

Research on the Training Plan for Professional Competence of Tourism English Majors under the Background of the Construction of Hainan Free Trade Port

Cheng Huang*

*Foreign Language Teaching Department, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology,
Haikou, Hainan, 571126, China*

**Corresponding Author*

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Abstract: The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port has set new requirements for the professional abilities of tourism English major students. This study constructs a three-level standard system of basic ability, core ability, and extended ability, examines the current training situation of Hainan universities, diagnoses the gap between the training and the ability standards, and analyzes the key factors that restrict the training effectiveness. Based on the concept of ability-oriented education, the research designs a career ability training plan from four dimensions: hierarchical positioning of training goals, systematic integration of course modules, hierarchical advancement of the practice system, and multi-dimensional construction of the evaluation mechanism. The aim of this study is to provide theoretical basis and practical guidance for the teaching reform of tourism English major, and to cultivate high-quality tourism English talents who are "proficient in language, familiar with culture, and skilled in service".

1. Introduction

The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port adheres to the strategic positioning of "three zones and one center". The establishment of an international tourism consumption center has imposed unprecedented capability requirements on tourism English professionals [1]. The outcome of the major national language commission project "Research on Language Services in Hainan Free Trade Port" reveals that there is a significant language service demand gap in key areas such as tourism consumption in Hainan, and the English service level has become a key factor affecting the international tourists' experience. By examining the current situation of tourism English professional talent cultivation in Hainan universities, although each institution has formed its own distinctive exploration paths, there is still an adaptation gap between talent cultivation and industry demands. The students' general English communication skills have basically met the standards, but they need to improve their specialized English expression in specific scenarios, adaptability in cross-cultural communication, and international interpretation of local culture. The constraints

involve multiple dimensions such as training goals, course settings, practical platforms, and evaluation mechanisms. Based on the concept of competence-oriented education, systematically designing a vocational ability training plan has become an urgent topic to respond to the needs of the Free Trade Port construction [2, 3].

Based on this, this research is titled "Research on the Vocational Ability Training Plan for Tourism English Students under the Background of Hainan Free Trade Port Construction", and it conducts a systematic study following the logical framework of "competence composition - current situation diagnosis - plan design". The article starts with the definition of vocational ability, examines the core demands for English talents in the tourism industry of the Free Trade Port, and constructs a three-level ability standard system; it further examines the current situation of vocational ability training in tourism English majors in Hainan universities, diagnoses the gap between it and the ability standards, and analyzes the key factors that constrain the training effectiveness; then, based on the concept of competence-oriented education, systematically designs the vocational ability training plan from four dimensions: training goals, course modules, practical system, and evaluation mechanism. The research aims to provide theoretical basis and practical guidance for the teaching reform of tourism English majors in Hainan universities and to cultivate more high-quality tourism English talents who are "proficient in language, familiar with culture, and skilled in service" for the construction of the international tourism consumption center of the Free Trade Port.

2. The determination of professional competence composition and standards for tourism English major students in free trade ports

2.1 Definition of professional competence and theoretical perspective

Professional competence is a core concept in vocational education. The definition of its connotation directly affects the goal positioning and path selection of talent cultivation. By drawing on the "professional action ability" theory in German vocational education research, professional competence can be decomposed into three dimensions: professional ability, method ability, and social ability. Professional ability refers to the knowledge and skills required for a specific occupation; method ability refers to the processive abilities of analyzing problems, formulating plans, and evaluating results; social ability refers to the interpersonal abilities such as communication, collaboration, conflict resolution, and responsibility assumption. For the tourism English major, this framework needs to be localized based on language acquisition theory. Language-related professional competence has special characteristics different from general vocational skills. It not only requires explicit language skill operations but also implicit cross-cultural communication schemas and situational response wisdom [4]. The constructivist learning theory and ability-based education theory have significant guiding roles in this research. The former emphasizes the construction of knowledge in real situations, while the latter advocates using vocational ability as the goal orientation for training. The curriculum content selection model based on work process orientation emphasizes the integrated cultivation of professional ability, method ability, and social ability, providing a methodological basis for the determination of professional competence standards. Zhejiang Tourism College adopts the mechanism of "three integration and three promotion" to cultivate international tourism and cultural talents with "thick literacy, proficient language, understanding of culture, knowledge of tourism, expertise in service, and ability to innovate". This conceptual framework is highly consistent with the construction requirements of Hainan Free Trade Port and provides a useful reference for the theoretical construction of professional competence composition [5].

