

A Note from the Executive Director
Vernon Lacour
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Dear MFLA Friends and Colleagues,

The 2010 MFLA Annual Conference was held November 12 and 13 at Lake Tiak O'Khata in Louisville, MS. There were 87 attendees: 59 regular members, 17 graduate students, 11 first year teachers and two exhibitors. The executive board and I would like to thank the many members who came, participated, and shared with their colleagues. Take a look at the minutes and the financial report for 2010 in this *Crusader* issue.

Neither the 2011 Conference venue nor the date (November 4-5 or 11-12) has been set. I apologize, but our first choice was too expensive and I am in negotiations with with conference centers in Jackson and Meridian. As soon as arrangements are finalized, all information will be posted on the website (www.msfla.org).

Make plans to attend, present, share and participate in our annual conference. Invite all language professionals in your school, college, university or local area to participate. If you have an idea for a special session or event, let me know, and I will make sure you have the proper contacts and information.

Please make sure that your current information and preferred means of contact are on the membership form included in this issue of the *Crusader*, along with the following application forms:

Student Scholarship
Helen T. Sharp Memorial Fellowship
Award of Distinction

Remember: this is your association. Your ideas, thoughts, projects, help and support are needed and valued. Join in and let's make MFLA the best Association in the region.

I look forward to seeing all of you in November.

Vernon LaCour
vernon.lacour@mgccc.edu

A Note from the President
Yohanna Jiménez
William Carey University

Dear MFLA members:

I hope that everyone is having a great academic year, full of excitement and energy. If you need new ideas for the upcoming months and you want to be rewarded professionally, come to the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) held March 10-12, 2011 in Baton Rouge, LA. For the first time in many years this conference is so close to us, that it will be a shame to miss it. The presentations and workshops offered are of great quality, and you have the opportunity to see what other foreign language teachers are doing in their classroom. Best of all is that Cheryl Maqueda and Nolvía Ventura will represent us as Best of Mississippi, and Vernon LaCour, our Executive Director, will be elected SCOLT president! It will be very nice if we could have a big group from MFLA that would go to the conference and would show them our support. I guarantee you that you will have a wonderful conference experience.

Also, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, held on November 19-21 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, MA, was a great success! Dr. Aurora Fiengo-Varn represented MFLA as Best of SCOLT and she did an awesome job. We are extremely proud of her!

It is an honor and privilege for me to serve you as MFLA president and I do hope to see you at SCOLT.

Yohanna Jiménez
yjimenez@wmcarey.edu

MFLA Website

The MFLA website is being updated, and we welcome any suggestions for improvement. Please, share with us photos of events happening at your school by e-mailing them to: <yjimenez@wmcarey.edu>.

A Note from the Vice President for
Membership
Ivonne Whitehead
University of Mississippi

Dear Colleagues,

As we enter into another year of our association I want all of us to make a renewed commitment of support to ensure we grow and prosper as an association. There are two ways you can support this objective. One is to renew your membership if you have not already done so. Second is to get actively involved in the recruiting process. Talk to your colleagues and get them to join, get them involved in recruiting other colleagues, and always remember that we have new foreign language teachers entering the system every semester. We should stress to these new foreign language teachers that through our association they can make the professional contacts that can assist them in their new careers.

By attending our conferences we can learn from sessions and workshops about new ideas and activities that can be used in the classroom. Additionally, we can meet new friends and colleagues and share our experiences to benefit new teachers.

Membership in our association is open to all foreign language teachers at all levels. Our association is an affiliate of the American Council on the Teaching of Languages (ACTFL). We also work with the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) and the Association of Teachers Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) and the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG).

The MFLA offers numerous benefits for our members. Besides professional benefits, we have an annual conference that offers in-service credits, meetings and workshops, an opportunity for members to present on topics of interest in language training and teaching, and a subscription to the *Mississippi Language Crusader*, a quarterly publication containing news articles and announcements about local and national foreign language activities.

My goal is to recruit new members as much as possible to continuing the growth of our association. Please join me in this effort to accomplish our goals. As we know, members move from one place to another, the association loses contact with these individuals, and we lose them as members. Let's work together to keep our contact information updated so we can track our members and keep them informed on what is happening or what is available for them.

Thank you, to all of the loyal hardworking longtime members, as well as the new ones. Welcome to our organization, new teachers, graduate students and professors. Let's grow; let's keep our association interesting to all the different levels and needs of our foreign language teachers.

Sincerely,
Ivonne J. Whitehead
ijwhiteh@olemiss.edu

<p style="text-align: center;">MFLA Business Meeting November 13, 2010 Lake Tiak-O'Khata</p>

I. Call to Order

President Virginia Gale Jolly called the meeting to order at 11:15 AM.

II. Financial Report

Executive Director Vernon Lacour gave the financial and conference report. The detailed budget is found in this issue.

For this year's meeting we had a total of 86 participants (84 members and 2 exhibitors). We will have in the bank at the end of the year about \$7,000 and a CD for \$3,000.

III. 2011 Meeting

Vernon Lacour was asked to look at the Jackson area. He talked to Eagle Ridge (the conference center of Hinds Community College) to find that although the facilities were very nice, the price is steep. He will continue to look up and down the I-20

corridor for a suitable facility. He will inform the membership of the dates as soon as he negotiates the best prices.

IV. Officer Reports

A. Program

Valentina Iepuri reported that the 2010 program contained 29 panels, the majority of which were from the University of Mississippi and Jackson State University. She asked all members to consider proposing papers and panels in the future.

B. Membership

Yohanna Jiménez reported that school addresses often bounce when members leave their school jobs. She will ask the Mississippi Department of Education to supply an e-mail list of all teachers in the state.

C. AATF

The new officers are Marta Chevalier, President; Abby Rodman, VP; Virginia Gale Jolly, Secretary Treasurer. The group paid a renewal fee for the chapter web site and sponsored Max Garriott to go to the AATF national meeting. The group discussed building membership and joining the Jackson French Alliance immersion program in early June. The group shared activities for National French Week, Nov. 4-10, for high schools.

D. AATG

The new officers are Sally Gray, President; Chris Sapp, Secretary; Corina Petrescu, Membership Coordinator; Owen Davis, Webmaster. The group discussed strategies for teachers' participation, including an accreditation workshop.

