A STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' SECOND LANGUAGE USE IN THE CONTEXT OF A COLLABORATIVE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER TASK

By

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To my Mom and to all the women who reclaimed
their independence through education

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This study explored how English language learners use language to interact with each other in the context of a collaborative graphic organizer task. Six adult English language learners from different cultural and language backgrounds of the same intermediate writing proficiency levels but at different levels of spoken English participated in a collaborative graphic organizer task.

According to the findings from the study, the students used a large span of academic vocabulary at varying levels of difficulty and both simple and complex sentence structures. Students' conversations involved multiple language functions expressed in various ways. The nature of the conversations was academic and activity-oriented, centering around the goal of completing the graphic organizer collaboratively. The final step of the task was the independent completion of an essay.

The researcher observed that in order to achieve a successful level of language use with multiple exchanges and conversations that flow smoothly, partners need to ask questions, give responses in extensive detail, and expand on subtopics with further examples and explanations. The interactions involved opportunities where students provided help for each other through various interactional roles, interactional styles, and

instances of conceptual, linguistic, and strategic scaffolding. This study can help teachers understand how English language learners interact in a collaborative graphic organizer task, and it has implications for adaptations in using graphic organizers in collaborative tasks as tools for English language learners' linguistic and academic development.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Academic tasks often require students to use complex skill sets, such as understanding printed material in textbooks across various content area topics, using critical thinking skills when reading, and producing academic written and spoken language. These skills can be difficult to acquire even for native speakers of the English language. English language learners in academic settings face even greater challenges because producing utterances and comprehending content area reading materials written in a language other than one's own are challenging tasks for ELLs (Cummins, 2000; Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1989), but such academic tasks are one of the most fundamental skills necessary for academic success. Academic language is needed to actively participate in a school, where all the students are expected to be familiar with the rules of communication and the use of language in academic settings.

Cummins (2007) defines academic language proficiency as a student's "access and expertise in understanding and using the specific kind of language that is employed in educational contexts and is required to complete academic tasks (p. 122)." Within the context of this definition, academic language proficiency entails all the members of the schooling culture to acquire the associated knowledge of this cultural context and metacognitive strategies necessary to function effectively in the discourse domain of the school to be able to fully participate in all the literacy events within the school setting (Cummins, 2007).

What is Academic Language?

Throughout this document, “academic language” will be used as a general term that refers to “the language that is used by teachers and students for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge and skills … imparting new information, describing abstract ideas, and developing students’ conceptual understanding” (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994, p. 40). Academic language proficiency can be defined as students’ ability to use the language required to participate in the instructional tasks of school including understanding as well as expressing ideas about academic content. If a student has academic proficiency in a language, s/he can comprehend and communicate by incorporating academic vocabulary, language functions, and discourse structures in different subject areas in tasks that require the student to understand the topic, gain knowledge about the topic, interact about the topic, and share his/her knowledge about the topic with others (Butler & Bailey, 2002). *Academic language functions* (ALF) are on the other hand the uses or purposes of language in academic work such as defining classifying, and hypothesizing (Kidd, 1996). Chamot and O'Malley (1987) describe academic language functions to have an important role in developing students’ academic language proficiency through their Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), and indicate that academic language functions are an integral part of academic communication, such as explaining, informing, describing, classifying, and evaluating (1987, p. 239).

Linguistic Complexity in Academic Language

In academic settings, English language learners have to deal with the complexity of academic language at high levels of linguistic load (Meyer, 2000) and also display academic performance that is sufficient to keep up with their peers for whom English is

their first language. Some of the issues that ELLs struggle with when it comes to linguistic load are to be able to comprehend the structure of the language, to understand new vocabulary and concepts and to recognize the knowledge/discourse structure of the reading material. Academic language places different linguistic demands on English language learners (ELLs) than social language does because it has its own discourse structures. For instance, *examine* and *cause* are the type of words that are often found in textbook prose and academic tests, and students are expected to understand and use these words as part of academic tasks, whereas *look at* and *make* would most often take place in daily speech (Cunningham & Moore, 1993). Furthermore, academic language is decontextualized, and when students are reading on their own, they are not able to ask questions, express confusions, and get immediate feedback. ELLs may become overwhelmed with unknown vocabulary items in academic texts or talk. Complicated syntactic structures and new vocabulary items can make strings of sentences hard to understand, causing ELLs to become intimidated or disengaged.

Academic language also requires students to communicate their messages in line with the conventional discourse patterns and global and domain specific vocabulary found in academic texts. Students need to be able to not only recognize these patterns and vocabulary but also produce language that uses this type of academic discourse as part of academic tasks at school (Cazden, 2001).

