


<p><b>The Unification of the University Programs and Textbooks of History in the Albanian Speaking Territories</b></p>		<p><b>Linguistics</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> program, unification, interpretation, critical thinking, history, contemporary.</p>
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<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>Nowadays, there is an urgency for the unification and the reforming of history programs and textbooks in terms of content considering the transitional time that Albanian speaking territories are experiencing with the aim of providing a more formative and efficient education to Albanian speaking youth. Endeavoring to achieve this, the way the history is treated should converge in all the Albanian speaking territories in compliance with the demand for the creation of a democratic society as specified and welcomed by the international organizations. The increase in the society’s interest shown towards the historical developments in the course of time closely associated with their right to provide their interpretations of the historical events demands for the unification of the history programs and textbooks, as well as an increased scientific and methodological level of the preparation of the teachers and an increased scientific and methodological level of the curricula and textbooks as recognized across the nation. The university programs should undergo unification by paying due respect to and establishing rightful connections and relations with the alternative interpretations, critical thinking and the future patriotic and contemporary formation of the generations to come. The research aims at promoting and establishing nationwide cooperation for designing unified university textbooks and programs for all the Albanian speaking territories.</p>		

The programs and textbooks of history and the different published books of history have posed a subject of great discussion and controversy among researchers at home and abroad in the period of time after 1990’. The programs and the textbooks used have not provided any solution for the achievement of unified programs and textbooks to be used in the public and private universities of the Albanian speaking territories. Therefore, this paper aims at laying the ground for undertaking the following steps to unify the programs and the textbooks of history in the Albanian speaking territories.

The social and political changes in the 1990’s in Albania brought about the needs and possibilities for profound changes in the university curricula which had to be properly managed and therefore, ensuring productive achievements in all the phases of the learning process at the universities. The immediate issue raised for the higher education institutions was the recognition and application of the Bologna Charter in conformity with its demands at all the structures of the faculties and departments paying due respect to the specifics of a nation and the contemporary demands for the mobility of the students, the equivalence and recognition of the degrees and courses of the Albanian universities in Europe, America and worldwide and vice versa. **(Kraja M.,(2009), Pedagogjia”, Mirgeralb, Tiranë, p.64)**

The designing of the new programs and textbooks had to successfully delineate the recommendations set forth by the international institutions. These institutions have been interested in rendering possible two most fundamental ideas in the treatment of history in South-Eastern Europe known as “disarmament of history” and “boundless history”. The later insinuates the integration into the multicultural world by supporting the democratic values, civic responsibility, tolerance and opposing the chauvinistic, ethnic, religious, inhuman, anti-democratic and narrow-minded intolerant attitudes. **(ISP, 2003, Kurrikula dhe shkolla, Tiranë, nr.4, p.28.)** In the context of the development and application of the education reform after the 1990’s and the autonomy of the universities that followed, the Faculties of History and their departments in all the public and private universities in the Albanian speaking territories undertook great changes in their daily work that had to do with: Changes in the programs and textbooks of history;

Determining the pursuits of study and specialities in the field of history;  
 Training and qualifying the academic staff;  
 The establishment of the training and qualifying centres for the lecturers;  
 Organizing the scientific conferences and symposiums;  
 Establishing contacts and close connections in the twinning faculties;  
 Engendering the conditions and spaces for professional experiences to be gained by the lecturers and students.  
**(Arkiv, (2009) Universiteti i Tiranës, Fakulteti i Histori – Filologjisë, Tiranë).**

Despite the changes that have happened in the Albanian speaking territories such as the acquisition of the autonomy by the universities, the changes in the curricula, programs and textbooks in the higher education, I hold that after such hard academic work at the faculties and departments of history, there is an urgent need for the unification of the programs and textbooks of history in the whole higher educational system in the Albanian speaking territories, so that there will be no obstacles to hamper the mobility of the students and lecturers from one faculty to another, which seems to have no longer existed in the European countries since the Dark Ages.

### **1. The programs and textbooks of the history course before the 1990's**

The programs and textbooks of the history course aimed at equipping the young generation with contemporary historical knowledge, ensuring the most scientific exactness in the treatment of history, highlighting the most fundamental and controversial issues raised in terms of the historical development. The designing of these programs and textbooks was based on sound ideological, scientific and pedagogical criteria. The basic ideological criterion for the designing of the history program and textbook was the description of the historical events according to the ideological framework of Marxism and Leninism. The Marxist and Leninist philosophy constituted the theoretical and methodological foundation for the designing of the programs.