E. AATSP

The new officers are Cheryl Maqueda, President; Aurora Fiengo Varn, VP; Felice Coles, Secretary Treasurer. The group discussed the annual meetings in Guadalajara, Mexico and Washington, DC. The Poster Contest for K-8 grades does not have enough participation because there are not enough elementary school foreign language teachers. The group will start a web site and a newsletter. Next year the group will host a

guest speaker and sponsor a representative to the national meeting. A set of presentations will be hosted by Coahoma Community College in February.

F. Classics

Elizabeth Harrison was elected Representative. The group noted that 1,000 students in public schools and 800 students in private schools study Latin. They discussed recruitment issues and the next JCL convention in the spring.

G. Less Commonly Taught Languages

No report was given.

H. English as a Second Language

Dinorah Sapp was elected Representative. The group discussed coordinating their efforts for increased participation in the MFLA.

I. College/University

The new officers are Janet Bunch, President; Aurora Fiengo Varn, Vice President. The group discussed ways to share information and created an e-mail list.

J. Elementary/Secondary

The new officers are Doris Bottorff, President; Laura Hall, Vice President. The group discussed the certification for K-12 teachers and encouraged members to travel abroad. They mentioned the Fulbright-Hayes scholarship and grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, SCOLT and the AATs. The group also encouraged applications for the student scholarships, the Helen T. Sharp Award and the Distinguished Service Award.

V. New Business

A. Student Scholarships

Yohanna Jiménez reported that this year Hannah Rhinehart and Jennifer Spears (teacher: Elizabeth Harrison) won the award of \$300 each. As soon as they turn in their transcripts/class schedules showing that they are taking foreign language classes they will receive their awards.

The deadline for next year's applications for the student scholarship is March 30.

B. Awards

Aurora Fiengo Varn (Best of Mississippi, 2008) won Best of SCOLT and will represent the region at the ACTFL meeting. Cheryl Maqueda and Nolvía Ventura won the 2009 Best of Mississippi and will represent Mississippi at SCOLT in March 2011. Yohanna Jiménez won Best of Mississippi for 2010 and will represent Mississippi at SCOLT in 2012.

Vernon Lacour has been elected President of SCOLT for 2011. He would like to see Mississippi promoted more at the SCOLT meetings.

C. Mississippi Economic Council

A motion was made to spend \$250 to join the MEC, which contains all the movers and shakers in the state. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

D. The *Mississippi Language Crusader*

Felice Coles made a motion to spend \$1,800 to print and distribute the *Mississippi Language Crusader*. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

E. Membership

The Executive Board discussed a Facebook page for the MFLA. Elizabeth Harrison volunteered as the representative for that page.

Elaine Coney mentioned that podcasts from the presentations can be put on Teacher Tube.

Brad Freeny suggested linking to a blog, which can have pictures and updates with links. His e-mail is <bfreeny@clinton.k12.ms.us>.

A suggestion was made to put the *Crusader* online. Felice will make a PDF of back issues to go on the web site.

F. Officer Elections

The Executive Board recommended the slate: Yohanna Jiménez, President; Joshua Nave, Vice President for Programs; Ivonne Whitehead, Vice President for Membership.

No nominations were made from the floor. A motion was made to accept the slate, which was seconded and passed unanimously.

G. Door Prizes

Elaine Coney, Felice Coles and Joshua Nave won door prizes, courtesy of SCOLT.

VI. Closing

Virginia Gale Jolly closed the meeting at 12:00 noon.

<p>Preliminary Financial Report 1 January 2010 – 13 November 2010</p>
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Beginning Balance	\$7,980.50
<u>Income</u>	
Membership dues	1,830.00
Conference registration	1,400.00
Exhibits	300.00
Interest	4.81
TOTAL INCOME PLUS	
BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 11,515.31

Debits/expenses

Crusader	1,800.00
Copies (mailout)	267.41
Postage (mailout)	85.40
Web design and hosting	114.40
ACTFL membership	125.00
Student Scholarship	0.00
Best of Mississippi (SCOLT)	100.00
Audit Review	150.00
<u>Conference expense</u>	
Supplies (printing, badges, folders, etc.)	193.98
Lake Tiak O'Khata	171.42
Awards	90.95
Refunds	20.00
Mississippi Economic Council	<u>250.00</u>

TOTAL DEBITS/EXPENSES	\$3,368.56
ENDING BALANCE	\$8,146.75
Certificate of Deposit for	\$3,125.99
Purchased: 8 January 2004, APR: 2.15% compounded quarterly	
Matured: 14 November 2005	\$3,288.46
Renewed: 8 November 2005, APR: 3.451% compounded quarterly	
Matured: 8 September 2007	\$3,502.29
Renewed: 8 September 2007, APR: 4.090% compounded quarterly	
Matured: 8 July 2009	\$3,773.54
Renewed: 8 July 2009, APR: 1.89% compounded quarterly	
Matures: 5 July 2011 from Bancorp South, Gulfport, MS	

<p style="text-align: center;">Mississippi Foreign Language Association Student Tuition Scholarship</p>
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The MFLA will be giving three tuition scholarships for the amount of \$300 each to high school students who continue their foreign language study in college. The application packet is found inserted in this *Crusader* and at the web site <www.msfla.org>. The application packet must be postmarked on or before March 30, 2011. The recipient(s) will be announced at the Business Meeting at the annual conference of the MFLA and published in the meeting minutes in the *Crusader*.

Send nominees to:

Yohanna Jiménez, MFLA President
William Carey University
Language and Literature
498 Tuscan Avenue, Box 6
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

An Ecological Approach to Teaching Phonetics

Ekaterina Gnatiuk

Jackson State University

Spoken language provides an excellent example of complex organization in which higher order invariants, such as those that specify syntactic principles, may not be detectable until the perceiver has learned to pick up certain significant information of lower levels, such as the critical differences in the phonetic patterns of similar sounding but meaningfully different words (Port 2008). In fact, the only level of available information that the learner is likely to detect initially is the surface phonetic information, and it is necessary to recognize those principles that are really crucial for successful perception (Port 2007: 150).

The ecological theory of perception (or perceptual learning) helps to understand whether and to what extent second language learners may learn to detect nonnative phonetic distinctions that are not utilized in their native language (Port 2007: 153). What is suggested by perceptual learning, then, is an optimization and economization of pick-up or extraction of critically distinctive properties. Perceptual learning leads to improved discrimination, but this does not mean simply the discrimination of smaller and finer stimulus differences. Instead, perceptual learning entails the discovery, for specific purposes, of the acoustic properties significant for perception. It involves the education of attention for the most telling differences that are of the importance to the perceiver (Bailey and Summerfield 1980). Thus, the ecological view is that the utterances provide a rich flow of information about dynamic speech events that extend over time, and that through perceptual learning the individual becomes attuned to various manifestations of category structure available in that flow.

