

A Study on the Content Reconstruction of the Vocational College English Curriculum Based on the Demands of the Cultural Tourism Industry in Langzhong Ancient City

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Abstract: As the integration of culture and tourism advances, Langzhong Ancient City, with its profound historical and cultural heritage, faces an increasingly urgent demand for high-quality, interdisciplinary cultural tourism talents. However, a noticeable disconnect exists between the content of vocational college English curriculum and the actual needs of the industry. This study explores the reconstruction of vocational college English curriculum through a systematic analysis of the job requirements within the cultural tourism industry in Langzhong Ancient City. By investigating job types, role responsibilities, and English proficiency requirements in the cultural tourism sector, and examining the gap between the current English curriculum and industry needs, the study identifies issues such as insufficient integration of industry contexts, lack of relevance and practicality, and the absence of local cultural characteristics. To address these issues, this study proposes that the reconstruction of English curriculum should adhere to the principles of practicality, relevance, dynamism, cultural integration, and innovation. A three-tier progressive English curriculum system comprising a “Basic Module + Professional Module + Local Characteristics Module” is constructed. Implementation pathways are designed in terms of content selection and organization, teaching method selection and application, teaching resource development and utilization, dynamic adjustment mechanisms, and interdisciplinary integration. The study suggests that the reconstructed English curriculum system can effectively achieve the organic integration of general English proficiency development, English for Specific Purposes training in the industry, and the incorporation of local cultural characteristics, providing theoretical reference and practical guidance for the reform of vocational college English teaching.

Keywords: Vocational college English; Curriculum content reconstruction; Cultural tourism industry demands; Langzhong Ancient City; Local culture

Online publication: May 12, 2026

1. Introduction

As the deep integration of culture and tourism continues to advance, tourist destinations endowed with

unique historical and cultural resources face an increasingly urgent demand for high-quality interdisciplinary talents. Langzhong Ancient City, one of the four most well-preserved ancient cities in China, attracts a large number of domestic and international tourists with its rich Spring Festival culture, Three Kingdoms culture, and ancient architectural complexes, placing higher demands on the comprehensive English proficiency of cultural tourism practitioners. However, current vocational college English teaching remains predominantly focused on general English, and there is a noticeable disconnect between English curriculum and the actual needs of the local cultural tourism industry, making it difficult to effectively support the development of students' professional competencies. In recent years, some teachers have attempted to integrate Langzhong's local culture into English teaching and have preliminarily developed online open courses such as College English, English for Fun—Career Edition, and Langzhong Travelogue—Spring Festival Edition, accumulating practical experience for the construction of locally characteristic courses. Nevertheless, there remains a lack of systematic curriculum content reconstruction frameworks and theoretical guidance. Existing research has pointed out that the key to curriculum content reconstruction lies in the renewal of concepts and the systematic design of pathways^[1], which is precisely the issue this study seeks to address.

Against this backdrop, this study focuses on the specific demands of the cultural tourism industry in Langzhong Ancient City for vocational college English curriculum, attempting to construct an English curriculum system that balances general English proficiency, English for Specific Purposes in the industry, and local cultural characteristics. By analyzing the job responsibilities and English proficiency requirements in the cultural tourism industry, examining the gap between the current English curriculum and industry needs, and proposing principles and pathways for curriculum content reconstruction, this study aims to provide operable practical references for the reform of vocational college English teaching, as well as theoretical support for the cultivation of local cultural tourism talents. This research not only helps enhance the vocational adaptability of vocational college students but also holds positive significance for promoting the deep integration of local culture and vocational education.

