

**EDITORIAL**

This issue of **Synergy**, the Journal of the Department of Modern Languages and Business Communication (2/2012) is published under the umbrella title of *Academic and Research Communication in Science and Humanities*, with a generous section of research in **Business and Cultural Studies**. We also need to proudly mention that five of the authors of this issue are graduates of Master's Programmes organised by our Department: "International Business Communication" and "English Language Education and Research Communication for Business and Economics".

With this issue we introduce a novelty: the book-review section, which aims to present new and innovative volumes which could stimulate intellectual debates and further research. This issue of *Synergy* presents the book **THROUGH THE LANGUAGE GLASS. Why The World Looks Different in Other Languages** by Guy Deutscher (London: Arrow Books, 2011). In the book review Anca-Teodora Şerban-Oprescu describes the way in which the author looks at language along history, and its conditionalities in terms of culture, country, climate, and so on. Language is discussed from the linguistic, historical, ethnographic, anthropological, psychological points of view, in what the book reviewer considers a humorous and elegant manner.

In the first article in this issue, **THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP? AN INQUISITIVE, NONLINEAR AND HOLISTIC APPROACH**, the authors Maria Hriţcu and Mariana Nicolae explore an innovative concept, that of "spiritual leadership", from three points of view: self-awareness, empathy and system awareness and by making use of one of the author's personal experience in India. The conclusion is that we can all be leaders, if we follow a self-reflexive exercise and we empathize with other people, while also keeping in mind that we can all influence the world.

Lucia-Mihaela Grosu critically analyses different opinions about conceptualizing cultural diversity in multi-ethnic states in **MULTICULTURALISM OR TRANSCULTURALISM? VIEWS ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY**. Different interpretations of multiculturalism/cultural pluralism are discussed, as well as the possibility for transculturalism/cosmopolitanism to be the solution for cultural interaction, to finally conclude that "accepting difference, not tolerating it, embracing and practicing diversity are the possible keys towards understanding the plurality of cultures that inhabit nowadays multi-ethnic states".

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In **SCHOLARS' VIEWS ON EASTERN EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICA**, Irina David discusses reasons why the countries in Eastern Europe do not display the same level of anti-Americanism as the ones in Western Europe, with a particular emphasis on communism which seems to have shaped these countries' pro American attitude. As during the cold war years these countries had come to look at America as to a positive alternative, they still feel the need of the American presence mainly as a security network.

Cultural awareness, sensitivity and competence are a must when doing business abroad, as shown in the article **CULTURAL AWARENESS, SENSITIVITY AND COMPETENCE: BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS IN NEPAL AND SOUTH AFRICA** by Daniel Iacob and Mihaela Virginia Dumitrescu. While looking at the issue of international negotiations from the point of view of one of the authors' personal experience in Nepal and South Africa, the article offers a perspective of the two countries' cultures starting from Edward T. Hall's and Geert Hofstede's theories. Moreover, it includes a few practical cross-cultural guidelines for Romanian businesspeople wishing to conduct business in these countries.

Lavinia Petre and Ruxandra Constantinescu-Ștefănel take into consideration possible cultural barriers in international negotiations that could result in deadlock at the negotiation table between Romanian and Japanese business people. The conclusion of the article **BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE ROMANIANS AND THE JAPANESE - A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE** - is that in spite of the differences between the two cultures, they can be overcome by thorough preparation. Data for the analysis is first hand, having been provided by expert interpreters and participants in international negotiations.

In **BLENDED LEARNING – THE FUTURE OF LEARNING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES** Monica Condruz-Băcescu deals with ways in which the idea of blended learning is applied to foreign language education and highlights some of its advantages, while also looking at its disadvantages. The author urges learners and teachers to use online platforms in order to enhance traditional learning, and not to replace it.

THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF RHETORIC: THE USE OF MEIOSIS AND HYPERBOLE IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH by Virginia Mihaela Dumitrescu explores the relationship between culture and rhetoric and focusses on the cultural characteristics of the UK and the US. The aim is to identify possible cultural differences and their corresponding linguistic expression.

Once again we would like to invite you to read the articles in our journal and to consider this a starting point for future intellectual debates and academic research.

Roxana Marinescu