

**EDITORIAL**

We invite you to read this issue of *Synergy*, the Journal of the Department of Germanic Languages and Business Communication of The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies (1/2010), which includes a diversity of articles in areas of interest for the foreign languages and communication instructors, and not only. They develop ideas and explore research results in the large field of education, with a focus on teaching Languages for Specific Purposes, and also contain reflections on cultural and literary aspects, as well as on linguistics and business communication.

In the section entitled **Considerations on Educational Issues**, Mihaela Arsene surveys major models available for classroom observation purposes and points out their basic tenets and limitations in her article **TEACHER DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PEER OBSERVATION: THE REFLECTIVE APPROACH**. A practical application to the author's teaching situation by means of a peer observation session conducted for professional development purposes is also included. In the same section, in the article **PEER EDUCATION E DISABILITÀ UDITIVA. INTEGRAZIONE DEGLI STUDENTI AUDIOLESI NELLA SCUOLA PEER EDUCATION AND HEARING DISABILITY. INCLUSION AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS**, the Italian researchers from the University of Naples, Italy, Carmela Franzese and Ida Galli propose an alternative application of peer group education as a strategy aimed at reducing prejudice and discrimination against deaf and hearing impaired persons with the main goal of promoting inclusion and active participation of adolescent students with hearing disabilities attending 'normal' high schools.

Lora Constantinescu's article **WENN DAS GLEICHE NICHT IMMER DASSELBE IST. PROBLEM WORTBEDEUTUNG IM DU**, which opens the section dedicated to **Considerations on LSP Teaching**, deals with the intercultural component of German vocabulary acquisition when teaching German as LSP to students of Economics. While focusing on the development and relevance of business culture information in foreign language teaching, the article also underlines the theoretical and practical points of view in the 'negotiation of meaning', with the aim of helping learners develop their intercultural skills and gain cultural insights; also it presents some examples of misleading/misinterpreted terms in teaching materials after 1990. Dana Sorana Urs and Mirela Catelly bring to attention the necessity of introducing soft skills instruction in technical

universities in Romania, where at the moment the educational methods are still based on traditional principles and focus mainly on the teaching of hard/technical skills. In their article **RAISING STAKEHOLDERS' AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR SOFT SKILLS IN THE TERTIARY ENGINEERING EDUCATION CURRICULUM**, the authors advocate for a fully systematic approach to soft skills teaching, based on the real needs of the students, that should be included in the curriculum as specially designed modules, workshops, lectures etc. This section also includes the second article (on **TEACHING MEETINGS**) of a series written by Ruxandra Constantinescu-Ștefănel and meant to provide important clues for less experienced instructors engaged in teaching the main oral communication situations in business English. It answers the questions What to teach? How to teach? How to asses? while providing information about textbooks where instructors may find materials connected to teaching meetings to foreign students, as well as a scale, devised by the author, to asses students' oral productions in this specific speech situation.

The first two articles in the section on **Cultural and Literary Studies** examine different aspects of novel production. In the first one, **SELF-CONSTRUCTION AND DECONSTRUCTION THROUGH OTHERING IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S *TENDER IS THE NIGHT*. IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEME OF THE OTHER, EROTICIZED AND ABJECTED** by Ioana Stamatescu, identity construction strategies in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel 'Tender Is The Night' are analysed in an attempt to show that the two main characters use a process of othering in order to achieve a 'complete self'. The second article, **VIOLATED HISTORY. COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXTS AND THE SOUTH-ASIAN EXPERIENCE** by Roxana Marinescu examines British colonialism in South-Asia and the violence of this process, as well as the internal post-empire violence, as reflected in a number of novels written in English by authors of South-Asian origin. The discussion revolves around the idea of institutional violence of the Empire or the new merging state(s) over the collective body of a nation (or several nations or ethnic groups) or over individual people. Also in this section, Monica Condruz-Băcescu's article **MANAGING A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT** deals with the very important issue of cross-culture management and focuses on conditions of successful international cooperation, including ways of bringing near cultures of mutually cooperating companies, while recommending processes for overcoming cultural differences. In **A FEW REMARKS ON SCHOPENHAUER'S WILL**, Doru Enache reflects on Schopenhauer's masterpiece – 'Viața, amorul, moartea' – and analyses the author's view on some essential aspects of human existence with the famous concept of 'will' in the center of his approach. According to him, the will to live appears as the only motivator of our existence, the only trigger of our actions as our existence lacks motivation; thus, the only way we can reach serenity is by accepting the absurd of our own life.

The last section of this issue of *Synergy* includes two articles in the area of **Linguistics**. In the first one, **IRONY: “A MOMENT IN A DIALECTIC OF THE SELF**, Virginia Mihaela Dumitrescu discusses the highly disruptive potential of irony as it is explored by Paul de Man in ‘The Rhetoric of Temporality’; irony is viewed as a typical example of the disjunction between “sign” and “meaning” that is totally in keeping with his notion of the linguistic “emptiness” of meaning, or the insubstantial character of language. In the second article of this section, **DIVULGAZIONE SCIENTIFICA OSSIA RIFORMULAZIONE SCIENTIFICA**, Mariana Săndulescu focuses on various modalities of conceiving broadcasting speciality information for the wide public in the view of the latest approaches of the communication theory.

Hoping that this issue will provide food for thought, we wish you pleasant reading.

Roxana Marinescu