academic interactions (Bernal, 2007). However, there is an increasing need for highly proficient English-speaking healthcare professionals in Vietnam, especially in the southern region, due to the growing demand for international collaborations in healthcare, medical tourism, and the global integration of healthcare services (Nguyen-Viet & Nguyen-Viet, 2023). For this reason, universities are faced with the task of significantly improving the English language skills of their health sciences students, ensuring that future graduates are academically and professionally competent (Pham et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, Vietnamese universities still face numerous challenges in providing students with competency-based English instruction in healthcare disciplines (Yen & Thao, 2024) in this immediate and pressing context. Several critical factors contribute to this complexity, including insufficiently trained teachers, curricula that do not align with students' realities, low student motivation (SM), and limited LR (Scott & Husain, 2021; Tran et al., 2022). For instance, TC lacks integration between healthcare-specific content knowledge and English language teaching skills, which impacts TE and, consequently, student COs (Canuto et al., 2024). Similarly, the current English curricula are too general and disconnected from the specific demands of medical and healthcare settings, leading to low learner engagement and reduced instructional effectiveness (Lopez & Razak, 2024). The scarcity of resources further exacerbates the situation; with limited access to English instruction channels and technology, the quality of English teaching in healthcare education becomes questionable (Nhat & Dung, 2024). Additionally, fluctuating levels of SM—a key factor in successful English instruction—are influenced by how students perceive the relevance of the curriculum and the quality of teaching, making it even more difficult for educators to achieve effective outcomes.

This scenario highlights a significant gap in empirical research regarding which of the key educational components—TC, CR, LR, SM, and IS—most strongly influence the effectiveness of English instruction and the resulting competency in English communication within the healthcare education context in Vietnam. To date, most existing studies have analyzed these variables separately or in general educational contexts, rather than within a competency-based English instruction framework specific to health professions (Rinawati et al., 2022; Vo et al., 2020). As a result, no studies have fully examined how these factors impact English proficiency in health sciences education, both individually and in combination.

To address this major research gap, the primary purpose of this study is to empirically investigate and validate a capabilities-based English teaching model developed for healthcare students at universities in Southern Vietnam. More specifically, the study has three objectives: (1) to examine the direct effects of TC, CR, LR, and SM on TE; (2) to explore the moderating role of IS in these relationships; and (3) to investigate whether TE acts as a mediating factor that translates these educational inputs into measurable English language COs for health sciences students. This research aims to provide robust empirical evidence and improve English language teaching practices in Vietnam's healthcare education by systematically testing these relationships through clearly defined hypotheses.

This study is significant for several reasons. Theoretically, it develops and empirically validates a comprehensive model of the factors that underpin effective competency-based English instruction in healthcare education. The explanation of this framework goes beyond what is typically found in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) literature, which often examines these elements in isolation rather than as part of an integrated professional teaching model (Nasiri & Khojasteh, 2024; Rashti et al., 2021). Practically, the study offers actionable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and university administrators, identifying areas for targeted interventions and improvement. For example, the findings may inform the development of professional training programs that integrate English language instruction with healthcare communication skills.

In addition, the evidence-based recommendations resulting from this study may guide reforms to align curricula with the communication needs of healthcare professionals. Furthermore, insights into the moderating effect of IS can prompt administrators and policymakers to implement structured interventions, allocate resources more strategically, and design better policies to enhance English teaching efficiency in healthcare education. The research also connects local and regional educational policies with Vietnam's broader goal of internationalization and improved professional capacity in higher education. Accordingly, the study's findings can inform national policy strategies aimed at strengthening English language proficiency and improving the educational outcomes and professional readiness of healthcare graduates.

This research addresses tough challenges in Vietnamese healthcare education by thoroughly studying a competency-based model of English language teaching. This study bridges notable gaps in the existing research and applies extensive evidence-based insights to both theoretical advancement and practical educational improvement, enhancing the English language competence of healthcare professionals in Vietnam within the rapidly expanding global healthcare sphere.

The structure of this research paper is as follows: first, the paper summarizes the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence that support each hypothesized relationship among the core constructs, namely TC, CR, LR, SM, TE, IS, and CO. The third section presents

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the methodology: research design, sampling procedures, measurements, and statistical methods for data collection and analysis, which includes Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). In the results section, the empirical findings are reported, along with an in-depth analysis of the outcomes for each tested hypothesis. The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings, their implications for theory and practice, the limitations of the current study, and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

Effective teaching in ESP, particularly within healthcare education, relies heavily on several core factors. To establish this, recent empirical research is critically synthesized to provide both theoretical and practical connections between TC, CR, LR, SM, IS, effective teaching, and CO. Separate scholarly studies are reviewed in each subsection, and the direct, moderating, and mediating relationships posited in the research model are systematically presented with supporting evidence. Various recent studies are critically reviewed to form a robust theoretical and empirical basis for assessing the effectiveness of competence-based English teaching for health students in Southern Vietnam.

