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Enhancing the Quality of English Language Education for Students at Art Universities in Vietnam through a Competency-Based Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the current state of English teaching quality for students at art universities in Vietnam, focusing on a competency-based approach. Utilizing a mixed-methods design, the research involves surveys and interviews with educators and students to identify key challenges and opportunities in implementing competency-based education (CBE) in English language teaching. The findings reveal an awareness of the importance of CBE; however, practical implementation is hindered by various factors, including curriculum limitations and the need for enhanced teacher training. Recommendations are proposed to enhance English teaching quality, emphasizing the integration of CBE principles to better prepare students for future career demands in the arts.

Keywords: Competency-Based Education; English Language Education; Art Universities

1. Introduction

In recent years, Vietnam has made significant strides in reforming its education system, particularly in language education, to meet the demands of globalization and economic development. To address the needs of international integration and cooperation, the Vietnamese government initiated the "National Foreign Language Project for the 2017–2025 Period" under Decision No. 2080/QD-TTg, dated December

22, 2017. This project aims to ensure that by 2025, 100% of foreign language training programs will implement foreign language curricula according to output standards specific to their respective disciplines, with 80% of other academic programs also following these standards. Additionally, the project includes the implementation of foreign language teacher training programs[1]. This initiative has a special focus on improving English proficiency among students across various academic disciplines, including the arts, with an emphasis on English instruction at the higher education level[1]. The national focus on improving foreign language skills reflects a broader commitment to economic growth and international collaboration, as language proficiency is seen as a key factor in fostering global competitiveness[2].

Despite these efforts, concerns persist regarding the effectiveness of English Language Teaching (ELT) in higher education, particularly at art universities. Traditional teaching methods that emphasize rote memorization and grammar often fall short of meeting students' practical language needs. Research has indicated that traditional methods of language instruction in Vietnam tend to prioritize grammar and vocabulary at the expense of communicative competence and practical application[3]. This gap has become increasingly problematic as globalization demands that students not only master language rules but also effectively communicate in real-world contexts[2].

Currently, the quality of English instruction at art universities in Vietnam is being assessed through the lens of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA). CBA shifts the focus from knowledge acquisition to developing practical competencies essential for success in professional and social environments. This approach emphasizes the development of students' practical skills in line with labor market requirements[3]. CBA not only helps students master the language but also equips them with the ability to apply English in specific contexts, particularly in the arts[4]. In the context of art education, CBA has been highlighted as a framework that can bridge the gap between academic knowledge and real-world practice, helping students develop competencies that are directly applicable to their future careers[5]. Despite the great potential of CBA, significant challenges persist, including the relevance of the curriculum, outdated teaching methods, and insufficient infrastructure support. Specifically, a large portion of students feel that the curriculum fails to meet practical needs and lacks appeal. Notably, traditional teaching methods do not encourage creativity and interaction between instructors and students[6]. These issues have been identified as key barriers to effective language learning, particularly in art-related disciplines where creative and interactive approaches are essential[7].

Therefore, the implementation of this approach in art universities faces many challenges due to the unique characteristics of arts education, which emphasizes creativity, personal expression, and critical thinking[8]. As art education often prioritizes innovation and creative thinking, integrating competency-based frameworks requires careful alignment between language teaching and the development of these artistic skills[9].

This study aims to explore the current state of English instruction at art universities in Vietnam, identifying the challenges and opportunities related to the application of competency frameworks. By employing a mixed-methods research approach, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how English is currently taught at art universities and the steps that can be taken to enhance its effectiveness. Mixed-methods research offers a holistic approach to understanding both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of English teaching, allowing for a thorough examination of current practices and future needs[6].

The key research questions guiding this study are:

Question 1: What is the current state of English teaching quality at art universities in Vietnam?

Question 2: How effectively has the competency-based approach been implemented in English courses?

Question 3: What challenges and opportunities exist to improve the quality of English instruction in this context?

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the discussion on reforming English language education in Vietnam and propose practical strategies to enhance competency-based English teaching quality at art universities. By addressing these questions, the research aims to provide actionable insights for improving the relevance, effectiveness, and creativity of English teaching in art universities[8].

2. Literature Review

The enhancement of English language education for students at art universities in Vietnam is critical for developing

competencies necessary for academic success and global employment opportunities. In recent years, competency-based education (CBE) has emerged as a promising framework to improve the quality of education across various fields, including English language learning. This section reviews key literature on CBE, its application in English language education, and its relevance to art students in the context of Vietnam.

2.1. Competency-Based Education in English Language Teaching

CBE is a learner-centered approach to learning that emphasizes achieving specific skills and competencies rather than relying solely on time-based progress[3]. CBE not only focuses on developing measurable and practical competencies but also allows students to adjust their pace of learning until they achieve proficiency in a particular area[6, 8]. This approach ensures that the learning process is not just about knowledge transmission but also about creating practical capabilities for students, thereby enhancing their confidence in communication and problem-solving in real-world contexts.