A thorough analysis of these programs and textbooks evidence the following:

The programs of history were the basic documents for all the faculties and departments of history and geography,

The programs of the history course determined the content quantitatively, as well as the arrangement of the issues to be covered, the time needed for its study and its involvement by the years of study.

The programs and textbooks of history were unalterable and unchallengeable,

The programs and textbooks of history were highly politicized at the service of the state party (their basic ideology was Marxism and Leninism and the teachings of Comrade Enver Hoxha).

The programs of history equipped the new generation with contemporary knowledge and aimed at achieving scientific exactness in the subject matter. **(ISP, 1987, “Metodika e historisë”, shtëpia botuese e librit shkollor, Tiranë, f.44)**

These programs and textbooks were not unified and were not equally treated in all the faculties and institutions of history and geography.

The programs and textbooks of history during the communist regime have undergone changes several times in terms of their philosophy and content. All the changes made in the programs and textbooks had to do with the orientations of the state party and there was no concern for the contemporary scientific changes. The changes in the usage and application of the programs and textbooks of history at the Faculty of History-Philology, University of Tirana, Institution of Shkodra, Gjirokastra, etc. had to do with the time framework of study (three and two years of study), the yearly or semestral study of a particular course, the provision of complete scientific information and historical sources, the professionalism of the lecturers to be chosen by the corresponding institutions.

The scripts and textbooks of history were designed by academics and highly professional professors at the University of Tirana and constituted the basic material to be used by all the students. In addition, these textbooks were to be accompanied by the scientific bibliography which relied basically on the theoretical works and teachings of Marxism and Leninism. Therefore, the programs and textbooks encompassed the scientific knowledge and the ideological content as well. The Marxist and Leninist philosophy pervaded and constituted the theoretical and methodological basis of the new programs and textbooks. Despite the efforts to design new programs and textbooks that were scientifically grounded as noticed in the changes made, they aimed at supporting the greater achievements in the historical science, but at the same time their politicization (**ISP, 2003, "Kurrikula dhe shkolla", nr.4, Tiranë, p.175.**)

During the '80's (after the year 1982), there was established a specialization for the pursuits of study and better training and preparation of the new historians and geographers at the Faculty of History-Philology, University of Tirana was ensured. (**Arkiv, (2012) Universiteti i Tiranës, Fakulteti i Histori – Filologjisë, Tiranë**). The programs and textbooks were changed again. There was a wider gap established between the preparation of the specialized students at the faculty of History-Philosophy, University of Tirana and that of the students in the institutions of the other cities across Albania. The mobility of the academic staff from one faculty to another was very difficult to be achieved within Albania and the more so beyond its borders. The specialization for the pursuits of study deepened the gap and differentiation among the faculties of history, the programs and textbooks and the unification of the textbooks and programs of history could not even be conceived. The specialization for the pursuits of study rendered impossible even the mobility of the students and academic staff from one faculty into another. The mobility seemed unattainable due to the lack of the unification of the programs and textbooks and the policies of the state party, as well.

The specialization for the pursuits of study in the branch of history paved the way for the preparation of real, genuine historians and teachers of history. Academics, professors, lecturers, scientific and methodological workers, specialists in the branch of history showed great commitment and worked hard for the designing of the programs and textbooks of history, and later on they were involved in teaching at the corresponding faculties. For the first time, the Albanian students encountered the new interpretations and recent scientific knowledge for the different historical events of Albania and world history. Despite the changes incorporated in the corresponding faculties, the programs and the textbooks of history were enriched with new scientific information and bibliography that relied basically on the classical works of Marxism and Leninism and those of Enver Hoxha. (**Gani. A, Filo.Ll.,Tasellari.M., Dërguti.M.,Thëngjilli.P.,Kuri V., 1987 "Metodika e Historisë", SHBLSH, Tiranë, p.45.**)

## **2. The programs and textbooks of the history course after the 1990's.**

The threshold of the '90's was associated with a deep internal crisis that pervaded in the economic, social and political life of Albania. After the fall of the Berlin Wall that shook the political, social and ideological concepts and practices of that period of time infested with dictatorship and dogmatism and brought about the need for changes in the governmental system, there was an urgent need for changes to be made even at the educational system. At the different universities, the extreme politicization of the historical facts in the teaching process and the ideological dogmas, especially those that had penetrated deep in the educational system began to be relieved and liberalized, but quite obviously they did so at a slow, intolerable level.