2.2 Core Demands of the Tourism Industry in Free Trade Zones for the Professional Competencies of English Majors

The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Zone is based on the strategic positioning of "three zones and one center". The establishment of an international tourism consumption center has put forward multiple-dimensional demands for the professional competencies of tourism English majors. The research results of the major project "Research on Language Services in Hainan Free Trade Zone" by the National Language Commission show that there are significant differences in multilingual service demands in key areas such as tourism consumption in the Hainan Free Trade Zone. This precisely identifies the talent gap in English and languages of ASEAN countries. The research focuses on key positions such as hotel reception, scenic spot interpretation, foreign-related services of travel agencies, exhibition operation, and duty-free shopping services, and uses the method of position capability group analysis to extract the common requirements and individual characteristics of each position for professional competencies. From the perspective of job tasks, the hotel front desk needs to proficiently complete foreign-related services such as reservation confirmation, check-in processing, and complaint handling; scenic spot interpreters need to accurately explain the historical and cultural connotations of the scenic spots and be able to flexibly respond to various inquiries from tourists; foreign-related tour guides of travel agencies not only need to be familiar with the itinerary arrangements but also possess cross-cultural communication skills and the ability to respond to emergencies; the exhibition operation position has higher requirements for business English letter writing and international conference reception skills. The "Entry Tourist Satisfaction Survey" conducted by the Tourism Development Bureau of Sanya City indicates that the level of English service is a key factor affecting the experience of international tourists, and the professional competencies in situations such as complaint handling, cultural explanation, and emergency response are particularly crucial. With the continuous growth of the inbound flow of foreign personnel after the closure of the border, the demand for the service capabilities of tourism English talents in emerging fields such as cross-border medical tourism and international study tours has become increasingly prominent, which puts forward dynamic evolution requirements for professional competencies [6].

2.3 Hierarchical Construction of Professional Competence Standards for Tourism English Majors

Based on the aforementioned theoretical review and analysis of industry demands, a hierarchical standard system for the professional competence of tourism English majors can be constructed. Drawing on the research ideas of the "Chinese English Proficiency Scale", the professional competence is divided into three levels: basic ability, core ability, and extended ability. The basic ability covers general English communication skills, basic tourism service etiquette, and basic job operation norms. These are the bottom-line requirements that all students must achieve; the core ability includes tourism-specific English ability, cross-cultural communication ability, and tourism service process integration ability, which are the main requirements that most students should strive to achieve; the extended ability involves emergency handling ability, cultural tourism product design ability, and digital service ability, which are the development requirements that outstanding students can pursue [7]. Core ability indicators include: being able to give an English explanation of the cultural content of a scenic spot for more than 30 minutes, being able to properly handle tourist complaints and emergencies, and being able to design basic inbound tourism reception plans, etc.; extended ability indicators include: being able to develop bilingual cultural tourism products, being able to enhance service efficiency by using AI tools, and being able to participate in the planning and execution of international exhibitions, etc. The research of Shenyang Normal University

indicates that the current tourism English course content mainly focuses on English language learning, but lacks the inclusion of the professional, methodological, and social abilities that students must master in tourism work in the learning content. This highlights the urgency of constructing the competence standards. The ability indicator system based on the work process orientation helps students acquire the knowledge and abilities they truly need in future tourism work. The hierarchical construction of competence standards provides a scientific basis for the differentiated design of subsequent training programs and points out the advanced path for the formation and development of students' professional abilities.

3. Diagnosis of the Current Situation and Problems in the Professional Competence Development of Tourism English Majors

3.1 Investigation of the Practice of Professional Competence Development in Tourism English Programs in Universities in Hainan Province

A systematic investigation was conducted on universities in Hainan Province that offer tourism English and related programs. It was found that each institution has carried out distinctive practical explorations in the field of professional competence development. The curriculum reform of "Tourism English" at Sanya University was centered on "product thinking". The teaching team conducted in-depth field research in local tourism enterprises and rural homestays, and integrated real work scenarios into the course content by shooting teaching videos, conducting interviews with practitioners, and compiling "Tourism English Manual" and "Tourism English Manual for Bohuo Village Homestays". This approach combined language skills with industry requirements. The school also deeply integrated the Xinyue Mi Xian Education Platform of Jili Talent Development Group to build an online and offline blended teaching model. Students received personalized learning plans and precise learning resource recommendations through the AI intelligent system.