None of the current phonological approaches have given any depth of consideration to how the listeners should learn to perceive foreign spoken language. A "theory of phonology" is a theory about a social institution and not a theory about human cognition (Port 2008).

This paper will argue that the traditional assumption that we

speak in words, symbols spelled from a small inventory of contrastive sound units called **phonemes**, does not resemble the form of words in memory (Port 2007: 143-170). The ecological view suggests a radical departure from the standard assumption of discrete, timeless features and calls instead for connected speech phonetic features.

To address this issue, we investigated the correlation between Russian students' knowledge of significant acoustic properties of Australian English consonants and their perception of Australian English words taken out of connected speech.

The Experiments

Among the universal modifications of English consonants (by "universal" we imply that these modifications are registered in all widespread accents of English such as American, Canadian, British, Australian) the following ones deserve careful attention:

- flap/tap. For many English speakers, including Australians, the consonant between the vowels in words such as *city*, *better*, *writer* is not really a stop but a quick tap in which the tongue tip is thrown against the alveolar ridge (Ladefoged 2008: 63). Many English speakers also make this kind of tap when /d/ occurs after a stressed vowel before an unstressed vowel. As a result, it is hard for foreign learners to distinguish between the pairs of words such as *latter* and *ladder*.
- glottal stop. A glottal stop is a sound (or, to be more exact, the lack of sound) that occurs when the vocal folds are held tightly together. (Ladefoged 2008: 60). It is clear from the description given above that there is no acoustic manifestation of the glottal plosive other than the abrupt cessation or onset of the adjacent vowel. Glottal stops frequently occur as allophones of /t/ in such context as *street web(site)*, *it wasn't*, *that we've*, *favorite one*.
- the use of weak voiceless consonants instead of phonologically voiced /b d g/ and phonologically voiceless /p t k/. In initial position phonologically voiced consonants have very little voicing or are not fully voiced throughout

the closure and they might be called weak voiceless—*baseball, day, gig—and due to the loss of aspiration after /s/ phonologically voiceless ones become unaspirated: *study, school, sport* and might also be called weak voiceless consonants;*

- elision: *on the Atlantic side, probably, different.*

In the perceptual experiment, we tested the subjects' ability to identify words with modifications of consonants mentioned above.

Experiment 1

Our first experiment was designed to prove that limited educated experience in phonetic phenomena of spoken utterance leads to difficulties in understanding natural English speech.

Method

Subjects

Thirteen university students (8 women and 5 men) participated as subjects. They included volunteers with limited experience in listening to spontaneous speech (hereafter, LE "limited experience"). They were all native speakers of the Russian language and reported having normal hearing.

Stimuli

All stimuli were recorded at Amur State Laboratory of Phonetics. They included 24 words and word combinations with the following modifications of consonants: taps/flaps (*it offers, dedicated, total, variety, started*); glottal stops (*favorite one, at least, certificate, presently, estate*); weak voiceless consonants (*centered, fondly, facts, probably, to help*); and cases of elision (*baseball, bag so, spot, stood, escape*).

Procedure

Each subject participated in 20-minute sessions during which he or she was seated in a quiet room, listening over earphones at a comfortable volume. The words were presented with appropriate rest periods following each word. The subjects were asked to identify the words. Each subject gave 24 responses to the stimuli, heard three times. In total, we received

312 responses.

Results

All LE students tended to make errors in labeling the words. Figure 1 shows that their overall performance was not very impressive. Individual subjects differ substantially in their accuracy (from 49% to 21%). The best subject achieved 49% correct, which is above chance, but not very accurate. The worst was 20% correct. The average error rate of all subjects was 65%.

Figure 1: Accuracy in Labeling Words, LE

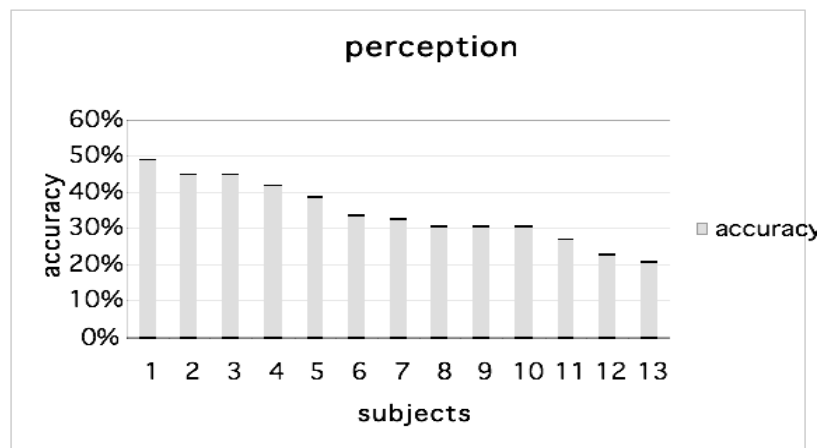
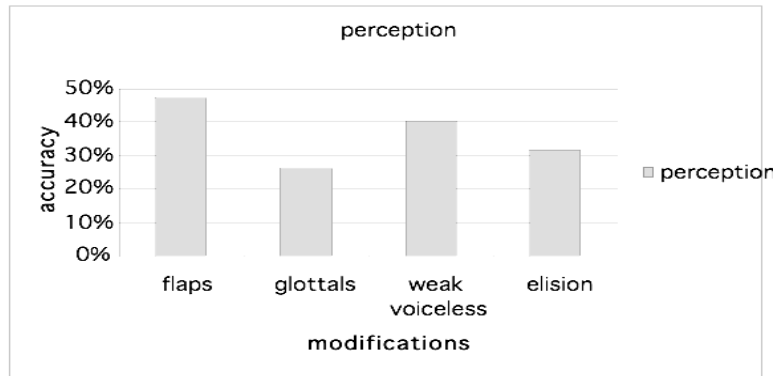


Figure 2 breaks the result down further by individual modifications. Here, it can be seen that words with glottal stops, elision cases and words with a series of modifications were the most difficult to recognize, which can be explained by their articulatory and acoustic properties. These realizations acoustically greatly differ from the "ideal sound pattern" or what is given in the pronunciation dictionary. The only significant result, although beyond any reliable percentage, is observed in the case of flaps. Flaps hamper identification of words, as their acoustic features have nothing to do with those of /t/ being most similar to alveolar /d/. It is evident that students with limited perception experience cannot pinpoint crucial phonetic characteristics of consonants in connected speech.