TC and TE (H1)

The TC has a substantial effect on the quality and outcomes of instruction, especially in language education. Research further indicates that teachers' linguistic proficiency contributes to effective classroom delivery (Choi & Lee, 2016). Mafa-Theledi (2024) asserts that teachers who master pedagogical content knowledge positively influence learner engagement and performance. Teachers' professional expertise in enhancing students' communicative skills in specialized English courses is undeniable, claim Mahboob and Lin (2016). Alavi and Kaivanpanah (2021) argue that skilled educators further improve educational outcomes by providing scaffolding for student learning. Tsui (2003) showed that highly competent teachers can make a significant difference in instructional clarity and learner engagement.

Vietnamese universities have reported similar findings. Tran et al. (2022) identified TC as a significant contributor to SM and learning satisfaction. Likewise, Basturkmen (2014) highlights better ESP instructional outcomes when teachers are not only proficient in English but also knowledgeable in the professional field—such as in medical education. Teacher expertise in instructional strategies is, in many ways, the key to learner success, as Li and Xu (2024) concluded from their study. The results of these studies are further supported by Freeman et al. (2015) and Canuto et al. (2024), who showed that effective teaching in the ESP context enables teachers to develop strong instructional skills.

Hypothesis (H1): TC positively affects TE.

CR and TE (H2)

The CR—or aligning content with learners' needs—is vital for maximizing TE. According to Richards (2001), curricula should be developed in close connection with learners' practical realities. In this context, Alptekin (2002) emphasized the importance of intercultural relevance for successful teaching, particularly in global professions such as healthcare. Macalister and Nation (2019) advocate for a task-based curriculum that helps develop practical language skills aligned with students' future careers.

Flowerdew and Miller (2008) and Basturkmen (2010) support the inclusion of occupational language in classroom curricula, which fosters meaningful learning and improves instructional effectiveness. Bernal (2007) offered evidence from healthcare education, showing that direct links between course content and clinical practice enhance learning outcomes. Lopez and Razak (2024) demonstrated that curricula closely aligned with professional language used in practice bring significant benefits for Vietnamese healthcare students. Similarly, Yen and Thao (2024) concluded that context-specific curricula improve teaching quality and learner participation. Additionally, Hyland (2022) and Flowerdew and Miller (2008) also emphasize the importance of relevant curricular content for effective teaching and academic achievement.

Hypothesis (H2): CR positively influences TE.

LR and TE (H3)

When high-quality LR are available, they can make teaching—especially language instruction—more effective. According to Warschauer and Kern (2000), the use of digital learning tools increases learner participation and comprehension. Al-Seghayer (2011) confirmed this finding, highlighting the significant effectiveness of multimedia resources in language instruction. Reigeluth (2013) argued that constructivist learning environments enriched with robust resources create optimal learning conditions. As Mayer (2020) emphasized, learners tend to retain more information and show greater engagement when taught using multimedia support.

Joseph et al. (2015) asserted that numerous studies consistently demonstrate better learning outcomes when interactive digital resources such as medical simulations are used. In Vietnam, Nguyen and Chu (2021) also observed similar improvements in student performance through the use of technology-driven interactive resources. Zhang and Liu (2024) confirmed that resource-rich instruction significantly enhances learners' clinical language skills. Additionally, Nhat and Dung (2024) found that virtual clinical tools effectively improved the effectiveness of ESP teaching. Vo et al. (2020) concluded that ESP programs enriched with extensive multimedia content resulted in higher student achievement and greater teaching

efficiency. Pishghadam et al. (2023) further supported these findings by emphasizing the critical role of comprehensive LR in effective language instruction.

Hypothesis (H3): LR positively influence TE.

SM and TE (H4)

The SM is vital to instructional effectiveness, as it fosters dynamic classroom interaction and greater learner engagement. Gardner (1985) laid the foundation for understanding the relationship between motivation and second language acquisition. Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) later demonstrated that motivated learners contribute to more effective classroom interactions. Self-determination theory (Noels et al., 2008) has shown that intrinsic motivation correlates strongly with improved learning outcomes. Stefanova and Zabunov (2020) found that, in ESP contexts, motivation linked to specific career goals significantly enhanced TE.

Tanvir (2021) also found that motivated students participated more actively in class and made instructional delivery clearer. In the same vein, Li and Xu (2024) reported that learners in ESP programs who demonstrated strong motivation experienced greater instructional effectiveness. According to Johnson (2017), learner motivation can directly influence teaching methods and outcomes. Nguyen and Chu (2021) observed that Vietnamese medical students who saw English as relevant to their field reported higher classroom satisfaction. Similarly, Pishghadam et al. (2023) and Nguyen et al. (2022) confirmed that learner motivation can improve both teaching delivery and instructional success.

Hypothesis (H4): SM positively affects TE.

TE and CO (H5)

Effective teaching has a significant impact on student learning outcomes, particularly in professional language competencies. Marsh (1982) established strong links between instructional clarity, engagement, and positive learner outcomes. Centra (1993) reinforced this, stating that effective teaching directly influences academic success. Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010) also found strong correlations between TE and the achievement of competencies. In the ESP context, Flowerdew and Miller (2008) pointed out that effective teaching strategies lead to better results.