The cumulative number of students enrolled in the "Tourism English" MOOC course at Hainan Normal University has been continuously increasing. The course effectively combines guided tour explanations and English practical application, inspiring students to master language communication skills and English thinking patterns through practical cases. The course content covers topics such as Chinese culture, world heritage, and red tourism. The International Tourism College of Hainan Foreign Language Vocational College has established a "Tourism + Foreign Language + Artificial Intelligence" integrated talent cultivation model, offering majors such as Tourism Management, Hotel Management and Digital Operations, International Tour Guide, and Tourism English. It collaborates with Hainan Tropical Marine University to jointly cultivate a 4+0 undergraduate program, focusing on cultivating "pin-type" high-skilled tourism talents with a global perspective. The college has deepened cooperation with nearly 100 enterprises, and teachers and students have won 79 awards in various national and provincial competitions, including 22 national awards and 57 provincial awards. The case of course ideological and political education has been selected as a national excellent case. Students continuously participate in volunteer services for major events such as the Boao Asian Forum, China International Consumer Goods Expo, and Wenchang International Aerospace Forum, honing their professional skills in real scenarios.

3.2 Diagnosis of the Gap in Training Effectiveness Based on Competency Standards

By systematically comparing the occupational ability classification standards established in the first chapter with the current training situation, it can be observed that there are multiple-dimensional gaps between the students' training effectiveness and the target standards. At the basic ability level, students' general English communication skills can basically meet the entry

requirements for the position, but the "Entry Tourist Satisfaction Survey" conducted by the Tourism Development Bureau of Sanya City indicates that the English service level remains a key factor affecting the experience of international tourists, and the response capabilities in situations such as complaint handling and cultural interpretation still need to be improved. At the core ability level, students' proficiency in tourism-specific English varies, and the flexibility and appropriateness of cross-cultural communication need to be strengthened. The research results of the major project "Language Service Research for Hainan Free Trade Port" show that there is a significant language service demand gap in tourism consumption and other key areas in Hainan, and the supply and demand of English and language of ASEAN countries have not yet achieved effective matching.

At the expansion ability level, the coverage of students who can reach this level is limited. The teachers and students of Hainan Foreign Language Vocational College have won 22 national awards, and these competition results reflect the relatively high level of some students' ability training from a certain perspective. However, most students are still at the initial stage of mastering basic and core abilities. The training practice of the Boao Asia Forum and the volunteer interpretation team in the United States shows that volunteer interpreters not only need to play the role of a tour guide but also need to have an understanding of the basic policies and achievements of rural revitalization, and tell Chinese cultural stories from an angle and in a way that foreign guests can accept. This puts forward higher requirements for students' comprehensive literacy. Some research indicates that the current tourism English course content mainly focuses on English language learning and lacks the inclusion of the professional, methodological and social abilities that students must master in their work. Through multi-dimensional and multi-level gap diagnosis, it can be seen that students' occupational abilities have room for improvement in terms of systematicness and depth, especially in aspects such as the ability to transform local cultural resources into international expressions, the ability to respond to emergencies, and the ability to provide services using digital tools, where the shortcomings are particularly prominent.

3.3 Analysis of Constraints on the Design of Professional Competence Training Programs

From the five dimensions of training objectives, curriculum design, teaching implementation, practical platforms, and evaluation mechanisms, this section systematically analyzes the key factors that constrain the effectiveness of professional competence training programs. At the training objective level, there are differences in the clarity and operability of the expression of professional abilities in the talent training plans of various institutions, and the degree of alignment between the goals and industry demands needs to be further deepened. The language service industry development model proposed by the major project of the National Language Commission, which combines government guidance, market dominance, and university support, provides a macro-level guidance for the precise positioning of training goals, but the goal transformation at the institutional level still needs to be strengthened.

At the curriculum design level, the proportion relationship of public basic courses, professional core courses, and practical teaching links needs to be optimized, and the rationality of the configuration of specialized English courses, cross-cultural courses, and local culture courses needs to be improved. Teacher Li Zi from Sanya University pointed out in the reflection on the "Travel Industry Translation Practice" course that the teaching content did not well combine with the local tourism resources of Hainan, did not adopt advanced translation teaching software and platforms in line with the times, and did not establish a student translation corpus. This reflection revealed the problems of insufficient integration of local culture and lagging technology application. At the teaching implementation level, the coverage and implementation depth of project-based teaching, situational teaching, and digital teaching vary, and the understanding degree of the ability training

concept by teachers and their teaching transformation ability are the key variables affecting the training effectiveness. Some research has proposed that further cultivation of teachers' comprehensive teaching abilities and reform of the teaching methods of tourism English teachers are needed.

