



# **Pedagogical Challenges in English for Specific Purposes: Integrating Social Science Perspectives in Albanian Higher Education**

**Ervin Hoxhaj<sup>1\*</sup>, Flavia Kaba<sup>1</sup>, Redinela Biba<sup>12</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Tirana

<sup>2</sup> CLIMAS Laboratory, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France

\* [ervin.hoxhaj@unitir.edu.al](mailto:ervin.hoxhaj@unitir.edu.al)

DOI: 10.26417/n82zv819

## **Abstract**

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become an essential element in higher education, providing students with language competencies specific to their academic and professional fields. This paper critically examines the pedagogical challenges of ESP implementation in Albanian higher education, addressing how institutional constraints, resource limitations, and social factors influence teaching practices and learning outcomes. Through survey data from dentistry students at the University of Tirana, the study identifies persistent barriers including limited resources, inadequate instructor training, resistance to curriculum changes, and lack of standardization in ESP programs. The findings reveal that effective ESP implementation requires alignment between pedagogical approaches, student needs, and institutional realities. Social and educational dynamics such as resource allocation, faculty preparedness, and institutional support significantly shape ESP effectiveness. The study emphasizes that ESP must be understood not merely as a linguistic concern but as an educational challenge shaped by broader social and institutional contexts. These findings highlight the necessity for context-specific solutions to improve ESP programs and strengthen the connection between curriculum and professional language demands, providing practical insights for enhancing ESP teaching practices in Albanian higher education and informing similar efforts across European contexts.

**Keywords:** ESP, curriculum development, teacher training, institutional constraints, needs analysis, specialized discourse, learner-centered instruction

## Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, English has become a cornerstone of academic and professional success. In Albania, English functions not only as a means of popular communication but also as an essential instrument in higher education and professional sectors. As universities attempt to equip students for global opportunities and competitive employment markets, the incorporation of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) into higher education has become more essential. ESP courses aim to provide students with specialized language competencies, facilitating their navigation of academic fields and future professions with enhanced fluency.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emphasizes customizing language education to address the specific requirements of students in their fields of study or career goals. It improves the connection between theoretical knowledge and practical application by offering specialized linguistic and communicative skills. This consistency is especially crucial in higher education, as students must acquire language and techniques specific to their selected disciplines. The success of ESP programs depends on how well the teaching methods and materials match the specific requirements and aspirations of the students. In other words, effective ESP courses must address students' individual academic and professional needs by customizing the material and format to their respective disciplines, such as technical terminology for engineers or negotiating skills for business students. Meeting student expectations for practical, task-oriented training increases engagement, whereas a mismatch causes the exact opposite. Teaching methods should be adapted to the students' backgrounds, such as problem-based learning for medical students or case studies for law students. Incorporating realistic, industry-relevant materials strengthens the relationship between theoretical learning and real-world application.

However, the implementation of ESP in Albanian higher education operates within a complex social and institutional context that directly affects its effectiveness. Unlike general English language teaching, ESP programs must address competing demands from different groups: students who seek immediate professional skills, faculty members who must balance specialized content with language instruction, and institutions that operate under significant resource constraints. These challenges are especially pronounced in Albania, where universities are working to align with European educational standards while managing local limitations and needs. The success of ESP programs depends on the relationship between institutional support, faculty expertise, curriculum design, and student expectations. The social context of ESP teaching - including classroom realities, institutional priorities, and educational policies - also influences program outcomes. Understanding these social and pedagogical factors is necessary for developing ESP approaches that function effectively in the Albanian educational setting and address the practical needs of both students and instructors.

This paper, while assessing the influence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) on pedagogical methods in Albanian higher education, aims to identify some of the challenges that both students and professors encounter in the ESP context. This article looks at how English for Specific Purposes enhances or obstructs teaching and learning experiences by analyzing its benefits, obstacles, and deficiencies within ESP classrooms. To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of students regarding the influence of ESP on pedagogical practices?
2. What are the discrepancies between pedagogical and learning expectations in ESP classes?
3. Finally, how might these findings assist ESP teachers in aligning their approaches with student needs?