2. Analysis of job demands and local cultural characteristics of the cultural tourism industry in Langzhong Ancient City

2.1. Overview of the cultural tourism industry in Langzhong Ancient City

Located in the northeastern part of Sichuan Province on the middle reaches of the Jialing River, Langzhong Ancient City is one of the four best-preserved ancient cities in China, with a history of over 2,300 years and profound cultural deposits. As a national AAAAA-level tourist attraction, Langzhong Ancient City is renowned for its unique Spring Festival culture, Three Kingdoms culture, Imperial Examination culture, and Feng Shui culture. It boasts numerous historical and cultural relics such as Zhang Fei Temple, the Imperial Examination Hall, Huaguang Tower, and Tengwang Pavilion, forming a tourism industry system centered on historical and cultural experiences. In recent years, with the deepening implementation of the culture and tourism integration strategy, Langzhong's tourism industry has continued to develop, with tourist arrivals steadily increasing and the degree of internationalization constantly rising, placing higher demands on practitioners' language skills, cultural literacy, and comprehensive service capabilities. Against this backdrop, the cultural tourism industry is transforming from traditional sightseeing-oriented services to experience-oriented and culture-oriented services, urgently requiring a group of high-quality technical and skilled talents who possess both professional knowledge and cross-cultural communication skills.

2.2. Job types and responsibilities

Based on a survey of recruitment information and job descriptions from cultural tourism industry employers in Langzhong Ancient City, as well as field visits to scenic area management companies, hotel enterprises, and cultural and creative institutions, the current cultural tourism industry jobs can be categorized into three main types. The first category is tourism service positions, mainly including tour guides, scenic area commentators, and tourism information consultants. Their core responsibilities are to provide visitors with attraction explanations, tourist route guidance, ticketing consulting, and other services, requiring practitioners to possess good language expression skills, cultural communication abilities, and on-site adaptability. The second category is hotel service positions, covering front desk reception, housekeeping services, food and beverage services, etc. These positions directly serve visitors, handling check-in registration, room arrangement, dining recommendations, complaint resolution, and other tasks. They require not only mastery of standardized service etiquette but also smooth English communication skills to cope with the increasing number of international tourists. The third category is cultural and creative industry positions, including cultural activity planning, cultural and creative product design, and cultural tourism project operations. These positions focus on the innovative transformation and market-oriented dissemination of local culture, requiring practitioners to use English for cultural project planning, international product promotion, and cross-cultural communication activities.

2.3. Comprehensive English proficiency requirements of the jobs

Through an analysis of the responsibilities of typical jobs in the cultural tourism industry in Langzhong Ancient City, as well as in-depth interviews with scenic area managers, hotel managers, and heads of cultural tourism enterprises, the comprehensive English proficiency requirements for practitioners can be summarized. These requirements are reflected both at the level of general English proficiency and at the level of industry-specific English proficiency.

In terms of general English proficiency, oral communication ability is regarded as the most fundamental and important requirement. Practitioners need to be able to engage in daily conversations, attraction explanations, service guidance, and emergency communication with tourists, possessing strong listening and speaking interaction skills to ensure accuracy of information transmission and smoothness of service delivery. Reading comprehension ability is also indispensable, as practitioners need to accurately read English-language tourism materials, hotel policies, service guides, safety instructions, and other textual information to properly handle related matters in daily work. In terms of writing ability, practitioners often need to write basic practical texts such as English travel guides, activity plans, service instructions, and emails, which require normative and practical written expression skills. Additionally, practitioners need to understand the cultural customs and communication etiquette of tourists from different countries and regions, respect cultural differences during service, and properly address communication issues arising from different cultural backgrounds, thereby enhancing tourist satisfaction.