At the practical platform level, the simulation degree of the on-campus training bases and the participation depth of the off-campus internship bases are the key factors restricting the practical teaching effect. At the evaluation mechanism level, the existing assessment methods have insufficient coverage of the three-level ability standards, the introduction of industry evaluation and vocational certification is not sufficient, and the dynamic tracking mechanism for ability development has not been established. Some research has pointed out that one should correctly handle the attitude towards examinations, reform the traditional assessment methods, combine formative evaluation and summative evaluation, and make the evaluation truly serve the development of students' abilities. Through the analysis of multiple factors, this section clarifies the reform focus and breakthrough direction for the subsequent optimization of the training program.

4. Design of the Professional Competence Training Program for Tourism English Majors Based on Competency Orientation

4.1 Hierarchical Positioning of Training Objectives and Detailed Decomposition of Competency Indicators

Based on the educational concept of competency orientation, the training objectives for professional competence of the tourism English major should be hierarchically positioned according to the three-level competency standards established in Chapter One. The basic competency goals are the minimum requirements that all students must achieve, ensuring that students have the basic qualifications for entering the tourism industry for internships and employment, covering general English communication skills at the entry-level of the position, tourism service etiquette norms, and proficient mastery of basic operation procedures. The core competency goals are the main requirements that most students should strive to achieve, cultivating students' comprehensive abilities to perform core job tasks, including the flexible application of tourism-specific English, the appropriateness of cross-cultural communication, and the systematic integration of service processes. The expansion competency goals are the development requirements that outstanding students can pursue, laying the foundation for industry leaders and innovative talents, involving emergency handling of sudden incidents, cultural tourism product design, and digital service innovation, etc. at higher levels.

Based on the hierarchical positioning of the objectives, the three-level competency standards are further decomposed into measurable and evaluable specific competency indicators. The basic competency indicators include: being able to accurately complete English conversations for hotel check-in registration, being able to standardly conduct gesture and language guidance in scenic spots, and being able to understand the accents of common foreign tourists. The core competency indicators include: being able to conduct English explanations of 30 minutes or more of scenic spot culture, being able to properly handle tourist complaints and sudden situations, and being able to design basic inbound tourism reception plans. The expansion competency indicators include: being able to develop bilingual cultural tourism products, being able to enhance service efficiency by using AI tools, and being able to participate in the planning and execution of international exhibitions and events.

4.2 System Integration of Course Modules and Scenario-Based Reconstruction of Teaching Content

Centered on the cultivation of professional abilities, the "language + culture + tourism" three types of course modules are systematically integrated to achieve a fundamental transformation of the course system from a knowledge-based logic to an ability-based logic. The language ability module strengthens the training of basic skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, but the training content shifts from general topics to tourism work scenarios. Drawing on the experience of students at Sanya University who used AI technology to extract frequent vocabulary and core sentence patterns in tourism English, an industry English resource library based on real materials is constructed. The cultural literacy module systematically integrates local cultural content of Hainan. Drawing on the experience of Sanya University in compiling the "Tourism English Manual" for Bohou Village, bilingual teaching resources on topics such as Li ethnic weaving, the March 3rd festival celebration, Dongpo Academy, and the Red Women's Army are developed to enable students to enhance cross-cultural communication skills in a cultural immersion environment. The tourism professional module is aligned with industry frontiers, developing specialized English courses around new business models such as customized tourism, study tours, smart tourism, and cross-border medical tourism.

The organization of teaching content adopts a scenario-based reconstruction strategy, integrating relevant knowledge and skills based on typical work tasks. Referencing the immersive tour guide training simulation test in Sanya City, typical work scenarios such as hotel check-in, site explanation, complaint handling, and emergency response are designed. Each scenario integrates the required language knowledge, cultural knowledge, service skills, and response strategies. Research indicates that the selection of course content based on the work process should also take into account the integrated cultivation of professional abilities, method abilities, and social abilities, closely aligning the learning content with the actual knowledge and abilities required in future work. The ultimate goal of the integration of course modules and content reconstruction is to enable students to simultaneously enhance their language application ability, cultural understanding depth, and professional service level during the completion of typical work tasks.