The article is structured in order to offer a thorough investigation of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the higher education scene of Albania. It initially begins by introducing ESP and its importance in getting students ready for success in both academics and business. The literature review looks at core ideas and viewpoints provided by significant authors of the field, therefore emphasizing the advantages and difficulties of ESP implementation. Following that, the part on the methodology describes the study plan with a focus on a survey among students meant to find challenges in implementing ESP programs. Stressing issues including limited resources, resistance to curricular changes, and the necessity of better preparation for instructors, the results and discussion address the findings. Emphasizing the need of altering approaches to fit the demands of students and teachers in Albania, the study concludes by providing ideas and suggestions for improving ESP practices.

## 1. Literature Review

The curriculum of general language classes often compresses excessive information—vocabulary, skills, and registers—into students' schedules, failing to sufficiently focus on the essential vocabulary and subjects necessary for achieving what they want to accomplish career-wise. Commitment to the goal of providing language instruction that addresses students' own specific language learning purposes is what those who take an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach see as distinguishing it from other approaches to English Language Teaching (ELT) (Hyland, 2002). Thanks to its innovative methods for studying and instructing language use, ESP has quickly become an essential component of English education in universities. Teaching methods that respond to students' individual subject-matter needs and expertise, as well as an emphasis on identifying the precise language features, discourse practices, and skills in communication that target groups need, are the key components of this approach. With that in mind, the field of ESP plays a crucial role in customizing language education to meet the unique needs of learners in various professional and academic contexts. Due to its learner-centered approach by

focusing on the precise language skills needed, as emphasized by Dudley-Evans and St. John in *Developments in ESP: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach*, ESP has come to be considered as essential for particular disciplines (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Similarly, Robinson (1991), in *ESP Today: A Practitioner's Guide*, highlights the importance of ESP across diverse fields such as medicine, business, and engineering, discussing how tailored ESP programs effectively prepare professionals for communication within their specialized domains. Corresponding to that, Coffey has said that in basic theory, ESP has become part of and at the same time the major expression of the communicative teaching of language, a wide field in which there is room for alternatives and controversy. While remaining faithful to its origins in work for science and technology, it is paying more attention to the needs of other learners, including students in the arts and humanities disciplines (Coffey, 1984).

However, Belcher argues that although the goal of ESP (specific-learner-centered language instruction) may appear straightforward enough, how best to meet the goal may be less obvious. This is the point where aligning theory with practice becomes challenging. According to her the ESP approach requires a willingness on the part of the language educator to enter (not unlike ESP students themselves) as a stranger into strange domains, specifically academic and occupational areas that may feel quite unfamiliar, and to engage in a degree of reflection that attempts to sort out the extent to which learners' purposes are actually served when the language practices of any target discourse community are taught (Belcher, 2009).

As stated by Hutchinson and Waters, in their article *How communicative is ESP*, ESP is primarily an educational, rather than a linguistic concern. It is therefore vital to base the ESP course on the need of the educational environment, and for the course to be informed not only by linguistic considerations but also, indeed chiefly, by educational percepts (Hutchinson & Waters, 1984). In other words, we need to take into account not only the requirements of the target situation, but also the needs and constraints of the ESP learning situation, and the general pedagogic approach they determine. This brings up a crucial issue regarding the practicality of interactive ESP. ESP seeks to provide learners with the competencies necessary for their professional or academic domains, and its efficacy depends on the degree to which it involves students in significant, task-oriented activities that reflect authentic communication.

Teachers often struggle with selecting appropriate materials because they are not experts in the learners' specific fields and may find it difficult to understand the content themselves. This struggle further becomes a problem concerning teachers and students likewise, that raises questions on methodology and implementation of ESP. The main criterion for incorporating any content or activity into the ESP course should not be whether it duplicates what the student will do in the target situation, but whether and to what extent it increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the ESP learning situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1984). In this context, David Carver emphasizes the importance of integrating authentic materials, simulations, role play,

and fostering some degree of self-direction to create a more dynamic and effective learning experience (Carver, 1983).