According to[10], CBE is not merely a teaching method but also an educational philosophy where learners hold a central role while educators act as facilitators and guides. CBE emphasizes not just content but also the way learning occurs, with the ultimate goal of helping students develop skills necessary for life and work. Furthermore, CBE has been shown to enhance student autonomy and responsibility in the learning process[11].

CBE has emerged as a global trend in education, particularly in fields such as healthcare, engineering, and language[7]. The benefits of CBE include providing personalized learning experiences, improving students' employability, and enhancing student engagement in the learning process[12]. However, the implementation of CBE also faces challenges, such as changing faculty mindsets, designing suitable curricula, and ensuring adequate resources to support students.

3. The Role of CBE in Language Teaching

In the context of English language teaching, CBE focuses on developing communicative competence, which encompasses not only grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to use language effectively in real-life situations[4]. CBE prioritizes practical skills over rote memorization and emphasizes creating practical learning environments where students are encouraged to use English for communication, collaboration, and problem-solving[13]. This approach is fundamental in helping students build their language proficiency in a meaningful way.

Recent studies emphasize the importance of integrating technology into modern frameworks to enhance learners' language skills. Ironsi[14] proposes combining technology with the Content Analysis Process Evaluation (CAPE) framework as an innovative approach to improve language proficiency. The study highlights the positive impact of technology in increasing teaching and learning efficiency and demonstrates how such integration significantly supports the development of essential language skills, particularly in the context of CBE.

Ironsi and Bostancı (2021) found that incorporating mobile learning, combined with the CAPE lesson framework, significantly improved students' productive skills. The CAPE framework encourages action-oriented tasks, which focus on real-life application and skill development, core elements of CBE. By leveraging mobile learning technologies, the study highlighted how students can engage in more interactive and flexible learning experiences, ultimately boosting their speaking and writing skills in English[15].

Research has shown that CBE methodologies lead to significant improvements in language proficiency. By focusing on practical skills, students can engage in real-world communication situations, helping them develop the ability to use language in diverse contexts. This focus on practical language use is crucial for building confidence in communication[16]. Moreover, CBE helps students bridge the gap between language theory and practice, allowing them to apply their linguistic knowledge in both academic and professional settings[17].

One of the key features of CBE is its competency-based assessment system, which ensures that students are not just learning for exams but are also developing the ability to use language flexibly and effectively in real-world contexts[18]. Additionally, the use of authentic materials and the design of real-world tasks that reflect the professional demands of the art industry can further enhance engagement. When students see the direct relevance of language learning to their career

aspirations, they are more likely to be motivated to improve their language proficiency[19].

Finally, the CBE model has been successfully implemented in several countries. Research has demonstrated improvements in language competencies within competency-based language programs[7]. In these contexts, students have opportunities to practice language in real-life scenarios, creating connections between theory and practice, and thereby enhancing their communicative abilities.

3.1. Global Trends in CBE for Language Education

Globally, the application of CBE in language education has shown promising results in countries such as the United States, Canada, and Finland. Research indicates that students in these countries have experienced significant improvements in their reading, writing, and speaking skills in English through competency-based programs[7]. The CBE approach is implemented in a learner-centered manner, allowing for flexibility and adaptation in curriculum design to reflect the specific needs of learners.

While the application of CBE in language education has improved learning outcomes, it has also fostered deeper student engagement in the learning process. Research by Jackson et al.[9] shows that CBE helps students develop the ability to use language practically and appropriately in various communication contexts. This leads to increased student participation and motivation in learning, thereby enhancing their academic performance. Moreover, countries such as Australia and New Zealand have actively implemented CBE in their language programs. According to research by Gervais[6], integrating CBE into language education not only equips students with necessary language skills but also better prepares them for the global workforce. This study emphasizes that CBE is not just about knowledge transmission but about developing soft skills essential for today's job market.

A study by Ironsi (2023) explored how VR technology can create immersive learning environments that engage students in real-world communication scenarios, fostering the development of practical language skills. The findings suggest that VR-based learning can increase students' confidence in speaking by providing safe, interactive spaces for practice, which is crucial in language learning[20].

Global trends in CBE for language education are also reflected in national and international education policies. Many international organizations, including UNESCO and OECD, have encouraged member countries to adopt CBE as a means to improve educational quality and meet the needs of the global labor market[21, 22]. This reflects a shift from emphasizing theoretical knowledge to developing practical competencies and adaptability in learners across various contexts.

3.2. Implementation of CBE in Vietnam

Vietnam is undergoing a transition towards CBE in its higher education system, particularly in art universities. This shift is driven by national educational reforms aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of students in the global labor market[23]. CBE in Vietnam emphasizes developing essential competencies for students, including not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills and teamwork capabilities.