In terms of industry-specific English proficiency, the English expression of Langzhong Ancient City's cultural knowledge has become an important component of job competence. Practitioners need to master the English expressions of historical culture, folk customs, historical figures, attraction backgrounds, and other content related to Langzhong Ancient City, enabling them to disseminate local culture to international tourists with accurate and vivid language, truly playing the role of cultural ambassadors. Meanwhile, practitioners need to be familiar with commonly used professional vocabulary and expressions in industries such as hotels,

catering, and tourism, and use them normatively in specific service scenarios, reflecting professionalism and standardization in service. Furthermore, practitioners need to possess English communication skills in emergency situations, such as when tourists get lost, fall ill suddenly, or when complaints or disputes occur, being able to express themselves clearly, calm emotions, and assist in problem-solving, ensuring tourist safety and rights. In summary, the English proficiency requirements of the cultural tourism industry in Langzhong Ancient City are characterized by complexity, scenario-specificity, and integration with local culture, providing clear directional guidance for the reconstruction of vocational college English curriculum.

3. Analysis of the current situation and problems of vocational college English curriculum content

3.1. Composition and characteristics of current vocational college English curriculum content

At present, the English curriculum in vocational colleges is mainly composed of general English, with curriculum content centered on basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The textbooks selected are mostly general English textbooks designed for vocational college students, and there is a high degree of homogenization between the teaching content and that of the general higher education English curriculum. In terms of course objective positioning, English curricula in most vocational colleges still focus on passing English proficiency tests, emphasizing the systematic teaching of language knowledge and the training of basic skills, while paying insufficient attention to the authenticity of language application scenarios and the relevance to career orientation. In terms of curriculum content organization, teaching units are usually divided according to thematic topics, such as “Greetings and Introductions,” “Asking for Directions and Giving Directions,” and “Dining and Shopping.” Although these contents reflect the needs of daily communication to a certain extent, they lack deep connections with specific industry positions. In addition, the update cycle of curriculum content is relatively long, and textbook compilation often lags behind the actual needs of industry development, resulting in a significant gap between what students learn in the classroom and the skills required in their future jobs.

3.2. Gap between curriculum content and job demands in the cultural tourism industry

A comparative analysis of the current vocational college English curriculum and the English proficiency requirements of jobs in the cultural tourism industry in Langzhong Ancient City reveals multiple gaps. First, there is a lack of integration of industry-specific application scenarios in the English curriculum. Current curricula are mostly set against general life scenarios, such as campus life and daily communication, while typical work scenarios in the cultural tourism industry, such as tourism services, hotel reception, and cultural creativity, are rarely addressed. The English curriculum fails to reflect the vocational nature and employment-oriented characteristics ^[2]. Second, the English curriculum lacks relevance and practicality. Although some vocational colleges have introduced simple tourism English or hotel English content into English teaching, this content is often presented in the form of scattered vocabulary or sentence patterns, lacking systematicity and contextualization, making it difficult to support students in completing complex communication tasks in real work scenarios. For example, in specific job tasks such as attraction explanations, complaint handling, and cultural activity planning, students not only need to master relevant vocabulary but also need to possess the ability to comprehensively use language in specific situations, yet current curricula are clearly insufficient

in cultivating such abilities. Third, the integration of local cultural characteristics into the English curriculum is severely lacking. Langzhong Ancient City, as a tourist destination with profound historical and cultural heritage, features unique resources such as Spring Festival culture, Three Kingdoms culture, and Imperial Examination culture, which are core elements of cultural tourism services. However, current English curricula barely cover these local cultural elements, leaving students without the linguistic reserves and cultural confidence to disseminate local culture in English, making it difficult for them to serve as cultural ambassadors in their future jobs.

3.3. Student feedback on current curriculum content and suggestions for improvement

To gain an in-depth understanding of students' authentic perceptions and needs regarding the current English curriculum, this study conducted a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews with students majoring in tourism management, hotel management, and related disciplines at vocational colleges in the Langzhong Ancient City area. The survey results show that a considerable number of students perceive a weak connection between the current English curriculum and their future work in the cultural tourism industry, which to some extent, affects their learning interest. In the interviews, many students expressed their hope that the English curriculum could incorporate more teaching materials related to local culture and tourism, such as attraction introductions, historical and cultural explanations, and service scenario simulations, believing that such content could both enhance learning interest and better prepare them linguistically for future employment. At the same time, students generally reported that current curricula lack practical components, with classroom instruction predominantly teacher-centered, offering few opportunities for language application in authentic contexts. They suggested incorporating more teaching formats such as case studies, situational simulations, and field practices. Some students also proposed that the course integrate more cross-cultural communication content to help them understand the cultural habits and communication styles of tourists from different countries and regions, enabling them to handle cross-cultural service scenarios more confidently in their future work.