The challenges facing ESP implementation in Albanian higher education reflect broader patterns documented across multiple educational contexts. Recent research on English for Medical Purposes reveals that complex medical terminology, limited contextual practice, and inadequate teacher training represent persistent obstacles across different countries (Nguyen, 2025). These findings align closely with the difficulties observed in Albanian medical faculties, where instructors must navigate specialized content without sufficient preparation or resources. The study emphasizes that effective medical ESP requires more than linguistic competence; it demands structured morphological analysis, needs-based curriculum design, and multimodal teaching methods such as role-plays and simulations to enhance student engagement and retention (Nguyen, 2025). The consistency of these challenges across different national contexts suggests that ESP implementation difficulties stem from systemic issues rather than local problems, indicating that solutions developed in one context may offer insights for others facing similar constraints.

Faculty development emerges as a critical factor in determining ESP program success, yet remains one of the most neglected aspects of implementation. A systematic review of ESP teaching practices reveals that instructors frequently lack knowledge of ESP pedagogy, struggle with interdisciplinary collaboration, and report low self-efficacy when performing pedagogical tasks individually (Jiang et al., 2018). These challenges are particularly pronounced for novice ESP teachers who must balance specialized content knowledge with language instruction despite receiving little or no pre-service training in ESP methodology. Teachers consistently identify the need for collaborative practice with content specialists, access to appropriate teaching materials, and institutional support for professional development (Sukying et al., 2023). Recent studies confirm that the absence of pre-service and in-service training, combined with limited collaboration opportunities with field instructors, significantly undermines ESP program effectiveness (Dou et al., 2023). Without adequate preparation, even experienced language teachers find themselves unable to meet the specific demands of ESP courses, resulting in programs that fail to deliver the specialized skills students need for their professional fields.

The success of ESP programs depends heavily on institutional commitment and the alignment of stakeholder expectations, yet these social dimensions often receive insufficient attention. Research demonstrates that faculty qualifications represent a major challenge in ESP teaching, with agreement rates reaching 73.49% across stakeholder groups, and even higher among specialized faculty at 89.28% (Mao & Zhou, 2024). This finding underscores that teacher-related issues constitute the most pronounced barriers to effective ESP implementation, a pattern consistent with scholarly discussions emphasizing the importance of qualified instructors in language teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, stakeholder relationships based on knowledge sharing, mutual trust, and involvement in decision-making processes create more

value for educational institutions (Langrafe et al., 2020). However, ESP programs frequently operate within environments where students, faculty, and administrators hold conflicting views about program objectives, creating tensions that undermine coherence and effectiveness. The interplay between institutional priorities, resource allocation, and faculty expertise ultimately determines whether ESP programs can move beyond superficial implementation to achieve genuine integration within academic curricula and deliver meaningful outcomes for students.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design and Approach**

A group of students of dentistry were handed a questionnaire about the challenges and barriers that exist in the widespread adoption of ESP programs in medical schools. The questionnaire was designed to gather firsthand insights from students actively engaged in ESP courses, as their perspectives provide valuable information about the practical realities of program implementation. The students were asked how these challenges can be overcome. By collecting data directly from learners, the study aimed to identify specific obstacles that might not be immediately apparent to administrators or faculty, thus offering a more complete picture of the ESP learning environment.

### **2.2 Population**

The questionnaire was filled by 1st year students of the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Stomatology, University of Tirana. First-year students were chosen because they are just starting their medical studies and beginning to encounter ESP courses, so their fresh perspectives help us understand the immediate challenges students face. A total of twenty-one students filled in the questionnaire. While this is a relatively small group, it was enough to identify clear patterns in how students experience ESP instruction.