Despite efforts to implement CBE, many challenges remain. Research by Nguyễn and Trần[3] indicates that many universities in Vietnam struggle with designing curricula that align with competency frameworks. Current curricula often lean heavily towards theory, lacking sufficient emphasis on developing students' practical skills and communication abilities in international contexts.

Furthermore, Hương and Dương[5] point out that one of the major obstacles in implementing CBE is the lack of training for educators. Many instructors are not adequately equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to apply competency-based teaching methods. This shortfall hinders the full potential of CBE to improve the quality of English language teaching at art universities.

Recently, the Vietnamese government has issued several policies to promote the implementation of CBE in higher education. According to the Ministry of Education and Training[24], universities are encouraged to proactively develop and adjust curricula towards CBE while enhancing collaboration between instructors and industry experts to ensure content aligns with real-world needs.

3.3. CBE in Art Universities

The application of Competency-Based Education (CBE) in art universities has garnered increasing attention

due to its potential to align student learning with the complex demands of the creative industries. Defined as an educational approach where students are encouraged to develop and demonstrate competencies through real-world tasks and specific projects[6], CBE supports a practical, skills-oriented learning environment that extends beyond theoretical knowledge.

The positive impact of CBE within art education has been well-documented. CBE empowers art students not only to produce artistic works but also to cultivate essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving[25]. These competencies are crucial for success in the creative industry, where collaboration and adaptability are valued as much as artistic talent. Moreover, CBE fosters active student engagement, which has been linked to increased motivation and self-confidence in learners[26]. This active participation helps students take ownership of their educational journey, making their learning more meaningful and applicable to professional contexts.

Despite its advantages, implementing CBE in art universities is not without its challenges. A significant barrier lies in the limited experience some instructors have with designing and executing competency-based courses[27]. Many educators may lack comprehensive understanding of effective competency-based assessment methods, which can result in inconsistent application of CBE principles. This inconsistency can create unequal opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate their competencies, potentially hindering the overall effectiveness of CBE.

Further complicating the adoption of CBE, while Vietnamese art universities have made initial steps toward incorporating CBE into their curricula, many programs remain overly focused on theoretical content[28]. This imbalance limits the potential for students to engage in hands-on practice and to apply their knowledge in realistic settings. Addressing this shortfall requires universities to enhance practical learning opportunities. Collaborative projects with arts organizations, for example, could provide students with the chance to apply their competencies in real-world scenarios, bridging the gap between academic learning and industry requirements.

Thus, while CBE presents significant opportunities for enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of art education, successful implementation depends on overcoming certain challenges. Art universities need to invest in faculty training to deepen understanding of competency-based curriculum design and assessment. Additionally, creating partnerships and practical learning projects can ensure that CBE fulfills its promise of producing well-rounded, skilled graduates ready to thrive in the competitive creative industry.

In conclusion, this literature review highlights the significance of CBE as a transformative approach in English language teaching, particularly within art universities in Vietnam. The analysis reveals that CBE plays a crucial role in fostering effective communication skills and practical language use among students, thereby enhancing their readiness for the global job market. This alignment with global educational trends emphasizes the importance of equipping students with competencies that are increasingly sought after in various professional fields. Despite the positive implications of CBE, challenges remain, including the need for appropriate curriculum design and comprehensive faculty training. Successful implementations of CBE in countries such as the United States and Canada demonstrate the potential for improved educational outcomes and student engagement, serving as valuable models for Vietnam. This review underscores the necessity for ongoing research and practical implementations of CBE to optimize educational outcomes. Future studies should focus on identifying specific strategies and adjustments required to address the unique challenges faced in art education, including collaborative projects with industry partners and enhanced faculty development programs. Ultimately, these efforts will contribute to improved English proficiency and the effective application of language skills in real-world contexts. It is crucial for educators, policymakers, and institutions to actively engage in the CBE movement to ensure that students are well-prepared for their future careers in the arts.

4. Material and Methods

To enhance the quality of English language education for students at art universities in Vietnam through a competency-based approach, a questionnaire was administered to 496 individuals from two representative art universities in Vietnam. The surveyed individuals represented various departments, including the Department of Film Art, the Department of Television, the Department of Photog-

raphy, the Department of Theater, the Department of Fine Arts Design, the Department of Dance, the Department of Technical and Technology in Film and Television, as well as the Department of Ethnic Opera at the Hanoi University of Theater and Cinema. Additionally, the National University of Art Education was also involved, including departments such as Graphic Design, Fashion Design, Theater and Film Acting, Music Education, Fine Arts Education, Vocal Music, and Piano.

The study included in-depth interviews with three groups of stakeholders: scholars, managers, and English language instructors. This survey aimed to gather detailed information about the quality of English teaching based on a competency - based approach for students across 15 departments of the two universities. It sought to assess the relevance, clarity, and alignment of the competency-based English curriculum with students' needs, evaluate the resources and tools available for English language instruction, and identify students' learning needs and the obstacles they face in mastering English.