Figure 2: Modification Perception, LE



Experiment 2

In this experiment our goal was to demonstrate that the educated experience of learners positively affect listeners' abilities to identify/successfully perceive the utterance.

Subjects

Thirteen native speakers of Russian (9 women and 4 men) participated as subjects. They reported a great amount of educational experience in listening to spontaneous speech (henceforth GE). They reported having normal hearing.

Stimuli

The stimuli and the procedure were exactly the same as those of Experiment 1.

Results

Subjects tended to make insignificant amounts of errors in labeling the words. Figure 3 shows that their overall performance was rather impressive. Individual subjects do not differ substantially in their accuracy (98% to 85%). The best subject achieved 98% correct, which is clearly above average. The worst was 85% correct. The average error rate of all subjects was 8%.

Figure 3: Accuracy in Labeling Words, GE

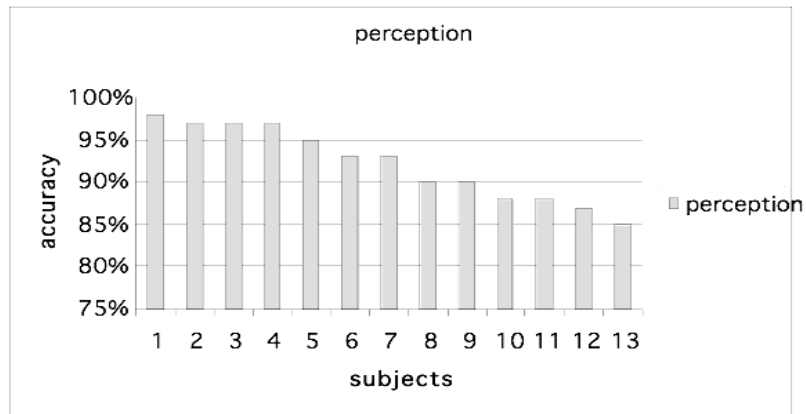
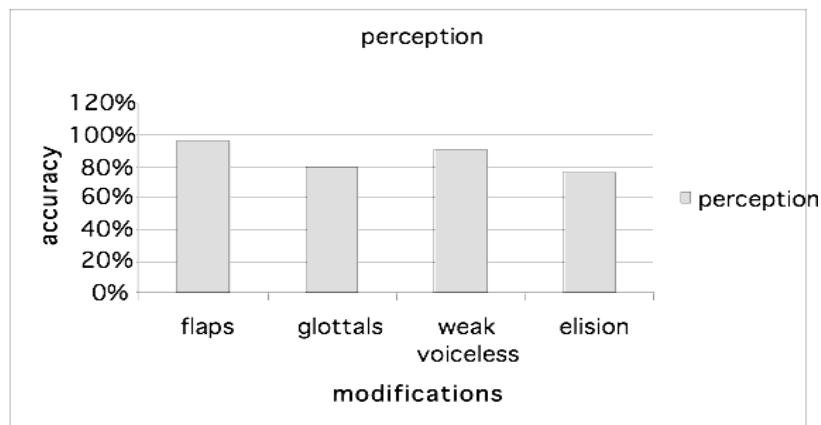


Figure 4 breaks the result down further by individual modifications. Here, it can be seen that even words with glottal stops, elision and words with a series of modifications were successfully recognized. The most significant result is observed in case of flaps.

Figure 4: Perception of Modifications, GE



These results bring us to a very important point that perceptually educated learners successfully distinguish modifications of consonants and consequently words.

General Discussion

With the findings of Experiments 1-2 in mind, we can summarize that in neglecting the ecological approach to perception of English connected speech in general, and English consonants in particular, we ignore the reality of the language and provoke frustrations in the sphere of English speech perception.

References

- Port, R. 2008. All is prosody: Phones and phonemes are the ghosts of letters. Paper presented at the Department of Linguistics Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, February 24, 2008.
- Port, R. 2007. How are words stored in memory? Beyond phones and phonemes. *New Ideas in Psychology* 25: 140-160.
- Bailey, Peter J. and Summerfield, Quentin. 1980. Information in speech: Observations on the perception of [s]-stop clusters. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 6 (3): 536-563.
- Ladefoged Peter. 2005. *A Course in Phonetics*. New York: Wadsworth Publishing.

SCOLT Annual Conference

The 2011 Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) will be held March 10-12, 2011, in Baton Rouge, LA, at the Crowne Plaza Executive Center. The conference's theme is: ***Got Languages? Powerful Skills for the 21st Century.***

Cheryl Maqueda (William Carey University) and Nolvía Ventura (Presbyterian Christian School) will represent the MFLA as Best of Mississippi with their presentation, "Boosting Student Interest with Low Cost Manipulatives."

MFLA members can submit a proposal to make a presentation in the 2012 conference. The deadline is April 15, 2011.

Also, this year, Vernon LaCour (MFLA Executive Director), will be elected SCOLT president.

Linguosemiotics and American Volunteering

Tatiana Lisovskaya

Jackson State University

Let us begin with the definition of linguosemiotics. According to information from Wikipedia, **semiotics**, also called **semiotic studies** or **semiology**, is the study of cultural sign processes, analogy, metaphor, signs and symbols. Semiotics is closely related to the field of linguistics, which in its part, studies the structure and meaning of language more specifically [www.wikipedia.ru].

Semioticians classify signs or sign systems in relation to the way they are transmitted. This process of carrying meaning depends on the use of codes that are the individual sounds or letters that humans use to form words, the body movements that they make to show attitude or emotion, or even the clothes that they wear [www.wikipedia.ru]. Investigation of the language, symbols of organizations, slogans and even clothes, are the so-called signs and symbols that semiotics study.

So how is our topic connected with the linguosemiotics? In our investigation on volunteering we will take into consideration the following aspects:

- Age of the participants
- Locations for volunteering
- Gender

Now, let us give the definition of volunteering itself. According to information from the Internet, volunteering is usually defined with regard to the following three points. It is an activity:

1. undertaken of one's own free will,
2. undertaken with no expectation of remuneration (e.g. unpaid),
3. undertaken for the benefit of individuals, the community or environment.