Recent empirical studies by Nguyen et al. (2022) showed that thorough instruction improved communication skills among Vietnamese healthcare students. Likewise, Johnson (2017) concluded that instructional effectiveness had a notable impact on clinical language abilities. Joseph et al. (2015) identified effective instruction as a key factor in improving learners' clinical language competencies. Canuto et al. (2024) found that healthcare students in

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Vietnam significantly enhanced their practical language skills when effective teaching strategies were applied. The most recent conclusive studies indicated that better performance in professional language skills stemmed from high-quality instruction (Shehzadi, 2018; Zhang & Liu, 2024).

Hypothesis (H5): TE significantly influences CO.

IS as a Moderator (H6-H9)

The IS is a critical moderator that influences the effects of TC, CR, LR, and SM on TE. According to Elmore (1996), institutional backing is vital for teacher performance. Strong support from institutions has been shown to significantly improve classroom teaching efficiency (Tickle et al., 2005). Moreover, Philipsen et al. (2022) demonstrated that institutions offering comprehensive support structures achieved higher instructional outcomes.

Yen and Thao (2024) found that institutional policies in Vietnam significantly strengthened the impact of CR and TC on TE. Previous studies have also emphasized the role of IS in fostering the success of ESP instruction (Dhillon et al., 2008). The effectiveness of resource-based learning was improved through institutional investment in learning tools, according to Scott and Husain (2021). Additionally, institutions that provide solid digital infrastructure are better positioned to enhance ESP outcomes (Nhat & Dung, 2024). Li and Xu (2024) noted that IS played a key role in transforming SM into successful instruction. Even more notably, Lopez and Razak (2024) confirmed that supportive institutions can improve instructional effectiveness regardless of the input quality. These findings were also supported by Bernal (2007), who found that structured institutional interventions led to enhanced ESP outcomes.

Hypotheses (H6–H9): IS moderates the relationships between TC, CR, LR, SM, and TE.

TE as a Mediator (H10-H13)

The TE is also linked to the main educational variables—TC, CR, LR, and SM—by influencing the development of students' professional language skills. Effective instruction is the central mechanism that translates educational inputs into improved CO. Freeman et al. (2015) emphasized that TE is key in converting teacher skills into student achievements. Their research highlighted the importance of pedagogical strategies as the intermediary factor that enables students to develop domain-specific language proficiency. Similarly, Christ et al. (2022) demonstrated that TE mediates the relationship between teacher expertise and student learning outcomes.

Hyland (2022) and Flowerdew (2013) pointed out that an effective curriculum leads to better outcomes only when coupled with strong instructional delivery. Their studies suggested

that without effective teaching strategies, even a relevant curriculum is not sufficient to produce improved competencies. Within the Vietnamese ESP context, Nguyen et al. (2022) confirmed this mediation effect, particularly among health sciences students. Zhang and Liu (2024) also found that TE mediates the connection between the availability of LR and students' language competence. While Mayer (2020) supported the direct impact of multimedia on learning outcomes, the study also revealed that such resources influence results indirectly through effective instructional approaches.

Finally, TE is the main channel through which SM influences competency development. According to Noels et al. (2008) and Stefanova and Zabunov (2020), effective learning outcomes are more likely to occur when student effort is supported by high-quality instruction. Johnson (2017) reinforced this mediation model by showing that instructional effectiveness is essential for transforming SM into professional language competence.

Hypotheses (H10–H13): TE mediates the relationships between TC, CR, LR, SM, and CO.

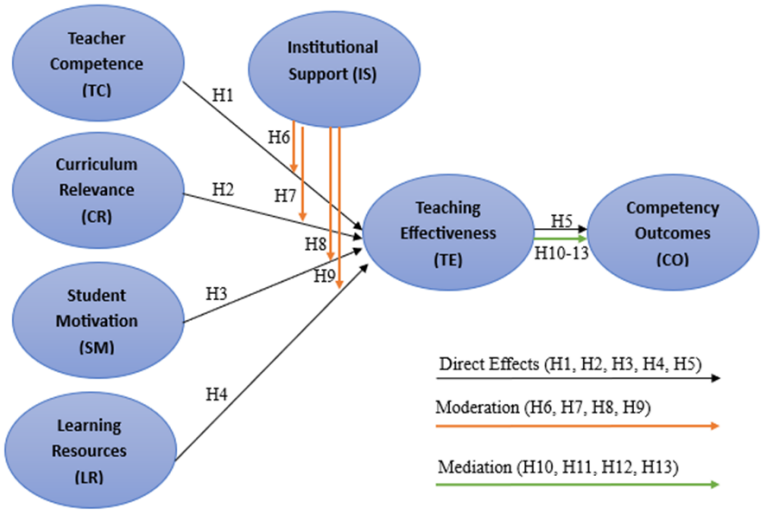
Table 1. Hypotheses (H1–H13)

Hypothesis	Type	Relationship
H1	Direct Effect	TC → TE
H2	Direct Effect	CR → TE
H3	Direct Effect	LR → TE
H4	Direct Effect	SM → TE
H5	Direct Effect	TE → CO
H6	Moderation	IS moderates TC → TE
H7	Moderation	IS moderates CR → TE
H8	Moderation	IS moderates LR → TE
H9	Moderation	IS moderates SM → TE
H10	Mediation	TE mediates TC → CO
H11	Mediation	TE mediates CR → CO
H12	Mediation	TE mediates LR → CO
H13	Mediation	TE mediates SM → CO

Source: prepared by the authors.