These aspects will identify both quantitative and qualitative factors, and the study will determine the key elements influencing the implementation of the competency-based approach in English language teaching. Consequently, actionable recommendations will be proposed to improve the quality of English language education for students at art universities in Vietnam.

4.1. Sample and Data Collection

The participants of the survey included administrators, lecturers, and students. The survey period spanned from February 2024 to November 2024. A combined total of 527 ballots were distributed to students from 15 departments across two universities: Hanoi University of Theater and Cinema and the National University of Art Education in Vietnam. Of these, 496 valid survey ballots were collected, as shown in **Table 1**. Additionally, the study incorporated 6 in-depth interviews administrators, lecturers while 22 were deemed invalid.

4.2. Variables and Scales

This study, titled "Enhancing the Quality of English Language Education for Students at Art Universities in Viet-

nam through a Competency-Based Approach," investigates the implementation of Competency-Based English Teaching (CBET) specifically designed for art university students. The theoretical framework is grounded in the foundational works of Canale and Swain (1980) and [2], which emphasize the importance of communicative competence and motivation in language learning. To evaluate various aspects of CBET implementation, a structured questionnaire was meticulously crafted to align with the research objectives.

Independent Variables:

The independent variables in this study are categorized into three main groups: institutional factors, instructor-related variables, and student-related variables. Institutional factors include the resources available for English language education, such as facilities, teaching materials, and technological tools. highlights the significance of institutional support in enhancing teaching effectiveness and motivating students. Furthermore, administrative backing from university leadership and ongoing professional development for educators play crucial roles in improving teaching quality, as noted by Canale and Swain (1980) and Jackson et al. (2007)[9, 29].

Instructor-related variables focus on the qualifications and professional experience of English instructors. Research by Naidoo and Jamieson[7] demonstrates that instructor expertise has a direct impact on student learning outcomes. Familiarity with competency-based education (CBE) principles is also essential, as[2] suggests that engagement with CBE practices enhances language instruction effectiveness. Additionally, the availability and quality of professional development opportunities are vital, with Cohen et al. (2007) asserting that continuous professional growth contributes significantly to improved teaching practices.

Student-related variables encompass prior exposure to English education, motivation levels, and adaptability to competency-based learning environments. Previous educational experiences shape students' readiness for new challenges, as supported by Jackson et al.[9]. Motivation, encompassing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, plays a crucial role in language acquisition and performance[2]. Moreover, students' learning styles and their ability to adapt to competency-based environments are essential considerations, emphasizing the need for alignment between teaching methods and students' preferences for optimal educational out-

Table 1. Some characteristics of the survey sample.

Hanoi University of Theater and Cinema	Quantity	Ratio (%)	National University of Art Education	Quantity	Ratio (%)
Total sample	166	100%	Total sample	330	100%
Department of Film Art	32	19.3	Department of Graphic Design	46	13.9
Department of Television	27	16.3	Department of Fashion Design	38	11.5
Department of Photography	28	16.9	Department of Theater and Film Acting	21	6.4
Department of Theater	21	12.7	Department of Music Education	96	29.1
Department of Fine Arts Design	20	12	Department of Fine Arts Education	80	24.2
Department of Dance	13	7.8	Department of Vocal Music& Piano	28	8.5
Department of Technical and Technological Studies in Film	14	8.4	Department of Early Childhood Fine Arts Education	12	3.6
Department of Ethnic Opera	11	6.6	Department of Early Childhood Music Education	9	2.7

Source: Based on the authors' own study/research.

comes.

Dependent Variables:

The dependent variables in this study evaluate the effectiveness of English teaching, focusing on four key areas:The effectiveness of the English curriculum, which measures how well the curriculum aligns with competency-based learning outcomes and its relevance to students' future careers [7]; English proficiency improvement, assessed through measurable advancements in reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, reflecting the success of teaching practices [2]; Student satisfaction, gauged through survey responses to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching methods, as high levels of satisfaction correlate with positive educational experiences [30]; Instructor satisfaction and performance, which examines instructors' perceptions of their effectiveness in delivering competency-based instruction, where higher satisfaction is linked to improved teaching outcomes [9].

4.3. Measurement Scales

All variables in this study are measured using Likert scales, providing a quantitative basis for analysis. The use of "Level (L)" to represent levels in your Likert scale—L1 = 1 (Strongly Disagree), L2 = 2 (Disagree), L3 = 3 (Agree), and L4 = 4 (Strongly Agree)—is an acceptable format for categorizing responses. The 4-point Likert scale, which excludes a neutral option, is effective for gathering clear-cut opinions and encouraging respondents to lean either positively or negatively.

This approach is often chosen to avoid the "safe" neu-tral responses that might obscure true sentiment. By doing so, it can produce more decisive data, which, in turn, simplifies the interpretation of results. Using "L" to label the levels might be particularly useful if you are discussing these scales frequently in your research, as it provides a shorthand for quick reference.