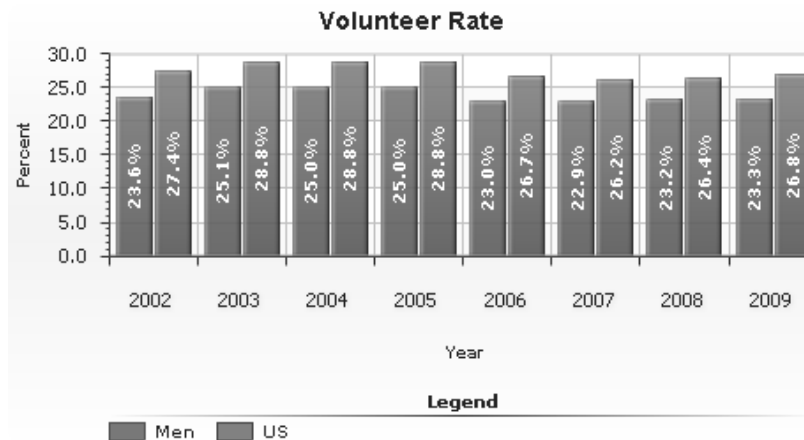
Volunteering is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will. People work to improve the lives of their neighbors and, in return, enhance their own

(volunteering.city.ac.uk/inspiration/volunteer/what-is-volunteering.aspx).

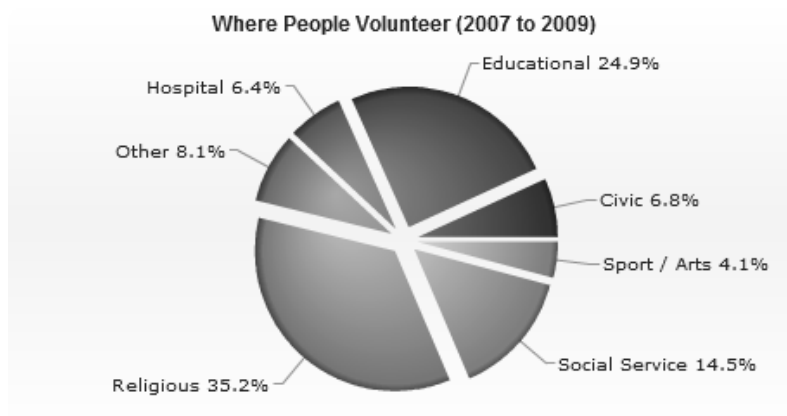
We began our investigation with the participants of volunteering. We have carried out the analysis of volunteer participants, distinguishing the following groups (taken from www.volunteeringinamerica.gov):

- men
- women
- college students
- older adults (65 and older)
- teenagers (ages 16 to 19)
- parents

The first group (men) takes active part in the volunteering work. In 2009, 26.8 million men dedicated 3.5 billion hours of service to communities across the country; 23.3 percent of men volunteered in 2009 (23.2% in 2008). Religious institutions are the most popular places through which men volunteer. Observe the table below:

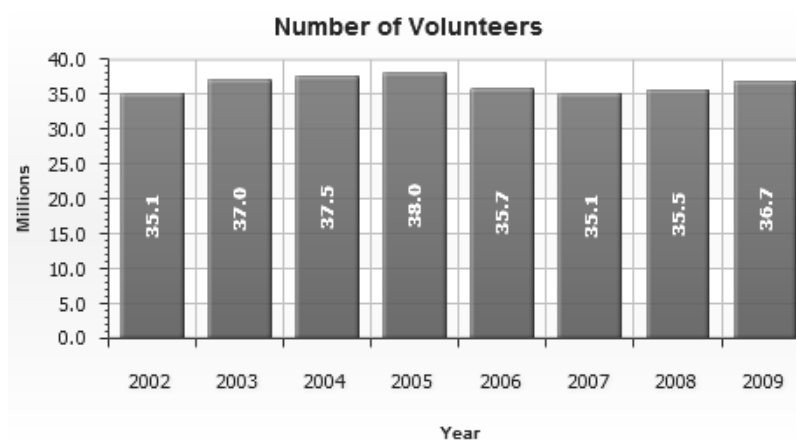


It is very interesting to know in what places men volunteer, as the next table will illustrate:

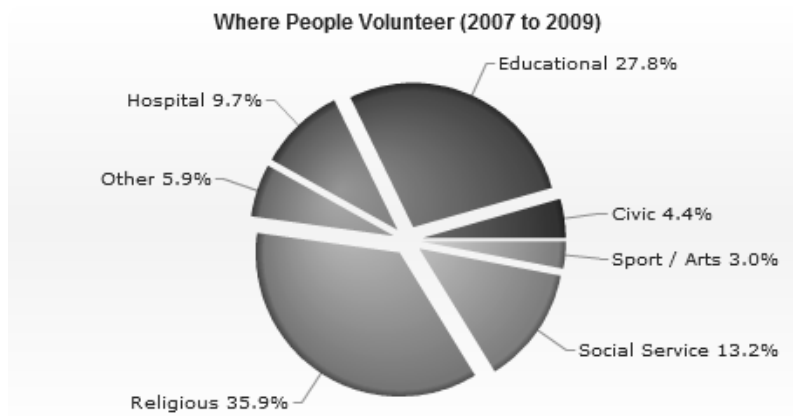


Religious institutions are the most popular places in which men volunteer (35.2%), followed by educational locations (24.9%) and places for social service (14.5%). These three branches are the most significant in people's lives.

The next group is women. In 2009, 36.7 million women dedicated 4.6 billion hours of service to communities across the country (shown in the table below).

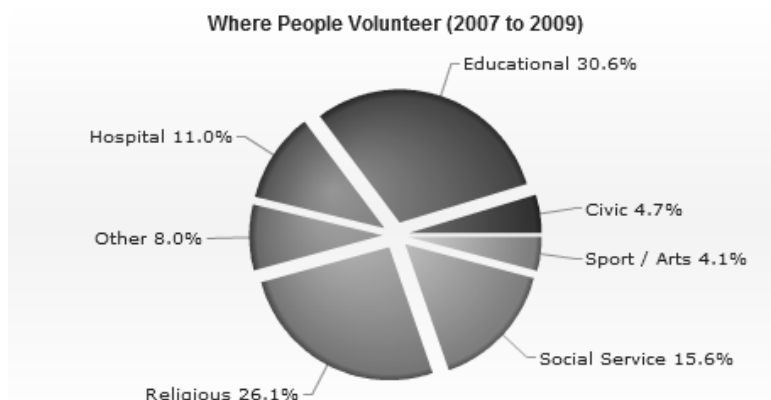


Religious institutions are the most popular places in which women volunteer.