Teaching Academic Language and Academic Content

Because ELLs experience difficulty in understanding and producing the academic language, they are more likely to fall behind in comprehending academic content. Therefore, language instruction and content instruction at every level of education need

to go hand in hand in order for ELLs to be able to keep up with their academic development and language development. Without tasks that are designed for active participation and socialization into academic discourse, ELLs may not be able to reach the level of linguistic development necessary to understand the language of school (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004).

All teachers who are involved in educating ELLs have a big responsibility in applying teaching strategies that enhance not only conceptual development but also second language acquisition. Teachers need to design their teaching around providing opportunities to students to make the topic more comprehensible and to provide interaction opportunities for ELLs in academic tasks.

This study has originated as an effort to improve instructional strategies that can help ELLs' academic language proficiency, and the main focus of this study is collaborative use of graphic organizers. In particular, this study explored English language learners' language use in collaborative activities based on visual representation of ideas with an emphasis on the linguistic and socicultural factors that are involved during a collaborative meaning making process.

Vygotsky's Theory on Scaffolding

According to Vygotsky's theory (1978), language acquisition takes place through collaborative dialogue where the learner has the motivational goal of acquiring the necessary knowledge from the tutor in an exchange of utterances through collaborative meaning making. Having developed the skills necessary to operate within the language and cultural community, the learner extends this activity to the other members of the community, and this developmental learning process is called scaffolding (Newman & Holzman, 1993). Scaffolding is a term that originates from cognitive psychology and L1

research (Flick, 2000), but it entails a sociocultural understanding of learning where a more skilled participant can provide a novice learner the supportive conditions by means of speech and enable the novice learner to extend their current level to a higher level (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

The general notion of scaffolding also holds that a more knowledgeable person can help improve a less knowledgeable person's learning by providing interaction and modeling of the targeted behavior (Vygotsky, 1978). Within the context of second language acquisition, the notion of scaffolding can go beyond an expert-novice relationship. In other words, learners that are at equal level of language proficiency can also help improve one another's linguistic development when interacting with one another. This interaction is called "collective scaffolding" (Donato, 1994; Moll, 1990). Students who work in collaborative tasks together can help each other become more capable in producing utterances in the English language. Collective scaffolding differs from Initiation-Response-Evaluation, IRE (Mehan, 1979), or as more frequently used in second language acquisition studies, Initiation-Response-Feedback, IRF, in the sense that IRF is teacher-driven talk (Cazden, 2001; Lemke, 1990; Sinclair and Courthard, 1975; Walqui, 2006). Therefore, rather than using language in a teacher-prompted conversation, in collective scaffolding students go beyond IRF by using the targeted language with one another in order to accomplish tasks with a purpose to communicate rather than just using the language forms in a scripted setting.

Language Scaffolding in Collaborative Tasks

Language scaffolding within the context of this study can be defined as a term that describes the modified interactions and language support provided by English language learners when students engage in dialogue with one another in a collaborative language

learning task (Gibbons, 2002; Gibbons, 2009). The concept of language scaffolding is elaborated in this study to describe the nature of interactions among English language learners in that collaborative work among English language learners may provide opportunities for language scaffolding (Foster & Ohta, 2005). The collaborative graphic organizer task within this research study was expected to help students become familiar with both the knowledge structure of comparison-contrast as a function and the formal language that this function involves. The collaborative nature of the task was expected to help students use the language of comparison-contrast and provide one another "comprehensible input" and comprehensible output" in a social setting with enhanced opportunities for language scaffolding. The task is designed in a way that prompts each pair to participate and ask questions that maximize production.

According to a review of L2 acquisition/learning literature by Long and Porter (1985), group work promotes language learning opportunities where L2 learners acquire English with less anxiety and greater practice. A number of studies (e.g., Pica & Doughty, 1985;Varonis & Gass, 1985) concluded that when non-native speaker pairs participate in interactions, the conversations involve negotiations of meaning with increased comprehensible input and modified interactions that can improve second language acquisition.

Gibbons (2002) reports that students performed more fluently when they were sharing their findings with the rest of the class following an initial talk in a group activity. Also, the spoken language students performed during group reports was beginning to sound more and more like the "written language." Within this task-based setting, after an exposure to the targeted language forms and with the help of the teacher's modeling,

students were working together to accomplish a hands-on task that required collaborative interaction for problem-solving within the task. Hence, Gibbons (2002) suggests that “scaffolded interaction among peers connects conversational language to academic discourse, both written and spoken” (p. 20).