4.3 Hierarchical Design and Progressive Arrangement of the Practical Teaching System

A four-level progressive practical teaching system, namely "Cognitive Internship - Simulation Training - On-the-job Practice - Internship in Actual Position", has been established. This system enables students to gradually develop comprehensive professional abilities through a progressive practice process. The cognitive internship is arranged in the first academic year, where students are organized to visit and investigate tourism enterprises, establishing a sensory understanding of the industry and positions. The practice of surveying local tourism enterprises and rural homestays by students of Sanya College can be used as a reference. First-hand industry materials can be accumulated through the filming of teaching videos and interviews with practitioners.

The simulation training is arranged in the second and third academic years, relying on the school's simulation training platform for systematic skill training. The "Three Orientations and One Base" model of Hainan Economic and Trade Vocational College integrates three training orientations - full-time teachers, entrepreneurship mentors, and enterprise masters - through a professional studio platform, providing an innovative path for simulation training. On-the-job practice is arranged in the summer vacation of the third academic year or the first semester of the fourth academic year, where students enter the cooperative enterprises for a 2-3 month on-the-job training, applying what they have learned, identifying problems, and accumulating experience. Internship in actual positions is arranged in the second semester of the fourth academic year, where

students undertake actual work tasks as probationary employees, honing their comprehensive abilities in a completely real environment. The on-the-job practice system enables students to establish interest through cognition, master skills through simulation, identify problems through practice, and enhance abilities through practice, forming a spiral growth trajectory.

4.4 Multi-dimensional Construction and Dynamic Feedback of Evaluation Mechanism

Establish a multi-dimensional evaluation mechanism that combines "process evaluation, result evaluation, and added value evaluation", to achieve the tracking and dynamic feedback of students' career ability development throughout the process. The process evaluation focuses on students' performance in course learning, simulation training, and project practice, using methods such as observation records, work reviews, and peer evaluations. The process performance of students in designing campus tour routes and shooting bilingual promotional videos can be used as evaluation criteria. Teachers provide targeted feedback from dimensions such as language expression, cultural interpretation, and creative design.

The result evaluation connects with industry standards and vocational certifications, introducing external evaluations such as tour guide qualification certificates, tourism consultant certificates, and hotel English level certificates, and converting enterprise employment standards into internal assessment indicators. The "Travel Industry Translation Practice" course at Sanya University helps students obtain tour guide certificates and other vocational qualification certificates, achieving an organic connection between course learning and vocational certification. The added value evaluation focuses on the increment of students' ability development, comparing the changes in ability before and after entry, during stages, and after graduation, to motivate students to continuously improve on the basis of their original performance. Teachers and students from Hainan Foreign Language Vocational College have won 79 awards in various national and provincial competitions, and the competition results can be included in the evaluation system, achieving "competition-driven evaluation and training practice".

The evaluation subjects expand from a single teacher to enterprise mentors, industry experts, and service recipients, forming a multi-party evaluation network. The university should establish a tracking mechanism for the employment quality of graduates, regularly collecting feedback from employers and development data of graduates, and using external evaluation results as the basis for continuous improvement of the training plan. Research has pointed out that it is necessary to reform the traditional assessment methods and combine formative evaluation with summative evaluation to truly serve the development of students' abilities. Through the dynamic feedback of multi-dimensional evaluation, a closed-loop optimization mechanism of "training - evaluation - feedback - improvement" is formed, ensuring that the vocational ability training plan always resonates with the development of the tourism industry in the Free Trade Port, and providing more high-quality tourism English talents with "understanding languages, mastering cultures, and proficient in services" for the construction of the International Tourism Consumption Center.

5. Conclusion

This study systematically designed a career ability training plan for tourism English major based on competency-oriented approach. The research holds that the key to solving the problem of matching talent cultivation with industry demands lies in: stratifying the training objectives according to three levels of competency standards, integrating course content based on typical work tasks, constructing a four-level progressive practical system of "cognitive internship - simulation training - on-the-job internship - on-the-job practice", and establishing a multi-dimensional evaluation mechanism of "process evaluation + result evaluation + added value evaluation". Future

research can further explore the reshaping effect of artificial intelligence technology on career ability training, as well as the collaborative path for cultivating comprehensive language skills in ASEAN countries, to provide more solid talent support for the construction of the international tourism consumption center of the Free Trade Port.

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