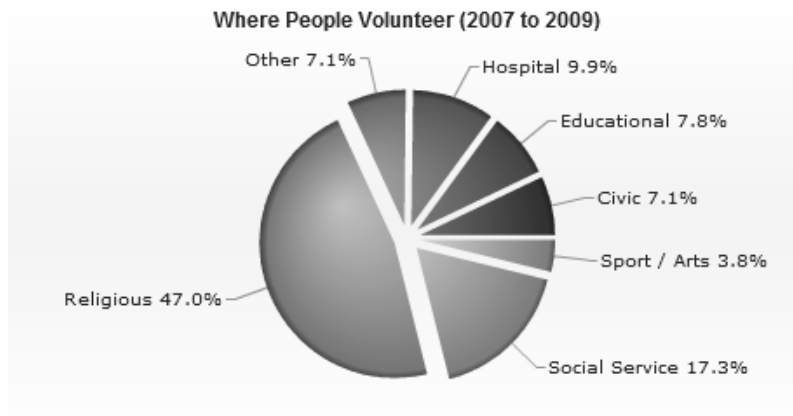
We note that many women devote a lot of time to church activities (35.9%). This percent is higher for women in comparison to men. We think that this fact explains the more active social position of American women.

Much information should be discussed about the college students. Of course, young people are actively involved in volunteering work. Their aim is not to earn money, but to socialize and to help all kinds of people. According to the statistics, in 2009, 3.2 million college students dedicated 307.3 million hours of service to communities across the country. Education (30.6%) and youth service organizations are the most popular places through which college students volunteer.

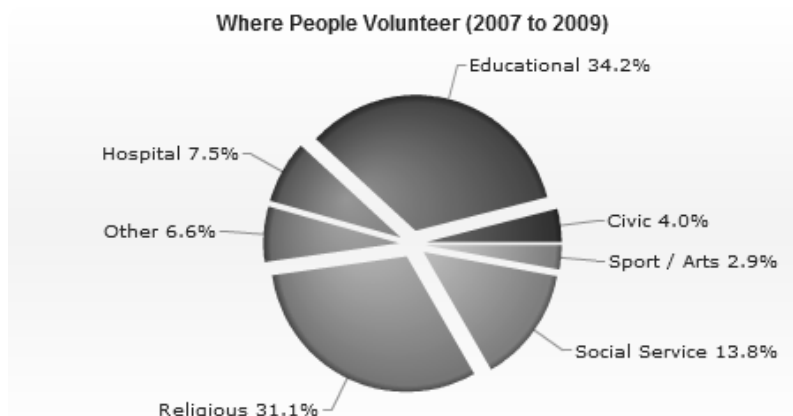


It is necessary to mention the active role of the elderly (65 and

older) in different volunteering activities. In 2009 alone, 9.1 million the elderly dedicated 1.6 billion hours of service to communities across the country. Religious institutions are the most popular organizations in which older adults volunteer.

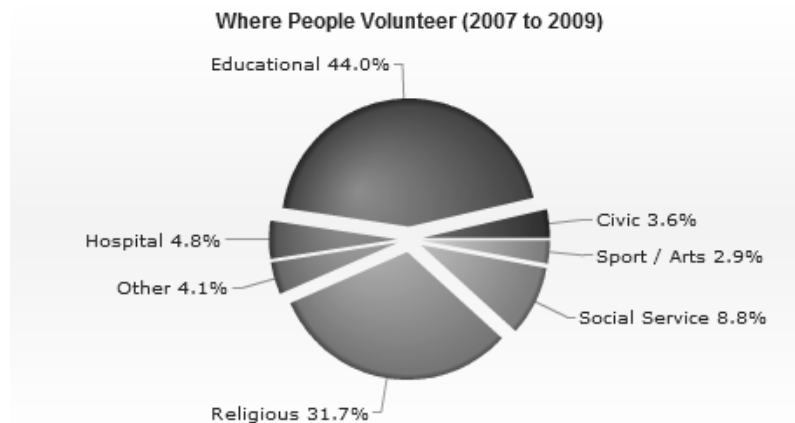


Volunteering is popular among teenagers (ages 16 to 19). This kind of work is in demand, and teenagers try to do their best to help people. According to the table below, education and youth service organizations are the most popular places through which teenagers volunteer.



The last group of participants which should be mentioned is parents. In 2009, 22.3 million parents dedicated 2.6 billion hours of service to communities across the country. Education

and youth service organizations are the most popular places through in parents volunteer.



To summarize, we conclude that volunteering in America is extremely popular. Practically all members of American society are interested in such kind of work because it brings pleasure and spiritual satisfaction, as well as good relationships, new acquaintances and a great deal of positive emotions.

ACTFL 2010 Annual Convention and World Language Expo

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention and World Languages Expo was held on November 19-21 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, MA, bringing together more than 6,000 teachers, administrators, method instructors and students of foreign languages at all levels from across the world. The convention featured over 600 educational sessions on such topics as Assessment, Culture, Curriculum, Learner Variables, Literature, Materials, Methods/Techniques, Policy/Issues, Professional Development, Research, Specific Purposes, Standards and Technology.

On November 20, Dr. Aurora Fiengo-Varn represented Mississippi as Best of SCOLT 2010 with her presentation, "Incorporating Afro-Latino Culture in the Spanish Language Class." Mrs. Lynne McClendon, SCOLT Executive Director, asked Dr. Fiengo-Varn to write an article based on her presentation to be published in *Dimension*, the official refereed publication of SCOLT.

The Reflection of Interpersonal Intelligence in the Classroom Environment

Eray Sevingil

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Abstract

Because children have a wide range of capacities, it is necessary to determine their strengths at an early age so that in order to incorporate these strengths in an education plan (Gardner 1993). In the opinion of Gardner (1999), people are unique in terms of their intelligences, which arise from the combination of genetic heritage and life conditions in a given culture and era. Individuals cannot be described as having a single quantifiable intelligence. Gardner puts forward a pluralistic approach to the notion of intelligence, proposing that seven types of intelligences. (Two other types were added later in Gardner's theory but will not be discussed here.) "Interpersonal intelligence" will be discussed in detail in this paper. Individuals thrive and grow when they interact with people. Interpersonally intelligenced people enjoys socializing and have empathy for the feelings of others. In terms of the classroom environment, peer and group activities, such as jigsaw puzzles, role plays and simulations that demand interaction with highly sociable people in the classroom environment can develop the abilities of interpersonally intelligenced learners. This paper presents reflections of interpersonal intelligence in the classroom environment and offers various ways to cater to the learners who possess interpersonal intelligence.