### **2.3 Instruments Data**

The study employed a survey to observe students' challenges and barriers in ESP adoption. The survey was structured to capture multiple dimensions of ESP implementation, focusing on both practical constraints and systemic issues that affect program quality. The questions covered aspects related to the role of ESP in preparing doctors for international medical practice. The following major principles were included:

- Limited resources (financial, materials, qualified instructors)
- Resistance to change in curriculum
- Lack of standardization in ESP Programs
- Assessment and evaluation challenges.
- Awareness and advocacy

## 2.4 Study Procedure

Data collection for this study followed a structured process that prioritized participant confidentiality and response quality. The procedure involved ensuring anonymity and encouraging honest responses to provide accurate insights. Students were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their feedback would be used solely for research purposes. The responses were collected and analyzed to identify trends, common themes, and opportunities for improvement.

## 3. Results and Discussions

These percentages are based on the responses of the 21 students surveyed. It appears that there is a consensus on the limited availability of resources and the need for faculty training, while there is some resistance to change and challenges related to standardization, assessment, and awareness.

The first question the students were asked was whether limited vocabulary of resources, including a shortage of qualified instructors, materials, and funding, was a challenge in implementing ESP programs in medical schools. All the respondents answered yes. In the follow-up question, if there was resistance to change in traditional medical education regarding the incorporation of ESP due to concerns about curriculum changes, 85% of the students answered yes. Asked if the lack of standardized ESP programs and assessment criteria led to variations in the quality of training in medical schools, 71% of the volunteers answered yes.

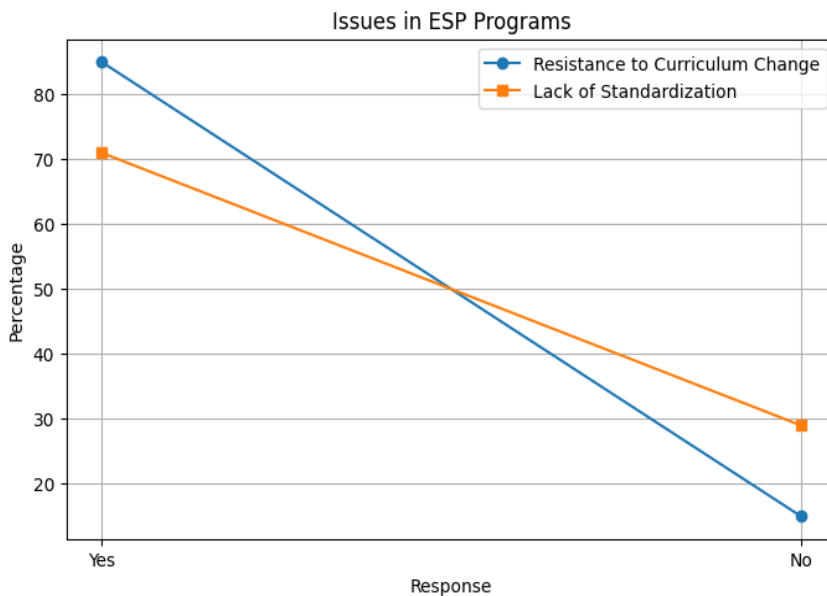
These findings underline a broader challenge in ESP implementation: the difficulty of aligning teaching practices with both learner needs and the realities of the teaching-learning environment. Texts taken directly from the target situation frequently prevent the teacher from doing this, as they often require a high level of specialist knowledge. For ESP to be properly "communicative", the teacher must be able to participate fully in the classroom communication. Texts taken directly from the target situation frequently prevent the teacher from doing this, because they demand too high a level of specialist knowledge (Hutchinson & Waters, 1984).

In short, although analysis of the target situation may guide us in deciding what to teach, how we teach it and what materials we use must be informed by the constraints and potential of the teaching-learning context. Unfortunately, most current ESP work appears to overlook this fundamental principle (Hutchinson & Waters, 1984). In their article *ESP in the 21st Century: ESP Theory and Application Today*, Bhatia, Anthony, and Noguchi argue that often, practitioners rely on textbooks they assume will meet learners' needs, but ESP textbooks are typically designed for broad markets, which may not align perfectly with specific learner requirements. When practitioners attempt their own needs analysis, they frequently depend on students' self-reported preferences (Bhatia et al., 2011).