There was a rapid growth of protest that started as an economic one, but precipitated into a political protest as a a rightful political movement. Hundreds of professors, academics, lecturers and teachers across the

nation gave their support to the students and people at large and therefore had the dictatorship toppled and a new democratic order was established. The downfall of the communist system revealed that the philosophy of Marxism and Leninism and its ideological spin which had pervaded deep in the lives of Albanians and their country, their education, especially the higher education (aiming at the preparation of truthfull, worthy members of the party) could no longer hold and had thus failed. A new outlook was needed not only for the construction of the new state and government, but for the university programs and textbooks as well, especially for those that had a politicized treatment of history. The designing of the new programs and textbooks of history constituted a great help for the new lecturers who lacked proper preparation. The main actions to be taken were the preparation, adoption and approval of improved textbooks of history devoid of any particular ideologies or politicization and abundant in new contemporary information for which universities and history teachers were mostly in need of.

The transitional period provided many opportunities, but even paradoxes, that were often associated with the tensions emerging from the clash between the conservative, inherited concepts and practices and the new tendencies demanding for changes in the programs and textbooks of the history of Albania and world history.

In this context, the curricula of history underwent changes that had to do with: The structure, The content.

Academically, the content was enriched with new historical information never treated before, up to the '90's,

Scientifically, pedagogically and didactically, the content was enriched too. (**Arkiv, (1993) Universiteti i Tiranës, Fakulteti i Histori – Filologjisë, Tiranë**).

The profound changes in the organization of the educational system in Albania became the issues of concern and the focus of great discussions and debate at University of Tirana, the Institutes of Higher Education in Shkodra, Elbasani, Gjirokastra, Korça dhe Vlora aiming at the improvement of their structures. Soon, many institutes became universities (**Arkiv i MASH, 1994, Fodi 21, d. 10,p. 23.**). Universities became autonomous and private universities came in existence, etc. In addition to public universities, private ones emerged to meet the demands of the market. The universities became autonomous and started their reorganization in structure and study programs to meet the needs of the workmarket and daily life. There was an urgent need to change the curricula of history in the corresponding faculties that had to be stripped from the possible manipulations and be treated in an objective, scientific way.

The existing programs could not meet the new demands set forth in terms of their didactics and content. There was a need for the professional contribution of foreign professors and specialists of developed western European countries in order to have the programs and textbooks of history properly changed and improved.

The adoption of the new programs of history by the Ministry of Education and Science constitute the basic documents for the work done by the Faculties and Departments of History, for these documents determined the quantity and structural order of the material and content, the time needed for its study according to the academic years of study. During these years of great endeavours for the qualitative improvement of the historical science, the academics and professors, researchers and scientists of history science were asked to consider that the new programs of history equip the new generation with the most contemporary knowledge and information, to obtain scientific exactness for the issues raised and have a thorough treatment of the fundamental controversies and issues of the historical development. The programs of history should provide a logical sequence of concepts, order and democracy and historical phenomena from one course into another. (**Gani. A**

Filo, L., Tasellari, M., Dërguti, M., Thëngjilli, P., Kuri V., 1987, “*Metodika e Historisë*”, SHBLSH, Tiranë, p.44).

The new treatment of the historical content influenced in the improvement of the history programs. The programs and textbooks of history were further elaborated and improved and relied on sound scientific and pedagogical criteria. They contained concrete materials, facts, events and phenomena, clarifications and interpretations based on proper scientific criteria and grounded on abundant scientific bibliography. In the programs and textbooks of history, the underlying aim was to establish an organic link in the history of different countries according to the corresponding periods and stages, so that the common features of some of historical events were evidenced and some generalizations could be made, some of which have proved to hold true even nowadays.