Introduction

Gardner (1983) puts forward a pluralistic approach to the notion of intelligence in his book *Frames of Mind*, in which he proposes the Multiple Intelligences Theory (MI), a revolutionary idea that proposes no standard definition of intelligence because each person is unique. Consequently, Smagorinsky (1995) contends that standardized tests have focused only on linguistic and logical intelligences, which have

been rewarded in a scholastic context for ages, for example, the intelligence quotient (IQ) constructed by Binet. Our testing society is derived from an earlier era in which behaviorist learning and theoretical views of cognition were popular, says Gardner (1993), and linguistic and logical intelligences should not be the focus of these tests, as individuals cannot be arrayed on a single intellectual dimension. Likewise, "smartness" cannot be viewed in terms of a score on a standardized tests (Campbell, Campbell and Dickinson, 1999). For many years intelligence has been considered a general ability found in varying degrees in all individuals and critical for successful performance at school (Gardner 1993), but people possess varying amounts of intelligences which they combine and use in highly personal ways. Taking human differences seriously lies at the heart of Gardner's theory.

Gardner (1999), instead of relying on the results of psychometric instruments, lays out a set of seven separate criteria. The MI Theory consists of seven (later, nine) intelligences, based on the idea that intelligence is not fixed (Mccliskey 1995). First, linguistic-verbal intelligence found in individuals who can think in words and use language to express meanings. Journalists are said to have this type of intelligence. Second, logical-mathematical intelligence learners calculate, quantify and carry out complex mathematical problems. Engineers possess this type of intelligence. Third, spatially intelligenced people, such as sailors, can think in three dimensional ways. Fourth, dancers have bodily-kinesthetic intelligence; that is, they are good at movement. Fifth, musical intelligence is evident in people, such as composers, who are sensitive to the melody and rhythm. Sixth, naturalist intelligence is found in people, such as botanists, who observe patterns in nature.

There are also intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. Intrapersonal intelligence includes the capacity to know one's own strengths, goals and feelings. People with this intelligence focus their thoughts on self-reflection.

In early childhood this intrapersonal intelligence may gradually lead to interpersonal intelligence, as people interact with each other and care about other people. Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand and work with others to

achieve coalition (Canone and Smith 1997). The people with interpersonal intelligence can sense feelings and learn by interacting with others. They identify moods and interpret them to empathize easily. They respond to the needs of others (Smagorinsky 1995). They see other people's points of view and help solve conflicts. They feel comfortable in a crowd, enjoying group activities. Gardner calls these people "people smart." Teachers, clinicians, religious leaders, actors, political leaders, sales people and counselors need this type of intelligence.

Interpersonal intelligence develops day by day as children grow up. Teachers can develop interpersonal intelligence by teaching their students to respect to the diversity of people. Teachers should arrange exercises that require working in pairs or in groups: for example, a learner can sit with another learner and give instructions to draw or write something. Campbell (1990) creates seven learning centers, each dedicated to one intelligence. For example, learners may spend time in the Working Together Center to develop cooperative learning skills, answer questions, brainstorm ideas and discuss the topic of the day collaboratively.

Interpersonal intelligence is expressed in cooperative group work, involvement and use of social gatherings as a context for learning (Canone 1997). Learners should be encouraged to use empathy, understanding the needs of others. They should be involved in counseling. These learners can be taught through seminars, dialogues, conferences and group activities. Desk arrangement is important: desks should be arranged for pair work and group work. In addition, peer teaching and discussion are highly recommended. Also, experiencing life from others' perspective is beneficial. The teacher can ask students to think in the way that a character from a novel thinks. Person to person communication and cooperation should be encouraged.

Teachers should integrate socialization into all curricular ideas. Learners should work in teams and learn through service. They need to be involved in discussions and problem solving activities. Some activities that are useful for interpersonally intelligenced learners are discussions, brainstorming as a group role play, debates, interviews and information exchange exercises that involve two-way communication Problem

solving activities are useful in that they require cooperation by participants in smaller or larger groups. Simulation, when people as a group try to create an "as if environment," may be based on real life actions. For example, learners studying a historical period may dress up in costumes of that time. A peer sharing activity can evolve into peer tutoring from time to time; that is, a learner teaches specific material to another learner (Crookes and Chaudron 1991). Peer teaching leads to greater motivation, involvement and self-esteem (Kumpulainen and Mutanen 1999).

Learning is more productive and enjoyable when learners feel a sense of belonging (Campbell, Campbell and Dickinson 1999). Cooperative learning enhances achievement. A useful cooperative learning activity is problem solving, which fosters interaction. Each learner takes a turn to solve a problem, while others check for accuracy and the correct answers. (Campbell, Campbell and Dickinson 1999). Pair work activities, such as practicing dialogues with a partner, question-answer exercises and peer-editing are also fun. Drama can be enjoyable and demands interaction. Moreover, story building, singing and joint story writing are beneficial and motivating (Brown 2000).

Group activities foster interaction and offer the opportunity of putting the language to a real and immediate use (Byrne 1980). In a group, there is no concern for accuracy, and the stress of public performance is reduced (Brumfit 1984). Cooperative group work brings learners together (Berdondini and Cowie 2001): they feel secure in a cooperative setting. When learners work in groups, the focus of attention is diffused among the group. Group projects can be reviewed before presenting them to the whole class. Group work increases the rate of learning, with more opportunity for negotiation of meaning (Leung and Spratt 2000). Group work generates interactive language, with more interaction and negotiation of meaning. (Brown 2000). Members of the group become more autonomous and share responsibilities.

Conclusion

Education focuses on bringing out potential, and each learner with diverse human gifts should find a place in schools. Teachers should be sensitive to the individual differences,

because education works effectively if these differences are taken into account. Teachers should develop ways to facilitate learning by engaging the nine intelligences. All the intelligences may be developed in a classroom environment, but in particular, the interpersonal intelligence is very important. Individuals talk to survive. They interact. At the heart of interpersonal intelligence lies the need for interaction in order to gain information, a most important quality of learning.

Students' successful performance depends on a team of individuals: if they work together, they will be more successful, says Gardner (1993). Teachers and students can work together to enhance multiple intelligences through a variety of activities.

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**Russian Teachers' Conference in April at
University of Mississippi
Valentina Iepuri
University of Mississippi**

The Department of Modern Languages of the University of Mississippi will host the 13th annual conference of the Central Association of Russian Teachers of America (CARTA) April 1-3, 2011. Everyone interested is welcome!