Furthermore, the issue with implementing ESP lies in the unrealistic expectations placed on practitioners, who are traditionally expected to handle multiple roles,



including course design, research, material preparation, teaching, and evaluation. These demands, coupled with heavy teaching loads and the need to address diverse specialist fields, often result in a reliance on pre-made textbooks, limiting the customization and effectiveness of ESP courses. The growing reliance on part-time faculty in universities exacerbates these challenges, leaving many instructors without the time or resources to implement ESP effectively. To address this, it is proposed to integrate ESP into the core of English programs, enabling collaborative efforts among faculty to share tasks and reduce the burden on individual instructors (Bhatia et al., 2011).



**Figure 1.** Student responses highlighting key challenges in ESP programs: 85% identified resistance to curriculum change, while 71% noted a lack of standardization.

Students were also asked whether the medical faculty lacks familiarity with ESP teaching methods, requiring training to effectively deliver ESP content; 85% of the volunteers responded positively. When asked whether it was challenging to establish fair and reliable methods for assessing students' language proficiency in medical contexts in their institution, 85% answered yes. Finally, 85% of respondents highlighted the lack of awareness of the benefits of ESP, which leads to insufficient advocacy for its inclusion in medical education.

These findings reflect broader challenges faced by novice ESP teachers, who as mentioned earlier in this paper, often struggle with selecting appropriate materials due to their limited expertise in learners' specialized fields. To address this, many rely on published textbooks, which, while helpful, present two significant limitations. First, textbooks are typically designed for broad markets, catering to generalized



"super-domains" like science or engineering, rather than specific disciplines such as computer science or physics. Consequently, they often provide only superficial coverage of the specialized content learners require. Second, there is a notable lack of published resources tailored to early-level students, such as freshmen and sophomores. Instead, existing materials frequently resemble traditional reading comprehension books with a superficial "specialist" theme, failing to address the specific skills and knowledge required for ESP learners (Belcher, 2004). Because of these problems and the fact that ESP isn't given much attention in regular English classes, it's clear that ESP courses need more resources and teacher training that are better suited to their needs.

This necessity, that is mentioned above, extends to methodology, where the question of proper approaches to ESP education is crucial. As Carver discusses, among the commonly discussed methodologies are the Approach through Register, which, despite falling out of favor, remains valuable for teaching elements such as the passive voice, complex nominal structures, and appropriate scientific expressions. Similarly, the Approach through Discourse emphasizes moving beyond individual sentences to understand cohesion and coherence, which strengthens learners' ability to navigate discipline-specific texts. However, there are valid concerns about the need for teachers to explicitly address all discourse features, as some may already be intuitive to learners based on their prior knowledge (Carver, 1983).

Simply put, though less often employed now, the Approach through Register is very useful since it emphasizes teaching particular language elements. While some discourse elements may already be natural to students depending on their existing knowledge, the Approach through Discourse stresses how sentences link to produce cohesive and coherent texts, therefore improving learners' capacity to interact with specialized resources.

To further bridge the gap between learners' needs and the teaching methodology, the study skills approach offers a promising direction. This method focuses on equipping students with practical skills such as reading flexibility, note-taking, library research, and summarizing within the context of ESP. Such an approach not only aligns with the demands of specific fields but also leverages authentic materials to ensure relevance. Taken together, these methodologies highlight the importance of tailoring ESP programs to both the specific linguistic and practical needs of learners, while addressing the broader challenges of teacher preparation, material design, and effective implementation (Carver, 1983). That is to say that by emphasizing practical skills like reading, note-taking, and summarizing, the study skills approach closes the gap between students' requirements and instruction. It uses real materials, conforms to field-specific standards, and tackles issues in teacher preparation and material design.

The findings from this study reveal patterns that extend beyond the immediate Albanian context and connect to broader systemic challenges documented across

European higher education systems. The universal acknowledgment of resource limitations among all surveyed students (100%) reflects a fundamental constraint that shapes ESP implementation across multiple national contexts. This finding aligns with research demonstrating that resource scarcity is not merely a financial issue but a structural problem that affects every aspect of program delivery, from instructor qualifications to material availability and assessment design (Nguyen, 2025).