Based on student feedback, several directions for English curriculum optimization can be identified. First, industry cases and practical projects should be added, transforming authentic work tasks from the cultural tourism industry into course learning projects, allowing students to enhance their language application skills while completing project tasks. Second, local characteristic modules should be developed, systematically integrating Langzhong Ancient City's historical culture, folk customs, tourist attractions, and other resources into the English curriculum, forming a teaching content system with local distinctiveness. Third, practical teaching components should be strengthened, creating authentic language application environments for students through methods such as situational simulations, role-playing, and field visits, thereby enhancing their vocational adaptability. Fourth, cross-cultural communication topics should be introduced to help students develop cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication competence, laying a foundation for serving international tourists. The core direction of these optimization suggestions is precisely to promote the close alignment between English curriculum and the core competency requirements of jobs^[3], providing clear guidance for the subsequent reconstruction of English curriculum.

4. Content reconstruction of the vocational college English curriculum based on job demands in the cultural tourism industry

4.1. Principles and objectives of content reconstruction

Based on an in-depth analysis of the job demands of the cultural tourism industry in Langzhong Ancient City and a systematic examination of the problems in the current vocational college English curriculum, this study proposes that the reconstruction of English curriculum should adhere to five fundamental principles. The first is the principle of practicality, which requires that the English curriculum be closely aligned with the actual work needs of the cultural tourism industry, ensuring that the knowledge and skills students acquire in the curriculum can be directly applied in future vocational contexts. The second is the principle of relevance, which requires that English curriculum be designed in a differentiated manner according to the competency requirements of different job types, meeting the individualized learning needs of students pursuing different career paths such as tourism services, hotel services, and cultural creativity. The third is the principle of dynamism, which requires that English curriculum remain open and be promptly adjusted and updated in response to industry development trends, changes in job competency requirements, and student feedback. The fourth is the principle of cultural integration, which requires that English curriculum fully incorporate the local cultural characteristics of Langzhong Ancient City, enabling students to enhance their cultural identity and cultural communication competence while learning English. The fifth is the principle of innovation, which requires that English curriculum break away from the knowledge-oriented orientation of traditional English curricula, focusing on the organic integration of language competence and vocational competence, and exploring pathways for interdisciplinary integration.

Guided by the above principles, the objectives of English curriculum reconstruction can be summarized in two aspects. On the one hand, the goal is to cultivate students' comprehensive English competence required for jobs in the cultural tourism industry, including general English communication skills, English for Specific Purposes application skills in the industry, and cross-cultural communication skills, enabling them to proficiently use English to complete communication and service tasks in authentic cultural tourism work scenarios. On the other hand, the goal is to inherit and promote the cultural characteristics of Langzhong Ancient City. Through the systematic design of English curriculum, students will master the knowledge and skills to disseminate local culture in English, becoming active promoters of local culture. The achievement of these objectives will effectively enhance the vocational competitiveness and job adaptability of vocational college students, while also providing talent support for the high-quality development of the cultural tourism industry in Langzhong Ancient City.

4.2. Reconstructed curriculum content system

Based on the above principles and objectives, and drawing on existing research findings on modular curriculum content systems, this study further constructs a three-tier progressive English curriculum system comprising a "Basic Module + Professional Module + Local Characteristics Module," building upon the foundational knowledge module, cross-cultural communication module, and workplace English content module proposed by Zhou. This system retains the foundational content for cultivating general English proficiency while strengthening targeted training in English for Specific Purposes in the industry, and highlights the integration of local cultural characteristics, reflecting the unity of competency orientation and characteristic orientation.

