

PREFACE

This book aims to provide an evaluative analysis of the contemporary *English Foreign Language Teaching* (ELT) academic programs in Albania, and contextualize the effectiveness of such ELT programs in the framework of Albania's domestic English needs in light of the country's aspiration to comply with European Union (EU) integration standards of higher education. The research examines particularly the compatibility of existing English language programs for advanced learners in Albania with the scope of identifying the need to propose and implement tailored curriculum transformation from *General English Teaching* mainstream to *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP) graduate programs.

It argues that the accelerating rhythm of globalization and European integration processes request qualified ESP teachers equipped with the relevant knowledge to design and offer tailored ESP courses at university studies. Furthermore, the ESP track will be a catalyst to learners' acquisition of English language relevant to the competitive demands of regional and European labour space. Most importantly, the special characteristics of ESP track such as its functional communication in/through authentic class materials, and its constructive teaching approach based on learners' needs and social interaction to problem-solving tasks will boost the development of independent thinkers capable to socialize, integrate professionally and construct knowledge creatively in the culturally heterogenous economic area of EU. This tangible application is explained by the theoretical approach of social constructivism: a theory of learning and Europeanization studies.

The book consists primarily of a qualitative research study pursuing a case study methodology line. However, given the multifaceted nature of foreign language teaching/acquisition as a social phenomenon influ-

enced and shaped by several other socio-political, cultural and economic variables, it will also utilize a mixed qualitative and quantitative method through content textual analysis of interdisciplinary theoretical and empirical literature related to ELT, ESP and EU debates narrowed to the case study of Albania. Statistical data have been collected from observations, semi-structured interviews of the three main stakeholders concerned with the quality of English programs; regional and international companies in Albania, the academic staff of English department at Tirana State University and students enrolled into existing English programs.

This research demonstrates the necessity to prioritize the urgent establishment of the master program on *English for Business and Economics* and builds up the implementable curriculum program with the relevant courses determined by the findings of both theoretical and empirical analysis. This constitutes an original contribution to foreign language methodology update accordingly, to the most contemporary needs of the advanced learners likewise other university scientific disciplines. This publication is a book version of my doctoral thesis defended at Sofia University “St.Kliment Ohridski” in Bulgaria in April 2019.