The analysis of the research results is conducted using two methods: calculating frequency (%) and calculating the average score as follows:

$$\text{Average Score} \left(\overline{X}\right) = \frac{\sum(\text{Number of Responses} \times \text{Score Level})}{(N)\text{Total Number of Responses}} \quad \left(\overline{X} = \frac{\sum}{N}\right)$$

5. Research Findings

The survey results in **Table 2** provide a comprehensive overview of the current status of English language teaching quality at art universities in Vietnam, evaluated through a competency-based approach. One positive finding is the expertise and experience of English teachers, which received the highest $\overline{X} = 2.87$. Nearly half of the respondents agreed, and 22.78% strongly agreed, indicating that teacher qualifications are a strong point in the teaching environment. Similarly, the teaching materials were noted as diverse and updated, with $\overline{X} = 2.66$, though there is still room for improvement as approximately 40% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction.

Despite these strengths, several areas require attention. The current English curriculum showed only moderate effectiveness ($\overline{X} = 2.46$), with over half of the respondents (51.81%) disagreeing that it meets students' learning needs. The assessment methods, while also moderately effective with $\overline{X} = 2.41$, need better alignment with competency stan-

Table 2. Current status of English language teaching quality according to the competency-based approach.

Content	Number(N)/ Ratio(%)	Strongly Disagree L1	Disagree L2	Agree L3	Strongly Agree L4	Σ	$\overline{X}$	Rank
The current English curriculum at the school fully meets the learning needs of students	N	40	257	130	69	1220	2.46	3
	%	8.06	51.81	26.21	13.91			
English teachers at the school have sufficient expertise and experience to implement competency-based teaching.	N	41	96	246	113	1423	2.87	1
	%	8.27	19.35	49.60	22.78			
The English teaching materials used at the school are diverse and updated, suitable for the learning content.	N	40	157	230	69	1320	2.66	2
	%	8.06	31.65	46.37	13.91			
The learning environment at the school is conducive and encourages students to actively participate in the English learning process.	N	88	269	120	19	1062	2.14	6
	%	17.74	54.23	24.19	3.83			
Students at the school have the opportunity to practice English through extracurricular activities and real projects.	N	83	266	130	17	1073	2.16	5
	%	16.73	53.63	26.21	3.43			
The assessment methods applied at the school accurately reflect the English proficiency of students.	N	83	196	146	71	1197	2.41	2
	%	16.73	39.52	29.44	14.31			
English lessons at the school focus on developing soft skills necessary for art students.	N	40	257	130	69	1220	2.46	3
	%	8.06	51.81	26.21	13.91			
You feel confident using English in real situations and in the field of art.	N	188	190	90	28	950	1.92	7
	%	37.90	38.31	18.15	5.65			
$\Sigma\overline{X}$							2.34	

Source: Based on the authors' own study/research.

dards, as 39.52% of respondents disagreed on their effectiveness. The learning environment was highlighted as a significant concern, receiving a low $\overline{X} = 2.14$, with 54.23% of respondents stating it does not encourage active participation. Additionally, opportunities for practical English application were perceived as insufficient, with $\overline{X} = 2.16$, reflecting a gap in extracurricular and real-world practice.

The focus on soft skills development also showed moderate results, with $\overline{X} = 2.46$, suggesting that more targeted training could benefit art students' overall skill set. Most notably, confidence in using English in real-life and professional situations was ranked the lowest, at $\overline{X} = 1.92$. A significant number of respondents (37.90% strongly disagreed and 38.31% disagreed) expressed low confidence, underscoring the need for measures to boost self-assurance and practical language use.

In summary, while teacher expertise and teaching materials stand out as strengths, significant improvements are needed in areas such as curriculum design, learning environments, practical application opportunities, and competency-aligned assessments. Addressing these challenges is essential for elevating the quality of English language education and ensuring that students at art universities in Vietnam can achieve the necessary competencies for both academic and career success.

Table 3 presents survey data on the effectiveness of competency-based English courses at art universities in Vietnam. The highest-rated item is that students have opportunities to apply their English knowledge in real-life situations and projects in the field of art, with $\overline{X} = 2.66$ and a rank of 1. This suggests a positive perception of practical applications within the curriculum, which is essential for art students who benefit from experiential learning. In contrast, the statement regarding the effectiveness of competency-based approaches in the English curriculum received $\overline{X} = 2.42$, ranking 2nd. While this is relatively favorable, it indicates that there is still

Table 3. Current status of the effectiveness of implementing competency-based english courses at art universities in Vietnam.