The literature reviewed above carefully combines existing research, providing a strong basis for understanding how the main variables in the study are related. To clarify the proposed relationships—including direct, moderating, and mediating effects—Table 1 presents them clearly. Additionally, Figure 1's conceptual framework graphically displays the effects of the hypothesized relationships. Together, the table and the figure serve as a structured overview that clearly demonstrates the proposed interconnectedness of the variables for the empirical analysis in the following sections of this research.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Source: prepared by the authors.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach to empirically test the hypothesized relationships among key constructs affecting English TE and CO in the context of English used for healthcare education in Southern Vietnam. Undergraduate and postgraduate healthcare students from selected universities in the southern region were used as the data source. Through purposive sampling, students involved in ESP courses specifically related to healthcare communication and practice were selected. A structured questionnaire was used to collect 450 valid responses for analysis. The SEM meets the minimum sample size requirements and complies with guidelines established for PLS-SEM applications in the social sciences (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

The data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method, suitable for complex predictive models involving multiple variables, through SmartPLS 4 software (Sarstedt et al., 2021). This method was chosen due to its robustness with non-normally distributed data and its ability to evaluate both the measurement and structural models simultaneously. The measurement model was assessed for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity before proceeding to the structural model to ensure construct integrity. Based on previous studies, the constructs were measured using previously validated scales on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The research model consists of thirteen hypotheses, including direct relationships (H1–H5), moderating effects (H6–H9), and mediating effects (H10–H13). The seven latent variables

used in the model include four independent variables (TC, CR, LR, and SM), one mediator (TE), one moderator (IS), and one dependent variable (CO). Each construct was operationalized using multiple measurement items derived from reliable, widely accepted academic sources.

The TC was measured using five items related to language proficiency and pedagogical skills, adapted from Choi and Lee (2016), Shulman (1987a), and Mafa-Theledi (2024). The CR was assessed using four items adapted from Richards (2001), Alptekin (2002), and Macalister and Nation (2019), focusing on how well the course content aligns with healthcare-related communication. Four items were used to measure LR, focusing on students' perceptions of technological and material resources, based on Al-Seghayer (2011) and Warschauer and Kern (2000). The SM was evaluated using five items drawn from Gardner (1985), Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), and Noels et al. (2008), specifically addressing learners' motivation to study English for healthcare, both for personal reasons and external rewards.

The TE was assessed using four items based on Marsh (1982), Centra (1993), and Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010), focusing on teachers' clarity, engagement, and the perceived helpfulness of their instruction—acting as the mediating factor. The IS was measured using four items adapted from Elmore (1996), Tickle et al. (2005), and Philipsen et al. (2022), describing the types of support schools provide to teachers, including administrative assistance, instructional support, and access to resources. The dependent variable—CO—was measured using five items based on the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and TESOL professional standards (Kuhlman & Kneževic, 2013), evaluating students' confidence and skills in using English for healthcare purposes.

Table 2 below summarizes the operational definitions and item enumerations for all constructs.

Table 2. Constructs, Measurement Items, and Sources

Construct	No. of Items	Adapted from
Teacher Competence (TC)	5	Choi and Lee (2016), Shulman (1987a), and Mafa-Theledi (2024).
Curriculum Relevance (CR)	4	Richards (2001), Alptekin (2002), Macalister & Nation (2019).
Learning Resources (LR)	4	Richards (2001), Alptekin (2002), and Macalister and Nation (2019).
Student Motivation (SM)	5	Gardner (1985), Dörnyei & Csizér (2002), Noels et al. (2008).
Teaching Effectiveness (TE)	4	Al-Seghayer (2011) and Warschauer and Kern (2000).
Institutional Support (IS)	4	Elmore (1996), Tickle et al. (2005), Philipsen et al. (2022).
Competency Outcomes (CO)	5	Gardner (1985), Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), and Noels et al. (2008).

Source: prepared by the authors.

RESULTS

This study unfolds in two main stages. First, the measurement model is assessed, testing reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. This analysis includes indicator loadings, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), the Fornell–Larcker criterion, HTMT ratios, and cross-loadings. Second, the hypothesized relationships among SIT elements—direct effects, moderation, and mediation—are tested using the structural model. The current analysis is based on 450 valid responses, and the data collected are analyzed with SmartPLS to build a robust perspective of the proposed competency-based English teaching framework for healthcare students in Southern Vietnam.