Negotiation of ideas during collaborative tasks gives second language learners an opportunity to both practice the second language and be exposed to meaningful language input in the second language. “As [second language learners] negotiate, they work linguistically to achieve the needed comprehensibility, whether repeating a message verbatim, adjusting its syntax, changing its words, or modifying its form and meaning in a host of other ways” (Pica, 1994, p. 494). In other words, when English language learners interact with one another in a dialogue, they are striving to find ways and means of creating comprehensible input for the listeners in the conversation, which is both a linguistic and cognitive effort to understand the topic. Dialogue provides learners with the opportunities to manipulate words and sentences for the best possible communication opportunities within their language development. Swain (1998) points out, “Language is simultaneously a means of communication and a tool for thinking. Dialogue provides both the occasion for language learning and the evidence for it. Language is both process and product” (p. 320). In this sense, comprehensible input is hypothesized to be a fruitful outcome of conversational and/written exchanges between second language speakers and leads into an interaction-based second language learning environment (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1983).

Collaborative Use of Graphic Organizers

Collaborative formation of graphic organizers, such as concept maps, thinking maps, and other types of visual tools can be used effectively as an instructional strategy

during peer-interaction (Ryve, 2004). The outcome is one or more concept maps or other types of graphic organizers, such as KWL charts or Venn diagrams that students create as a group that result in collective construction of knowledge in a teacher-coordinated classroom setting.

Graphic organizers are visual tools that have a potential for increasing comprehension of reading materials by giving students a better visual understanding of the concepts and helping them perceive the textual structure (Novak & Govin, 1984). During a collaborative task with graphic organizers, students are instructed to graphically illustrate relationships between concepts and ways of how these concepts are connected to one another. Students can organize and enhance their knowledge about different topics when completing graphic organizers as part of an instructional sequence. Graphic organizers may help facilitate ELLs' conceptual and linguistic development because they can provide students with opportunities to see how already-familiar and new concepts are connected to one another. Furthermore, when used in collaborative tasks, graphic organizers can also serve as tools for increasing students' awareness of academic language use and for enhancing their second language production skills. Systematic use of collaborative tasks where students design graphic organizers about content material collaboratively may ease linguistic load and increase comprehension of academic discourse. Therefore, collaborative use of graphic organizers for interaction and language scaffolding can be an effective teaching strategy that may give ELLs opportunities to use academic language while building better understandings of the learning material.

When students build graphic organizers, they may become more aware of their own understanding by becoming actively involved in the meaning-making process (Ryve, 2004). Also, graphic organizers may help learners build a stronger conceptual framework as a foundation for new knowledge, and students' understandings of the concepts may increase as they make an effort to communicate their own conceptions. (Ostwald, 1996; Roth & Roychoudhury, 1994; van Boxtel, van der Linden, Roelofs, & Erkens, 2002). Collaborative use of graphic organizers may promote deeper processing of knowledge through explanations, justifications for thinking, and propositions as a result of the higher quality of student interaction (Ostwald, 1996; Roth & Roychoudhury, 1994; van Boxtel, van der Linden, Roelofs, & Erkens, 2002).

Common Themes in Graphic Organizer Research

There is a large body of research on the role of comprehensible input in improving second language acquisition (Dupuy & Krashen, 1993; Ellis, 1995; Gass, 1997; Krashen, 1988, 1989). However, there is a gap in research on the collaborative use of graphic organizers with an emphasis on second language use. Furthermore, research on the collaborative use of graphic organizers as effective instructional tools even with native speakers of English in grades K-12 has been minimal. Previous studies on graphic organizers within the context of second language learning have been rare and have focused on quantitative accounts of second language development in a graphic organizer-supported environment for learners (Tang, 1992). Students' interactional discourse originating in such an environment has not been studied with an in-depth analysis of discourse patterns generated during collaborative activities that center around collaborative meaning making with the help of graphic organizers and/or the collaborative formation of graphic organizers.

When individual learners are assessed for reading comprehension in an activity that involves graphic organizers, the process typically does not involve any verbal exchange or actual opportunities for oral language use, so there is no peer interaction that would provide communicative language experiences. However, research shows that co-building knowledge may enhance the activation of prior knowledge of the members in a learning group (Ostwald, 1996; Roth & Roychoudhury, 1994; van Boxtel, van der Linden, Roelofs, & Erkens, 2002). In a collaborative learning environment where the task is to design a graphic organizer, learners are expected to represent their knowledge linguistically and visually to a degree that satisfies the other group members. This allows the learners to present their knowledge more explicitly. Learners must deepen their understanding of the reading material in order to help peers make better sense of it. These activities result in a better activation of prior knowledge as well as in stronger connections between the newly learned material and background knowledge. Therefore, collaborative knowledge construction creates opportunities for more meaningful learning (King, 1999; Ostwald, 1996).