Content	Number(N)/ Ratio(%)	Strongly Disagree L1	Disagree L2	Agree L3	Strongly Agree L4	Σ	$\overline{X}$	Rank
Competency-based approaches have been effectively applied in the English teaching curriculum at my university.	N	97	161	170	68	1201	2.42	2
	%	19.56	32.46	34.27	13.71			
The learning objectives in the English course are clearly defined and aligned with the competency framework.	N	79	178	211	28	1180	2.38	3
	%	15.93	35.89	42.54	5.65			
Students are encouraged to participate in the learning process and assess their own competencies	N	89	299	68	40	1051	2.12	4
	%	17.94	60.28	13.71	8.06			
The learning activities in the English course are appropriate to the needs and real-life context of art students.	N	199	200	76	21	911	1.84	5
	%	40.12	40.32	15.32	4.23			
Lecturers use diverse and flexible teaching methods to meet the needs of individual students.	N	189	225	57	25	910	1.83	6
	%	38.10	45.36	11.49	5.04			
Students have opportunities to apply their English knowledge in real-life situations and projects in the field of art.	N	40	157	230	69	1320	2.66	1
	%	8.06	31.65	46.37	13.91			
The competency assessment methods in the English course at my university are fair and effective.	N	195	207	74	20	911	1.84	5
	%	39.31	41.73	14.92	4.03			
	$\Sigma\overline{X}$						2.22	

Source: Based on the authors' own study/research.

room for improvement in fully integrating competency-based approaches across the curriculum.

The clarity of learning objectives being clearly defined and aligned with the competency framework received $\overline{X}$ = 2.38 and ranked 3rd. This reflects a reasonable level of clarity; however, enhancing communication of these objectives could help further align student expectations with the curriculum goals. The survey reveals that students are encouraged to participate in the learning process and assess their own competencies, but this area ranked lower ($\overline{X}$ = 2.12, rank 4). The high percentage of respondents who disagreed (60.28%) points to a significant gap in student engagement strategies and suggests a need for institutions to foster a more participatory learning environment.

The appropriateness of learning activities to the needs and real-life context of art students received $\overline{X}$ = 1.84 (rank 5). This indicates that while there is some relevance, many students feel that the activities do not adequately meet their needs, which could negatively impact their motivation and learning outcomes. The diversity and flexibility of teaching

methods scored $\overline{X}$ = 1.83 (rank 6), indicating that lecturers may not be fully utilizing varied instructional strategies to cater to individual student needs. This limitation can hinder effective learning, particularly in an art education context where creativity and adaptability are vital. Finally, the competency assessment methods scored $\overline{X}$ = 1.84, with a significant portion of respondents expressing disagreement about their fairness and effectiveness. This concern highlights the need for more robust assessment practices that accurately measure student competencies and provide constructive feedback.

Overall, $\Sigma\overline{X}$ = 2.22 suggests that while there are strengths in the implementation of competency-based English courses, several areas require significant attention. To address these weaknesses, art universities in Vietnam should enhance student engagement through interactive learning strategies, revise learning activities to better align with students' needs, diversify teaching methods to cater to different learning styles, and improve assessment practices to ensure fairness and effectiveness. By focusing on these areas, art

universities can improve the quality and effectiveness of their English language education, ultimately better preparing students for both academic success and professional careers.

Table 4 provides a detailed examination of students' perceptions regarding the opportunities and challenges in enhancing English language teaching through competency-based approaches at art universities in Vietnam. The responses categorize varying degrees of agreement, revealing key insights into the current landscape of English instruction and areas needing improvement. A notable challenge identified is the difficulty students face in grasping the competency framework utilized in their English courses, reflected in $\overline{X}$ = 2.02. With 33.87% of students strongly disagreeing and 37.90% disagreeing with their understanding, it is evident that there is a significant communication gap regarding the framework. This finding suggests an urgent need for institutions to implement clearer guidelines and training to enhance student comprehension of the competency-based approach.

Regarding the adequacy of resources, $\overline{X}$ = 2.06 indicates that perceptions are somewhat divided. Although some students acknowledge the presence of resources, 31.25% strongly disagree and 38.31% disagree that these resources are sufficient to support effective competency-based teaching. This implies that while resources may exist, their quality and effectiveness may not meet the demands of competency-based approaches, necessitating a reassessment of resource allocation. The need for enhanced training for lecturers is underscored by $\overline{X}$ = 1.97, with a considerable 35.28% strongly disagreeing and 39.31% disagreeing regarding lecturers' preparedness to implement these approaches effectively. This finding highlights a critical demand for professional development programs designed to equip educators with the skills and knowledge required for successful competency-based instruction.

The analysis reveals a significant gap in innovative teaching strategies, with $\overline{X}$ = 2.22. Nearly 48.59% of respondents disagree regarding the availability of creative teaching methods, indicating that a lack of innovation may hinder student engagement and learning outcomes. The introduction of more creative pedagogical practices could potentially enhance the learning experience and cater to diverse learning styles. On a more positive note, students largely believe in the potential benefits of collaboration with artistic organizations, indicated by $\overline{X}$ = 2.49. With 27.42% agreeing and

18.15% strongly agreeing that such partnerships could improve English teaching quality, there is a clear opportunity to enrich the curriculum through practical experiences and external expertise. The need for course adjustments to better meet students' artistic needs is emphasized by the highest $\overline{X}$ = 2.62. The substantial agreement (33.87% agreeing and 18.15% strongly agreeing) suggests that aligning course content with students' specific disciplines and career aspirations is essential for relevance and effectiveness.