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test

Constructs	items	Loading	Alpha	CR	AVE
CO	CO1	0.803	0.863	0.901	0.645
	CO2	0.819			
	CO3	0.804			
	CO4	0.807			
	CO5	0.783			
CR	CR1	0.837	0.845	0.895	0.682
	CR2	0.838			
	CR3	0.805			
	CR4	0.822			
IS	IS1	0.822	0.853	0.901	0.694
	IS2	0.823			
	IS3	0.85			
	IS4	0.838			
LR	LR1	0.853	0.84	0.893	0.676
	LR2	0.83			
	LR3	0.844			
	LR4	0.757			
SM	SM1	0.82	0.871	0.906	0.659
	SM2	0.811			
	SM3	0.806			
	SM4	0.807			
	SM5	0.814			
TC	TC1	0.858	0.895	0.922	0.704
	TC2	0.824			
	TC3	0.861			
	TC4	0.817			
	TC5	0.833			

TE	TE1	0.865	0.839	0.892	0.675
	TE2	0.767			
	TE3	0.824			
	TE4	0.827			

Source: prepared by the authors.

The convergent validity for all constructs in the measurement model is shown in Table 3, including item loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Convergent validity confirms that a group of indicators reliably measures the intended concept and is deemed acceptable when factor loadings are above 0.70, CR exceeds 0.70, and AVE is greater than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019).

All item loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.757 (LR4) to 0.865 (TE1), indicating strong associations between each item and its respective latent construct. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.839 (TE) to 0.895 (TC), demonstrating high internal consistency for all constructs (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Additionally, CR scores fall between 0.892 and 0.922, further confirming the reliability of the constructs.

All AVE values are above the minimum threshold of 0.50, ranging from 0.645 (CO) to 0.704 (TC), indicating that each construct explains a sufficient portion of variance. These results confirm that the measurement model has solid convergent validity, supporting its use for structural analysis, in line with the standards set by prior SEM research (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4. HTMT Ratio

	CO	**CR**	**IS**	**LR**	**SM**	**TC**	**TE**
CO							
CR	0.217						
IS	0.232	0.096					
LR	0.271	0.089	0.07				
SM	0.28	0.064	0.088	0.057			
TC	0.124	0.133	0.05	0.083	0.056		
TE	0.486	0.362	0.375	0.407	0.371	0.402	

Source: prepared by the authors.

A strong way to check whether two concepts are different in PLS-SEM is by using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations (Table 4). According to Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT values below 0.85 (strict) or 0.90 (more relaxed) indicate that the two concepts are clearly different. As noted by Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT values below 0.85 (conservative) or 0.90 (liberal) confirm that two constructs are empirically distinct. All HTMT values in the table are well below 0.85, ranging from 0.05 (IS–TC) to 0.486 (CO–TE). The results of this

test demonstrate solid discriminant validity, suggesting that the constructs in the study do not conceptually overlap and can be confidently used in the structural model (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 5. Fornell Larcker

	CO	CR	IS	LR	SM	TC	TE
CO	0.803						
CR	0.189	0.826					
IS	0.201	0.041	0.833				
LR	0.233	-0.051	-0.042	0.822			
SM	0.242	0.013	0.008	-0.012	0.812		
TC	0.103	-0.116	-0.016	0.051	0.025	0.839	
TE	0.42	0.303	0.325	0.349	0.319	0.35	0.822

Source: prepared by the authors.

To show that the results are valid, Table 5 applies the Fornell–Larcker criterion, a method in PLS-SEM that compares the square root of each construct's AVE (the diagonal values) with the squared correlations between different constructs (the off-diagonal values). Discriminant validity is confirmed only when the square root of a construct's AVE is greater than its correlation with any other construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

All values in the table are higher than their respective off-diagonal correlations, and all diagonal values are greater than or equal to 0.803 for CO and 0.839 for TC. For example, the square root of the AVE for TE is 0.822, which is higher than its highest correlation with CO, at 0.42—indicating that TE is distinct from the other constructs. The same pattern is observed for all other constructs, confirming the uniqueness of each latent variable in the model. These results confirm the strong discriminant validity of the measurement model, in line with Hair et al. (2021).