The Basic Module focuses on the cultivation of general English knowledge and skills, with language functions as the main thread, emphasizing the establishment of a solid language foundation for students' subsequent professional studies. Different from traditional general English curricula, this module incorporates contextual elements from the cultural tourism industry as much as possible in the selection of language materials, such as using reading materials and listening texts related to tourism and services, allowing students to gain initial exposure to the language characteristics of the industry while mastering basic language knowledge.

The Professional Module constitutes the core component of the English curriculum system, aiming to cultivate students' ability to apply English for Specific Purposes in the industry. This design reflects the conceptual shift from English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), meaning that English curriculum should focus on the authentic language needs of vocational positions, with vocational competence cultivation at its core^[4]. This module is divided into three directions. The first is Tourism English, covering typical work scenarios such as tour guide services, attraction introductions, tourism consulting, and itinerary planning, with emphasis on training the listening and speaking communication skills as well as reading and writing abilities required in the tourism service process. The second is Hotel English, covering core aspects of hotel operations such as front desk reception, housekeeping services, food and beverage services, and complaint handling, focusing on cultivating students' standardized service language expression and emergency communication skills. The third is Cultural and Creative English, covering emerging areas such as cultural and creative product introduction, cultural activity planning, and cultural project promotion, aiming to enhance students' English application skills and cultural communication competence in the cultural and creative industries.

The Local Characteristics Module represents an innovative aspect of the English curriculum reconstruction in this study, aiming to transform the unique cultural resources of Langzhong Ancient City into course teaching content. This module mainly consists of two parts: Langzhong Ancient City Culture English and Cross-Cultural Communication. The Langzhong Ancient City Culture English part systematically organizes the English expressions of the ancient city's historical and cultural background, Spring Festival culture, Three Kingdoms culture, Imperial Examination culture, Feng Shui culture, and other characteristic resources, designing teaching units such as attraction explanations, cultural introductions, and historical figure stories, enabling students to gain an in-depth understanding of local culture while learning English. The Cross-Cultural Communication part focuses on the cultural customs, communication etiquette, and interaction characteristics of tourists from different countries and regions, cultivating students' cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication skills through case analyses, situational simulations, and other methods, enabling them to demonstrate good cultural adaptability when serving international tourists.

4.3. Specific design and implementation

The implementation of the English curriculum system requires systematic design and effective implementation pathways. In terms of content selection and organization, actual cases from the cultural tourism industry should serve as the foundation, closely integrated with the cultural characteristics of Langzhong Ancient City. Representative work scenarios should be selected as teaching contexts, such as "English Commentary of Zhang Fei Temple," "Front Desk Reception at Ancient City Inns," and "International Promotion Planning for Spring Festival Culture." Each teaching unit should follow the teaching logic of "context introduction—task-driven—language learning—practical application—reflection

and improvement,” ensuring that students develop both language competence and vocational competence simultaneously through the completion of authentic tasks.

In terms of teaching method selection and application, as Chen pointed out in the context of holistic foreign language education, language teaching should follow the principles of “holistic input, holistic interaction, and holistic output”^[5]. Therefore, student-centered teaching models such as task-based language teaching, project-based learning, and situational teaching are recommended, placing language learning within authentic vocational contexts to promote the holistic development of students’ language competence. Task-based language teaching guides students to actively explore language knowledge and skills through the design of authentic work tasks. Project-based learning cultivates students’ comprehensive ability to solve complex problems by organizing them to complete integrated practical projects, such as “Creation of English Tour Guide Scripts for Langzhong Ancient City” and “International Tourist Satisfaction Survey and Report Writing.” Situational teaching enhances students’ on-site adaptability and confidence in language application by simulating authentic work scenarios, such as simulated front desk reception and simulated complaint handling. Meanwhile, the application of blended online and offline teaching models can effectively expand learning time and space, providing micro-lecture videos, interactive exercises, and extended resources through online platforms to support students’ autonomous and personalized learning.