While 40.52% of students agree that opportunities for practical projects exist, $\overline{X}$ = 2.42 suggests that these opportunities may not be fully realized or widely available. Expanding such initiatives could greatly enhance the practical application of English language skills. Finally, the overall optimism regarding the potential for improving English teaching quality is reflected in $\overline{X}$ = 2.32, where 33.87% of students express agreement. This positive outlook can serve as a catalyst for initiating improvement efforts within the educational framework.

In conclusion, addressing the identified challenges is crucial for enhancing English language teaching quality at art universities in Vietnam. The development of comprehensive training programs for lecturers, improved resource allocation, and curriculum reforms aligned with student needs are necessary steps forward. Additionally, fostering creative pedagogies and expanding practical opportunities can significantly enrich the educational landscape. By leveraging existing opportunities while tackling these challenges head-on, art universities can not only improve their English teaching quality but also better prepare students for successful careers in the arts, equipping them with the essential language skills needed in a global context.

6. Discussion and Analysis

The quality of English language education at art universities in Vietnam is critical for preparing students to meet global communication demands in artistic fields. Analysis of **Tables 2–4** offers insights into the current status, effectiveness, and opportunities for improvement in English teaching through a competency-based approach.

Current Status (**Table 2**): Students' satisfaction with teaching methods, course materials, and the learning environment varies, with notable dissatisfaction or neutrality indicat-

Table 4. Opportunities and challenges in improving the quality of english teaching according to competency-based approaches at art universities in Vietnam.

Content	Number(N)/ Ratio(%)	Strongly Disagree L1	Disagree L2	Agree L3	Strongly Agree L4	Σ	$\overline{X}$	Rank
I have difficulty understanding the competency framework when participating in the English course.	N	168	188	102	38	1002	2.02	7
	%	33.87	37.90	20.56	7.66			
There are sufficient resources and facilities to support teaching English according to competency-based approaches.	N	155	190	117	34	1022	2.06	6
	%	31.25	38.31	23.59	6.85			
I feel that lecturers need more training to effectively implement competency-based approaches in English teaching.	N	175	195	90	36	979	1.97	8
	%	35.28	39.31	18.15	7.26			
There is a lack of creative teaching methods applied in the English course.	N	95	241	116	44	1101	2.22	5
	%	19.15	48.59	23.39	8.87			
I believe that collaborating with artistic organizations could improve the quality of English teaching.	N	75	195	136	90	1233	2.49	2
	%	15.12	39.31	27.42	18.15			
English courses should be adjusted to better meet the needs of students in the field of art.	N	39	199	168	90	1301	2.62	1
	%	7.86	40.12	33.87	18.15			
I have opportunities to participate in practical projects that help enhance my English skills.	N	69	188	201	38	1200	2.42	3
	%	13.91	37.90	40.52	7.66			
I believe there are many opportunities to improve the quality of English teaching at my art university.	N	89	199	168	40	1151	2.32	4
	%	17.94	40.12	33.87	8.06			
$\Sigma\overline{X}$							2.5	

Source: Based on the authors' own study/research.

ing room for improvement. Aligning teaching methods with student needs and incorporating interactive, student-centered approaches can enhance engagement. Additionally, updating course materials to reflect modern trends in both English and the arts is crucial for practical application.

Effectiveness (**Table 3**): While some competency-based courses show promise, challenges such as inconsistent teaching quality, limited resources, and misaligned curricula with industry needs hinder effectiveness. Addressing these issues requires professional development for instructors, sufficient teaching materials, and diverse assessment methods that accurately capture students' competencies.

Opportunities and Challenges (**Table 4**): Collaboration with artistic organizations presents valuable opportunities for experiential learning, making courses more relevant and engaging. However, barriers such as unclear communication about competency-based frameworks and inadequate resources need urgent attention. Institutions must clarify

goals and invest in resources to overcome these challenges.

To understand the issues for Enhancing the quality of English language education for students at art universities in Vietnam through a competency-based approach, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with managers and English language instructors. The results of the interviews are as follows: 1) How do you assess the current quality of English language teaching at the university, particularly regarding the application of a competency-based approach? What are the notable strengths and weaknesses?