CARTA consolidates and coordinates the efforts of the Russian language and area studies educators in seven states (Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas) in order to enhance and expand Russian studies in the region. Currently among CARTA members are representatives of major universities from the area, as well as from middle and high schools. Scholars from abroad will be included as presenters.

Information about CARTA conference in Oxford, MS can be found at the following website:

http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/modern_languages/ModernLanguages.html

Mississippi Chapter
American Association of Teachers of Spanish
and Portuguese
2011 Early Language Learning (ELL) Poster
Contest

ELL en 2011: Mejor comienzo, mejor futuro
ELL em 2011: Para bom começo, melhor futuro

Entry Requirements

Sponsoring Teachers

1. Teachers may submit a total of three posters per grade level: K-3, 4-5, and 6-8.
2. Sponsoring teachers of students entering the contest *must be current AATSP members* (to become a member go to <www.aatsp.org>).

Criteria for Poster Development

3. Each poster must be created by only one student; multiple artists on one poster will not be considered.
4. Posters must be 12 X18 inches.
5. Posters may be created by using pencils, crayons, pens, paints, or markers.
6. Any writing on the poster must be in *SPANISH and/or PORTUGUESE*.
7. The theme *ELL en 2011: Mejor comienzo, mejor futuro / ELL em 2011: Para bom começo, melhor futuro* must appear on the poster.
8. Students may use a variety of artistic approaches to represent the theme.
9. Posters will be judged on their applicability to the theme, creativity, uniqueness, and overall neatness.
10. Each poster must be accompanied by the AATSP *Student Information Form* (containing this information) which may be duplicated as needed. PLEASE TYPE all information and attach the form to the back of the student poster with tape ON ALL FOUR SIDES of the form; do not staple the form to the poster.

Poster Submission

11. Posters must be RECEIVED by March 21, 2011.
12. Mail posters first class, FLAT, not rolled or folded, and protected by cardboard.
13. Mail posters directly to: Yohanna Jiménez, MS AATSP Poster Contest Director; William Carey University; Department of Language and Literature; 498 Tuscan Ave., Box 6; Hattiesburg, MS 39401.
14. Teachers of winning students will be notified by the end of May 2011.

For additional information, contact <yjimenez@wmcarey.edu> 601-913-6765.

<h2>News Notes</h2>

Allen Clark (University of Mississippi) reports that on November 11, 2010, Professor Mahdi Alesh delivered the 50th speech in the Longest Lecture Series titled, "Learning Arabic: The Risk of Identifying with the Adversary." Alesh, a professor of Arabic and applied linguistics, recently assumed the position of the head of the research chair at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, after having acted as the Associate Dean for International Affairs at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The purpose of the lecture was twofold: to acquaint the audience with the Arabic language and culture and to help them dispel some of the highly negative stereotypical images of its speakers, which have circulated in the media for decades. The lecture provided the audience with a brief history of teaching Arabic in the United States and an evaluation of the Arabic field today. The talk concluded with information about assessing learner language abilities and the impact of this assessment on instruction across institutions.

Julia Bussade (University of Mississippi) reports that in late April, the Office of Information Technology (IT) teamed up with the Provost's Office to purchase 16 Dell Latitude Mini laptops for the Department of Modern Languages. This

decision came about from observations in her dissertation titled, "Instructors' Attitudes toward the Use of Technology at the University of Mississippi." Virtually all Spanish and Portuguese instructors used PowerPoint and other kinds of instructional technology in their classes, yet not all of the classrooms to which they were assigned had full lecterns. Therefore, they relied heavily on IT Media to deliver laptops, creating more demand than could be met. IT and Modern Languages saw a mutually beneficial solution: to equip Spanish and Portuguese instructors with Dell mini laptops that they could use to make classroom presentations, thereby removing the need for deliveries every class period.

Aurora Fiengo-Varn (Mississippi Valley State University) was honored on November 30, 2010 by the Mississippi Humanities Council as the 2010 MVSU Humanities Teacher of the Year.

As part of the recognition, Dr. Fiengo-Varn gave a presentation, "A Place of Encounters: The Writings of Guamán Poma de Ayala." Dr. Fiengo-Varn is well-known to MFLA members as a Best of Mississippi and Best of SCOLT winner and will publish her presentation from the ACTFL 2010 annual meeting in an upcoming issue of the journal *Dimension*.

Elizabeth Harrison (Houston High School/Mississippi State University) reminds everyone that the MFLA has a Facebook page. Search for "Mississippi Foreign Language Association" to locate it. Our aim is to provide a network for world language educators and friends of world languages. Feel free to announce events from your foreign language classes, add photos, videos, post questions, topics for discussion, etc. Your comments and suggestions are welcome and encouraged. You can also send an e-mail to <msfla@groups.facebook.com> and your message will be posted on the wall.

Virginia Gale Jolly (Gautier High School) reports that classes at Gautier High School are gearing up for a school exchange with 20 students (11 boys and 9 girls, with two chaperones) with the Lycée Maurice Genevoix in Decize, France, located in Burgundy. Many activities have been organized for the visiting exchange students and their American hosts, including a tour of

the old place and the history of the Gautier family, founders of the town; a trip to the New Orleans School of Cooking; a bilingual visit to the Walter Anderson Museum of Art, for which Doug Mayatt will be doing the French interpretation and a hands-on activity; presentations by historians Ray Bellande and Gail Buzhardt, both experts in the French presence in Mississippi; a Franco-American dinner; and a tour of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College led by French professor Cindy Smith. The French students will be at Gautier High School from February 6-19. Then, "Madame Jolly" will lead a group to France on May 25. The Americans' trip to France will include a two-week homestay with families in Decize and a week in Paris.

Diane Marting (University of Mississippi), Graduate Program Coordinator for French, German, and Spanish, counts nine new graduate students this academic year, two in French, one in German, and six in Spanish. The MA program has been strengthened by recent revisions of the requirements and an additional web presence. The interactions with the MA program in TESL have been increasing, such that most MA students consider a subfield in TESL while in Oxford, while a few take subfields in other European languages or specialize in literature. Diane says, "We are considering adding a segment in Film and Culture to the MA in the near future, which would further consolidate our program by recognizing our teaching and research strengths in these areas." For more information, please write to <dmarting@olemiss.edu>.

Beth Pierce (Columbia High School) reports that Columbia High School will host 30 students from the Lycée Geoffroy St.-Hilaire from Etampes, France, for a two-week exchange April 2-16. This is the sixth year of the exchange! Students will stay in the homes of their pen pals, and the classes will make excursions to New Orleans, Jackson and Natchez.