Table 6. Cross Loadings

	CO	CR	IS	LR	SM	TC	TE
CO1	**0.803**	0.132	0.159	0.175	0.227	0.16	0.328
CO2	**0.819**	0.178	0.162	0.179	0.152	0.052	0.309
CO3	**0.804**	0.192	0.186	0.198	0.153	0.04	0.379
CO4	**0.807**	0.18	0.15	0.185	0.215	0.104	0.353
CO5	**0.783**	0.066	0.146	0.197	0.231	0.061	0.306
CR1	0.173	**0.837**	0.084	-0.058	-0.014	-0.08	0.259
CR2	0.105	**0.838**	0.01	-0.127	0.012	-0.09	0.229
CR3	0.192	**0.805**	-0.047	0.039	0.011	-0.088	0.247
CR4	0.151	**0.822**	0.081	-0.03	0.033	-0.124	0.263
IS1	0.125	-0.036	**0.822**	0.014	-0.039	0.034	0.25
IS2	0.18	0.004	**0.823**	-0.004	-0.057	-0.004	0.278
IS3	0.178	0.08	**0.85**	-0.098	0.108	-0.033	0.292
IS4	0.185	0.083	**0.838**	-0.045	0.005	-0.046	0.259
LR1	0.2	-0.01	-0.056	**0.853**	-0.017	-0.013	0.277
LR2	0.156	-0.084	-0.023	**0.83**	-0.025	0.037	0.283
LR3	0.231	-0.051	-0.012	**0.844**	0.041	0.073	0.332
LR4	0.171	-0.019	-0.056	**0.757**	-0.055	0.067	0.243
SM1	0.189	-0.037	0.024	-0.016	**0.82**	0.091	0.29
SM2	0.224	0.078	-0.013	-0.051	**0.811**	-0.001	0.242
SM3	0.148	0	0.007	-0.013	**0.806**	-0.032	0.245
SM4	0.18	-0.037	-0.033	0.004	**0.807**	0.021	0.239
SM5	0.239	0.052	0.04	0.024	**0.814**	0.011	0.271
TC1	0.053	-0.084	-0.042	0.045	0.025	**0.858**	0.289
TC2	0.098	-0.061	-0.016	0.108	-0.026	**0.824**	0.285
TC3	0.034	-0.078	0.009	-0.023	0.028	**0.861**	0.286
TC4	0.153	-0.18	0.011	0.049	0.056	**0.817**	0.296
TC5	0.091	-0.083	-0.027	0.034	0.021	**0.833**	0.308
TE1	0.382	0.24	0.307	0.308	0.252	0.331	**0.865**
TE2	0.277	0.271	0.148	0.219	0.247	0.262	**0.767**
TE3	0.339	0.28	0.246	0.269	0.293	0.311	**0.824**
TE4	0.371	0.213	0.345	0.338	0.257	0.242	**0.827**

Source: prepared by the authors.

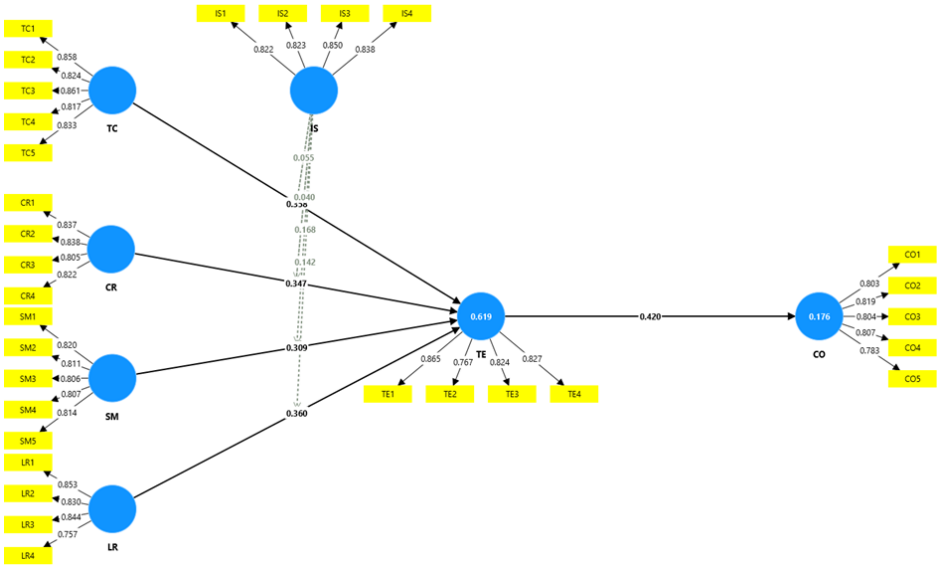
Table 6 presents the cross-loading results, a key method for checking discriminant validity in PLS-SEM. According to Hair et al. (2021), each indicator should load more heavily on its intended construct than on any other. These results confirm that items are uniquely aligned with their corresponding latent variables.

In this study, each item shows its highest loading on the construct it was designed to

measure. For example, CO1 through CO5 load most strongly on CO, all above 0.78, and much lower on other constructs. Likewise, all CR items (CR1–CR4) load highest on CR, with values above 0.80. This pattern is consistent for IS, LR, SM, TC, and TE.

These results confirm excellent discriminant validity at the item level and reinforce the construct validity of the measurement model, supporting the appropriateness of the indicators used (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015).

Figure 2. Measurement Model



Source: prepared by the authors.

Figure 2 presents the measurement model. Based on indicator loadings and their relationships to latent constructs as computed in SmartPLS, the model includes the respective R^2 values. All indicator loadings are above 0.70, confirming excellent item reliability (Hair et al., 2021). The TE explains 42.0% of the variance in CO, while external variables account for 61.9% of the variance in TE—both representing strong values. The previously reported AVE and CR values support the model's convergent validity and internal consistency, which is also evident in the visual structure. These results confirm the robustness of the measurement model.