Instructor A emphasized that the current curriculum has initially adopted the competency-based approach, helping students improve their communication and teamwork skills. She noted: "Some activities, such as project presentations and case-based exercises, have proven effective in enhancing students' practical English skills." However, she also pointed out that the curriculum content has not been adjusted to align with the needs of the arts field, making it challenging for

students to learn specialized vocabulary and terminology. Instructor L appreciated the opportunities students gain through highly practical activities, such as English-language workshops or practicing communication with international lecturers. She shared: "These activities help students become more confident in using English in real-world contexts." Nonetheless, she observed that the current assessment system does not clearly reflect competency-based criteria, as tests still focus heavily on grammatical knowledge rather than the practical application of English.Instructor T highlighted that instructors have been trained in modern teaching methods, such as project-based learning. He said: "This method enables students to practice skills in real-world scenarios, thereby improving their communication competencies." However, he also stressed a significant challenge: the lack of teaching materials tailored to English for the arts, which limits students' ability to learn and be creative.Manager H shared his perspective from an administrative standpoint: "The university has recognized the importance of the competency-based approach and is gradually investing in improving the quality of English teaching." However, she candidly pointed out that the implementation has been inconsistent and lacks a clear strategy. she explained: "Some instructors are not sufficiently equipped with the knowledge and skills for teaching using the competency-based approach, leading to significant variations in teaching effectiveness across classes." Manager D added that the university has made notable efforts to integrate technology into teaching, providing students with access to abundant online resources. He remarked: "This is a highlight in the effort to improve the quality of English teaching." However, he also emphasized that the current infrastructure does not meet the demand, citing issues such as a lack of modern classrooms and interactive teaching tools;

2) How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the current English courses at the university in developing the language competencies of art students? What factors do you think need improvement?

Instructor A believes that the current English courses have contributed to the development of basic communication skills for students. She shared: "The lessons on grammar and everyday communication have helped students become more confident in everyday situations." However, she noted that the program still lacks a focus on specialized English for the arts, which makes it difficult for students to use English in

specific artistic fields.Instructor L mentioned that the courses have begun to provide students with exposure to specialized English through some lectures related to artistic terminology. However, she commented: "The teaching materials have not been thoroughly developed and lack practical application, especially in fields such as painting, music, and design." Manager H agreed that the current courses have had a positive impact but pointed out that the effectiveness is uneven across different classes. She stated: "Some classes perform well thanks to experienced instructors and effective teaching methods, but others fail to meet expectations because the instructors lack deep expertise in specialized English for the arts." Manager D added that the integration of technology into teaching has brought some improvements in students' learning outcomes, such as using vocabulary learning software and online exercises. However, he emphasized: "The combination of technology and the competency-based approach has not been fully effective due to the lack of clear guidance and appropriate supporting materials.";

3) In your opinion, what are the biggest opportunities and challenges in enhancing the quality of English teaching through a competency-based approach at the university? What feasible solutions do you propose to overcome these challenges?

Instructor A noted: "The greatest opportunity is the strong support from the government's educational reform policies, especially the emphasis on developing language skills for students in the context of international integration." However, she also pointed out: "The main challenge is that art students often pay little attention to English because they view it as a secondary subject, unrelated to their artistic specialization." The solution she suggested is to design courses that integrate specialized English with art practice, to spark students' interest in learning. Instructor L shared: "The increased international collaboration between art universities presents an opportunity for students to be exposed to real-world English environments." However, he emphasized: "The current resources, especially the faculty with expertise in specialized English for the arts, are very limited." A feasible solution would be to organize intensive training courses for instructors or collaborate with international experts to enhance teaching quality.

Instructor T highlighted: "The application of technology in teaching is a great opportunity, especially online plat-

forms that allow students to access materials and lectures flexibly." However, he noted: "The lack of specialized English teaching materials tailored to the arts is still a major challenge." He proposed the solution of developing or translating specialized English materials that meet the learning needs of art students.

Manager H observed: "A major opportunity is that more and more students are becoming aware of the importance of English in their international careers, particularly in showcasing their artworks to the world." However, she also pointed out: "The shift to a competency-based approach requires a significant change in teaching and assessment methods, while the supporting infrastructure is not yet uniform." The feasible solution he proposed is to create a specific implementation roadmap, including upgrading facilities and organizing in-depth training sessions for instructors.

Manager D added: "Art universities have a great opportunity when collaborating with international organizations, not only to improve the quality of training but also to provide students with real-world English experiences." However, he observed: "One of the challenges is the lack of alignment between the program objectives and the expectations of the international job market." He suggested organizing workshops or international conferences to update teaching trends and more clearly define the competencies needed for students in the context of globalization.

Thus, from the results of surveys in **Tables 2–4**, and the interview findings, it is evident that the quality of English teaching at art universities is showing certain improvements, but there is still a lack of consistency across different classes and instructors. Both instructors and administrators agree that the competency-based approach is not yet fully effective, particularly due to the lack of specialized teaching materials and insufficient investment in teacher training. Additionally, there are significant opportunities from educational policies and international collaborations, but upgrading infrastructure and teaching methods is necessary to meet the learning needs of art students.

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