The high percentage of students identifying faculty training needs (85%) corresponds directly with literature showing that ESP instructors across different countries consistently report feeling underprepared for the specialized demands of ESP teaching (Indrapuri et al., 2025; Jiang et al., 2018; Sukying et al., 2023). What makes the Albanian case particularly instructive is how these challenges intersect with the country's broader efforts to align its higher education system with European standards while operating under significant resource constraints. The data suggest that ESP programs in Albania face a double burden: they must meet international expectations for quality while lacking the institutional infrastructure and support systems that more established programs in Western Europe can draw upon.

The social and institutional dimensions underlying these statistical findings deserve careful attention, as they reveal how ESP implementation depends on factors that extend far beyond curriculum design or teaching methodology. The 85% of students reporting resistance to curriculum change points to a deeper issue of institutional culture and stakeholder alignment. This resistance likely reflects legitimate concerns from faculty and administrators about disrupting established programs, concerns about instructor capacity to deliver ESP content effectively, and uncertainty about how ESP fits within existing degree requirements and credit hour allocations.

Such resistance is not unique to Albania. Research on how educational institutions work with students, faculty, and administrators shows that educational innovations often fail when institutions attempt to implement them without adequate consultation, resource allocation, or attention to the competing priorities of different groups (Langrafe et al., 2020; MAO & ZHOU, 2024). In the Albanian context, this resistance may be amplified by the ongoing transformation of the higher education sector, where institutions are simultaneously managing multiple reform initiatives while facing funding pressures and staff limitations.

The students' identification of assessment challenges (85%) similarly reflects more than technical difficulties in test design. It signals fundamental questions about what ESP programs should accomplish and how success should be measured. Without clear institutional consensus on learning outcomes and assessment criteria, individual instructors are left to make these determinations independently, resulting in the lack of standardization that 71% of students identified as problematic. The interplay between these factors creates a situation where even well-intentioned ESP initiatives struggle to achieve coherence and consistency, as each component of the program operates without sufficient coordination or institutional support.

These findings have important implications for how ESP programs should be developed and supported in Albanian higher education and similar contexts facing comparable constraints. First, the data make clear that ESP cannot be treated as simply another course to add to existing curricula. It requires dedicated institutional commitment in the form of faculty development, resource allocation, and curricular integration. The universal acknowledgment of resource limitations suggests that institutions must make strategic choices about how to deploy scarce resources rather than attempting to implement ESP programs without adequate support. This might mean starting with pilot programs in specific departments, focusing initial efforts on faculty training rather than immediate student enrollment expansion, or developing collaborative arrangements where multiple departments share ESP instructors and resources.

Second, the high levels of concern about faculty preparedness indicate that teacher development must be treated as a prerequisite for program expansion rather than an afterthought. This aligns with research showing that ESP teacher training should address not only linguistic and pedagogical skills but also the practical realities of working with specialized content, collaborating with discipline-specific faculty, and adapting materials to local contexts (Nguyen, 2025; Dou et al., 2023). For Albanian institutions, this suggests the need for systematic professional development programs that provide ongoing support rather than one-time training sessions.

Third, the resistance to curriculum change and concerns about standardization point to the necessity of inclusive planning processes. Albanian medical schools need to bring together students, language instructors, medical faculty, and administrators to develop shared understandings of ESP program goals and implementation strategies. The stakeholder literature emphasizes that programs succeed when they balance competing interests through genuine dialogue and negotiation rather than top-down mandates (Langrafe et al., 2020). In practical terms, this means establishing ESP working groups that include representatives from all stakeholder categories, developing clear program frameworks that specify learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and creating feedback mechanisms that allow for program adjustment based on ongoing experience.

Finally, the findings suggest that Albanian ESP programs should look to establish connections with more established programs in other European countries. The goal is not to simply import foreign models but to learn from others' experiences with similar challenges and to identify adaptations that might work in the Albanian context. The consistency of challenges across different national settings indicates that solutions developed in one context, when appropriately modified, can inform practice in others facing comparable constraints.