Table 7. Path Analysis

CR -> TE	0,347	0,346	0,032	10,756	0,000
IS -> TE	0,325	0,325	0,033	9,944	0,000
LR -> TE	0,360	0,359	0,029	12,580	0,000
SM -> TE	0,309	0,309	0,031	9,851	0,000
TC -> TE	0,358	0,358	0,031	11,534	0,000
TE -> CO	0,420	0,423	0,038	11,030	0,000
IS x LR -> TE	0,142	0,141	0,029	4,932	0,000

IS x CR -> TE	0,040	0,039	0,034	1,189	0,234
IS x TC -> TE	0,055	0,056	0,031	1,799	0,072
IS x SM -> TE	0,168	0,168	0,032	5,289	0,000
IS x LR -> TE -> CO	0,060	0,060	0,013	4,554	0,000
IS x CR -> TE -> CO	0,017	0,016	0,014	1,189	0,234
IS x TC -> TE -> CO	0,023	0,023	0,013	1,796	0,073
IS x SM -> TE -> CO	0,070	0,071	0,014	4,948	0,000
CR -> TE -> CO	0,146	0,146	0,018	8,104	0,000
IS -> TE -> CO	0,136	0,138	0,019	7,295	0,000
LR -> TE -> CO	0,151	0,152	0,018	8,184	0,000
SM -> TE -> CO	0,130	0,131	0,017	7,693	0,000
TC -> TE -> CO	0,150	0,151	0,018	8,453	0,000

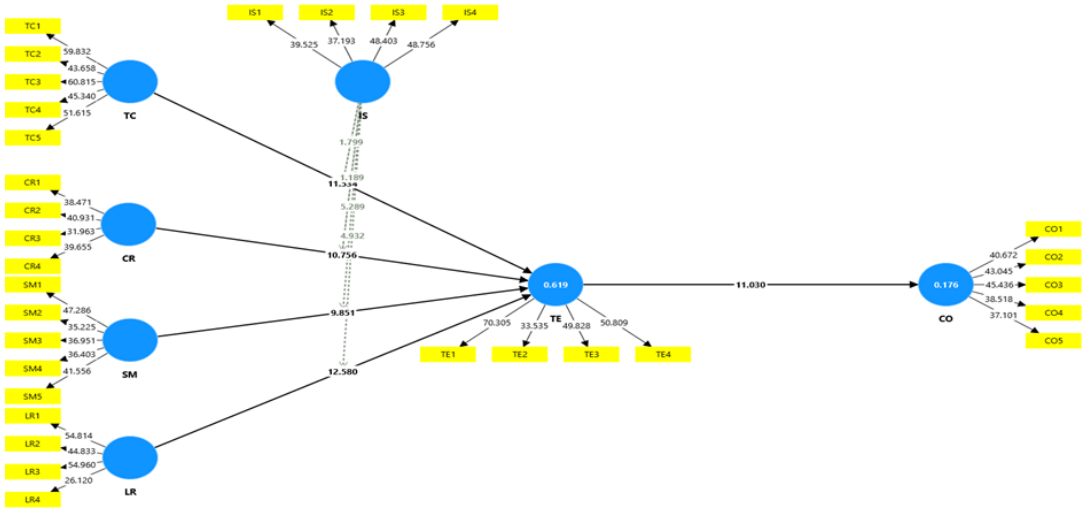
Source: prepared by the authors.

The findings from the path analysis using PLS-SEM in Table 7 show the direct effects, indirect effects, moderation, and moderated mediation pathways. Supporting H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5, all direct relationships from the independent variables—TC, CR, LR, SM, and IS—to TE are statistically significant ($\beta = 0.309$ to 0.360, $p < 0.001$). TE also has a strong impact on CO ($\beta = 0.420$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H5 and aligning with the findings of Hair et al. (2021).

Regarding the moderation effects (H6 to H9), IS plays a significant role in how LR and SM relate to TE ($\beta = 0.142$ and 0.168, $p < 0.001$, respectively), confirming H8 and H9. However, the effects of IS on TC and CR are not significant ($p > 0.05$), so H6 and H7 are not supported. In addition, the conditional indirect effects via TE (IS × LR → TE → CO and IS × SM → TE → CO) are statistically significant.

Moreover, all simple mediation paths (H10–H13) are statistically significant ($\beta = 0.130$ to 0.151, $p < 0.01$), confirming the mediating role of TE. The results indicate that TE functions both as a mediator and as an outcome variable, strengthening the model's reliability and relevance in ESP healthcare education (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

Figura 3. Structural Model



Fonte: elaborado pelos autores.

As shown in Figure 3, the structural model results using PLS-SEM include the path coefficients, t-values, and R^2 values. The R^2 value for TE is 0.619, meaning that 61.9% of its variance is explained by the five exogenous constructs. The R^2 for CO is 0.176, reflecting moderate explanatory power. All direct connections from TC, CR, LR, SM, and IS to TE, and from TE to CO, are statistically significant ($t > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$), supporting the main hypotheses (Hair et al., 2021). The moderating paths, indicated by dotted lines, show varying degrees of significance. These results confirm TE's integrated role in mediating and linking key antecedents to language CO in healthcare education among ESP students (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the factors affecting English TE and CO among healthcare students in Southern Vietnam—specifically, TC, CR, LR, SM, IS, and TE's mediating role. The PLS-SEM results offer both theoretical and practical insights regarding the study objective and the existing literature.