In terms of teaching resource development and utilization, efforts should be made to build a diversified and multi-dimensional teaching resource system. For multimedia teaching resources, video and audio materials related to Langzhong Ancient City culture can be developed, such as historical and cultural documentaries about the ancient city and bilingual introduction videos of tourist attractions, enriching the presentation forms of teaching content. For industry expert resources, seasoned practitioners from the cultural tourism industry can be regularly invited to deliver thematic lectures, sharing industry experience and local cultural knowledge, thereby bridging the gap between the classroom and the industry. For field visit resources, students can be organized to conduct field visits to tourist attractions, hotels, and cultural and creative institutions in Langzhong Ancient City, enhancing their perceptual understanding of local culture and industry practices. For virtual simulation teaching resources, virtual simulation technology can be utilized to simulate authentic cultural tourism work scenarios, such as virtual attraction tours and virtual hotel reception, providing students with immersive language practice experiences.

In terms of dynamic English curriculum adjustment, a regular mechanism for English curriculum evaluation and feedback should be established. Opinions from industry experts, changes in employer needs, and student learning feedback should be regularly collected, and English curriculum should be promptly updated and optimized in light of the latest developments in the cultural tourism industry, ensuring the practicality and forward-looking nature of the English curriculum.

In terms of interdisciplinary integration and English curriculum expansion, active exploration should be conducted on pathways for interdisciplinary integration between vocational college English curricula and majors such as tourism management and hotel management. Through joint teaching and research, collaborative course development, and project coordination, disciplinary boundaries can be broken down, and an interdisciplinary comprehensive English curriculum can be designed. For example, interdisciplinary course modules such as “English Planning for Cultural Tourism Projects” and “International Tourist Service and Management” can be developed, enabling students to systematically acquire professional knowledge while mastering English language skills, thereby enhancing their comprehensive vocational competence.

Interdisciplinary integration not only contributes to the enrichment and deepening of English curriculum but also provides strong support for the comprehensive development of students' vocational abilities.

5. Conclusion

This study is grounded in the actual demands of the cultural tourism industry in Langzhong Ancient City for high-quality technical and skilled talents. It systematically analyzes the job types, responsibilities, and comprehensive English proficiency requirements in the cultural tourism industry, thoroughly examines the gap between the current vocational college English curriculum and industry needs, and on this basis proposes principles, objectives, and specific plans for English curriculum reconstruction. By constructing a three-tier progressive English curriculum system comprising a “Basic Module + Professional Module + Local Characteristics Module,” this study achieves the organic integration of general English proficiency development, English for Specific Purposes training in the industry, and the incorporation of local cultural characteristics. This English curriculum reconstruction scheme breaks away from the traditional single model of vocational college English curriculum dominated by general English, embodies the design concepts of practicality, relevance, dynamism, cultural integration, and innovation, and provides an operable theoretical framework and practical pathways for the reform of vocational college English teaching. This research not only helps enhance the vocational adaptability and job competitiveness of vocational college students but also provides educational support for the cultivation of local cultural tourism talents and the dissemination of local culture.

This study has certain limitations. It is mainly based on survey data from Langzhong Ancient City, so the generalizability of the research findings needs further validation. Moreover, the constructed English curriculum system has not yet been tested for effectiveness through systematic teaching implementation. Future research can be extended to other tourist cities with distinctive local cultural characteristics, and empirical studies can be conducted through teaching experiments and other methods.

Funding

This study was funded by the Advisory Committee of Foreign Language Teaching in Vocational Education, Ministry of Education, P.R. China, under its 2024 special program for vocational colleges “Languages Empowering Vocational Education to Go Global” (Project No. WYJZW-2025-069).

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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