#### **4. Limitations and Future Research**

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample included only first-year dentistry students at the University of Tirana. While this focus

provided useful insights into ESP challenges in medical education, the findings may not represent what happens in other medical programs or universities across Albania. Different schools may face different challenges based on their resources, locations, and student groups. A larger study including students from various medical fields and multiple universities would make the findings more applicable to Albanian higher education as a whole.

Second, the study gathered information only from students through questionnaires. While student experiences are important for understanding ESP problems, future research should also include teachers, administrators, and classroom observations to get a complete picture. Understanding how different groups see the same challenges could show important differences in how they understand program goals and priorities.

Third, this study looks at one moment in time. Research that follows students throughout their studies would show how ESP programs change over time and whether the problems first-year students identify continue or get better as they progress. This would also help identify which solutions actually work in practice.

Future research should include students at different stages of their medical education to see how ESP needs change as students advance. Studies comparing multiple Albanian universities would show whether these challenges exist everywhere or are specific to certain institutions. Research examining schools that have successfully improved their ESP programs would provide practical examples for others to follow. Studies looking at how language teachers and medical faculty work together could offer specific strategies for better collaboration. Finally, research tracking graduates to see how their ESP training affects their professional work would demonstrate the real value of investing in quality ESP programs and justify the resources needed to improve them.

## **5. Conclusion**

This article emphasizes the critical need of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in addressing the particular language and communicative requirements of Albanian higher education. ESP classes have shown to be an essential asset in equipping students with the tools required to succeed in both academic and professional settings. Research shows, however, ongoing difficulties that prevent ESP programs from reaching their full potential. Along with opposition to curriculum changes, lack of standardization, and poor assessment systems, these challenges include restricted financial resources, insufficient teaching materials, and a lack of proficient professors. Added here, there is also the overreliance on generalized textbooks that fail to address the specific needs of different disciplines. As a consequence, the line between ESP and ELT becomes somewhat fuzzy.

The findings from this study of dentistry students at the University of Tirana confirm these challenges and reveal their concrete impact on student learning experiences.

The universal acknowledgment of resource limitations, combined with widespread concerns about faculty preparedness, curriculum resistance, and assessment inconsistencies, demonstrates that ESP implementation faces systemic obstacles requiring coordinated institutional responses. These results are particularly valuable because they come directly from students experiencing ESP instruction, offering perspectives that validate and extend concerns documented in the broader literature.

This research contributes to understanding ESP by examining it through a social science lens that considers institutional dynamics, stakeholder relationships, and resource constraints alongside pedagogical concerns. By connecting local findings to international research, the study demonstrates that challenges facing Albanian ESP programs reflect broader patterns across European higher education contexts. This comparative perspective suggests that Albanian institutions can learn from strategies developed elsewhere while adapting them to local realities.

Addressing these issues requires a coordinated approach including improved use of resources, dedicated teacher development programs, and coordinated creation of instructional materials. However, the findings make clear that isolated interventions will not suffice. Instead, institutions need comprehensive strategies that address multiple challenges simultaneously through ongoing faculty support, clear program frameworks, and collaborative structures enabling language instructors to work effectively with medical faculty.

Integration of ESP into basic academic programs must be given top priority in institutions. The data suggest that ESP cannot succeed when treated as an add-on but must be recognized as essential to students' professional preparation. This integration requires commitment at multiple levels, from department leadership allocating adequate resources to medical faculty collaborating in identifying authentic language needs to administrators recognizing ESP's role in institutional quality and graduate employability.

ESP can close the gap between education and employment by matching educational approaches with student needs and professional requirements, thus promoting more efficient and relevant learning environments in Albanian higher education. However, achieving this potential requires recognizing that ESP implementation is not merely a technical matter of curriculum design but a complex social and institutional process depending on adequate resources, prepared faculty, supportive structures, and stakeholder alignment. This strategy guarantees ESP program success as well as improves students' skills to compete in a globalized workforce. The path forward requires sustained commitment, collaborative effort, and realistic recognition of both the challenges and opportunities that ESP presents for Albanian higher education.

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