First, the study confirmed a significant and positive impact of TC on TE ($\beta = 0.358$, $t = 11.534$, $p < 0.001$). This finding reinforces what the literature has long established: both language and pedagogical expertise of teachers enhance student engagement and learning (Choi & Lee, 2016; Mafa-Theledi, 2024; Shulman, 1987b). As outlined in the literature review, H1 describes how competent ESP teachers who integrate healthcare-specific content into language instruction improve clarity and student satisfaction.

The analysis showed that TE increases by 0.347 for every one-point improvement in CR ($\beta = 0.347$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2 and aligning with Richards (2001), Macalister and Nation (2019), and Alptekin (2002), who argue that professionally oriented curricula yield

better learning outcomes for adults. Healthcare students demonstrate greater participation and better learning outcomes when they perceive the curriculum as directly relevant to their field. This supports proposals for contextualized ESP curriculum reform in Vietnam's health education system (Bernal, 2007; Canuto et al., 2024).

The third significant relationship supports H3 and confirms previous studies on the role of digital tools and instructional materials in language development (Al-Seghayer, 2011; Warschauer & Kern, 2000). Specifically, LR significantly influence TE ($\beta = 0.360$, $t = 12.580$, $p < 0.001$). This is particularly relevant for Vietnamese institutions, which, as Vo et al. (2020) point out, often operate with limited access to modern language learning technologies.

Similarly, SM was found to positively influence TE ($\beta = 0.309$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4 and aligning with the work of Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), as well as self-determination theory (Noels et al., 2008). Gardner (1985) emphasized that motivated students not only perform better but also contribute to a more dynamic classroom atmosphere and increased teacher effectiveness—an observation confirmed in Vietnamese ESP classrooms (Tanvir, 2021).

These findings support H5 and are consistent with conclusions by Marsh (1982), Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010), and Nguyen et al. (2022), who found that effective instruction leads to improved language performance. This is particularly critical in ESP, where language learning must translate into real professional competence.

Partial support was found for the moderating role of IS. H8 and H9 were validated, showing that IS influences the relationships between LR → TE and SM → TE. IS attenuated the strength of these links but had no significant effect on CR → TE (H6) and TC → TE (H7). This suggests, as noted by Yen and Thao (2024) and Tickle et al. (2005), that the material and motivational dimensions of IS play a larger role in promoting faculty engagement, particularly in STEM fields.

Finally, the results supported all mediation hypotheses (H10–H13). TE significantly mediated the relationships between teacher-related factors (TC), course-related factors (CR), LR, and SM and student competency. This underscores TE's central role in transforming input variables into measurable student outcomes. These findings also build on prior research by Freeman et al. (2015) and Christ et al. (2022), reinforcing the critical function of teaching in ESP contexts. The results affirm the importance of an integrated, institutionally supported model of competency-based English teaching in healthcare education.

Conclusion, Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

An assessment of TE in ESP for healthcare students in Southern Vietnam from the viewpoints of its antecedents and outcomes is carried out in this study. The study showed using PLS-SEM that TE is greatly influenced by teacher skills, relevant curriculum, learning materials, and SM and strongly affects students' CO. Additionally, support from the institution is shown to affect some of these relationships, and TE is found to play a role in how all the important

factors contribute to developing competencies. These results show that a complete competency-based English teaching framework is suitable for healthcare education and highlight how the quality of teaching connects the input factors to real learning results.

The study has numerous theoretical and practical implications. It adds to the theory of ESP and educational effectiveness by suggesting and confirming a strong model that includes direct, moderating, and mediating effects specific to the context. It gives practical insights, therefore, to university administrators, language educators, and curriculum designers. To help healthcare students improve their English proficiency, targeted teacher training, curriculum contextualization, improved resource provision, and institutional policy support are key.

However, the study has its weaknesses. Consequently, the study only collected data from healthcare students in Southern Vietnam, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to other regions or disciplines. The cross-sectional design is also restrictive for doing causal inference. Additionally, perspectives from teachers and administrators were not included.

There is room for future research aimed at using several longitudinal designs to evaluate the causal effects of a longer time remarket intervention, as well as expanding the sample to include other geographical areas or professional domains. Qualitative integration can provide more understanding with regard to the experiences of stakeholders and the institutional challenges. Also, the model could be improved and offer better understanding of ESP effectiveness in different educational settings by looking into other influencing factors like digital literacy or intercultural competence.

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CRediT Author Statement

Acknowledgements: No.
Funding: This research did not receive any financial support.
Conflicts of interest: There is no conflict of interest.
Ethical approval: The work respected ethics during the research.
Data and material availability: The data and materials used in the work are not publicly available for access.
Authors' contributions: Each author helps 33.33%.

Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação
Proofreading, formatting, normalisation and translation