In this context, the curricula of the study of history underwent some changes as follows:

Changes in the curricula structure and content. Within its structure, three specializations in the pursuits of study were established according to the needs that time set: a specialty in history, archeology and didactics and methodology (teaching) (ISP, 2003, *Kurrikula dhe shkolla, histori-gjeografi, nr. 4, Tiranë p.198.*). This was no slight change and it was not easy to be adopted. This change was most necessary, since it emerged as a consequence of the tasks posed by the state bodies of higher education for the designing of the new curricular structures specialized in certain fields of history study according to the needs that time set. This idea and initiative was crystallized in consultancy with the Albanian specialists and foreign ones. (ISP, 2003, *Kurrikula dhe shkolla, histori-gjeografi, nr. 4, Tiranë p.198.*)

In academic terms, the curricular content was enriched with new historical events, facts and developments which were not treated up to that moment. The enriched content involved: the history of civilizations, the history of culture, the history of religions, the history of historical thought, the didactics and methodology of history, European integration, non-European civilizations, etc. The introduction and adoption of new courses brought changes in the plans and programs of the curricula, readjusting and re-evaluating the courses according to their importance. Some of the overloaded courses and programs were split into two, new, semestral courses; there were more optional and much more specialized courses; more practical learning activities were incorporated in the curricula, such as more seminar classes, course assignments, etc. It is important to highlight the fact that the new programs were adopted at the faculties of history during these years in Albania, but such a thing had existed in many universities of Western Europe for a long a period of time. (ISP, 200, *Kurrikula dhe shkolla, histori-gjeografi, nr. 4, Tiranë, p.198.*)

At the current stage of the implementation of the educational reform, many problems are encountered and many tasks to be carried out in addition to the positive achievements obtained so far. We are quite aware that we should do much more fruitful work to arrange trainings for the academic staff dealing with the scientific and didactic treatment of the science of history. Lecturers need a didactic training to meet the demands of the teaching process at the universities. The teaching process still leaves much to be desired for the traditional lecturing seems to be a common and widespread practice. Few lecturers have incorporated changes in teaching a particular course in the most contemporary and dexterous way, involving students in discussions, making use of supplementary bibliography and didactic materials, presentations with the overhead projector, etc. Many lecturers involved in different projects have received the qualifications or the scientific content of the course for the methodology of teaching at universities.

Despite the recent progress in the published books, the textbooks used by the students are still lacking in the provision of alternative thoughts. Many important steps are set forth in the publishing of the university textbooks. The textbooks have qualitatively improved in terms of their didactic and scientific content.

The authors of these textbooks are professors who hold scientific degrees and this makes the textbooks more credible for the professors have contributed in the realization of scientific exactness in the books' content. At this historic moment when we are living and working in a time of great technological and cybernetic boom, abundant contemporary methods and technologies in the educational system, with such great historical knowledge and information being given, the very teaching process of history is facing the most urgent need to establish and apply high scientific and didactic standards for the scientific and professional training of the new generations of students in order to meet the mid-term and long-term demands of the programs and textbooks of history, the educational reforms, so that the mobility of the students and lecturers at the universities in the Albanian speaking territories is facilitated through the intergovernmental and ministerial agreements achieved. A thing like this is not difficult to be obtained once we have achieved the unification of the programs and textbooks in the Albanian speaking territories, which would in turn do away with all the bureaucratic obstacles for the mobility of the academic staff and students and the recognition of the programs and diplomas in the corresponding faculties and universities.

The unification of the programs and textbooks was something that did not escape the concern of many European countries as a very important element for their civilization decades ago. By the XII-th century, Europeans understood that knowledge had to go out of the doors of the monasteries into the wider spaces of the cities. Many secular schools and universities were established such as: University of Bologna, Padova, Piza, Perugia, Paris, Montpellier, Oxford, Cambridge, etc. In all these European universities, the unification of the programs and textbooks and the establishment of a common language to be used rendered the mobility of the students and lecturers from one university into another possible, creating thus a cultivated and unique culture of great admiration among many other universities. Quite likely, we aim the same thing, the unification of the programs and the textbooks of different disciplines of study, especially those of history in all the universities of Albanian speaking territories.

### Conclusion

In order to achieve this unification and the establishment of a common language to be used, the mobility of the academic staff and students from one university to another, as Europeans did centuries ago, the most important steps to be taken today and in the future are: intergovernmental and ministerial involvement and commitment in the Albanian speaking territories; nationwide commitment of human resources: academics, professors, scientific and methodological workers, etc. specialized in the field of didactics and historical science, who have been successful in the designing of the programs and textbooks; the involvement of the associations of Albanian historians that have many historical resources in their countries and abroad; the participation and cooperation of all the faculties and departments of history in all the Albanian speaking territories; the cooperation with foreign experts, training for the contemporary developments in the historical science and research within the country and abroad; greater cooperation for twinning programs and study with European faculties, etc.

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