Rationale for the Study

Graphic organizers and concept maps may be considered particularly effective as educational tools to increase comprehensibility of subject matter. Graphic organizers can also increase students' higher order thinking skills because they can help students perceive the knowledge structures and overarching relationships between ideas. Using graphic organizers as part of classroom instruction may foster ELLs' academic language development. Furthermore, with additional cooperative activities designed around using graphic organizers, teachers can increase student-to-student interaction in class. These activities can provide meaningful communication for ELLs' students and

multiple opportunities to make sense of the text as a group and scaffold each other's learning process.

The main instructional goal of the collaborative graphic organizer task was to create opportunities for ELLs' to listen to the English spoken by their peers and to use English with peers where English language learners learn new vocabulary, language structures, and language expressions from one another. Such activities provide students with more opportunities for language input and language production, and therefore these types of collaborative activities are commonly used in settings where English is taught as a second language. Within the setting of this study, the focus is on academic language, and because academic language is more formal in nature, verbal interactions on topics in academic English can help students extend the language use into their writing by adapting and adhering to the conventions of academic writing. Consequently, the collaborative graphic organizer task integrates language scaffolding opportunities with opportunities for language use with the help of graphic organizers as tools for extended communication.

The collaborative graphic organizer task was designed to help LLC students become aware of the academic language embedded in different types of discourse structures and use the discourse markers that are prevalent in these discourse structures first through conversing in English with peers and then through writing in English individually. Each academic text involves language specific to its discourse structure. For instance, a text written based on comparison-contrast will use language relating comparisons and contrasts. A huge portion of academic tasks at school is based on students being able to talk about/write about what they have read in English. If

students are familiar with discourse structures and the type of language prevalent in each, they may have an easier time when talking about and writing about comparison and contrast. Furthermore, students can also recognize discourse structures when they see these discourse markers in a text, which may also increase students' reading comprehension skills and help them become independent readers.

The collaborative graphic organizer task matches with the goals of the reading/writing class in teaching students how to recognize comparison-contrast and cause-and-effect discourse structures and how to write academic texts that are based on these discourse structures, and both the teachers and the coordinators at the LLC approve the use of the task in the LLC classroom as part of the curriculum.

As noted earlier, the main body of research on graphic organizers has not focused on student discourse produced during their use in classroom instruction. Prior studies on graphic organizers are mostly experimental research on the effects of an instructional intervention on individual students' learning, and they lack an in-depth qualitative depiction of the role of language used by students (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2001; Hawk, 1986; Nguyen, 2009; Robinson & Kievra,1995.) This study explores the sociocultural and linguistic nature of second language use during a collaborative graphic organizer task with a detailed analysis of students' collaborative discourse.

Research Problem

English language learners in K-12 school settings need opportunities to use the English language in order to improve their academic language skills. Proficiency in daily conversational skills in English is not satisfactory for academic success. ELLs need to participate in conversations about the academic content in order to improve their academic language skills, and their classroom instruction needs to be supported with

instructional tools that help ELLs gain awareness of academic language. Collaborative formation of graphic organizers can be a promising task for increasing interaction in classrooms. This in turn would create opportunities for ELLs to receive language scaffolding from their peers and to use their academic language skills.

Specific Research Questions

The research question guiding the discourse analysis process was explored as part of a graphic organizer activity that involved ELLs conversing in English and collaborating to complete graphic organizers for a text using comparison-contrast as a language function:

- How do English language learners use language in a collaborative graphic organizer activity?

Significance of the Study

There is a gap in research on the use of graphic organizers in cooperative settings with an emphasis on both language development and conceptual understanding. Studying discourse produced in such settings can help us understand problems as well as strengths of such learning environments and reach a better understanding of how collaborative design and use of graphic organizers aid scaffolding language production during cooperative meaning-making tasks.

In-depth analysis of classroom discourse generated during collaborative use of graphic organizers can shed light onto ELLs' second language development and illuminate the dynamics involved during linguistic and cultural exchanges between second language speakers and their peers. Hence, we can acquire a deeper understanding of the nature of students' thinking processes in a more communicative

setting rather than trying to study their thinking via think-aloud or recall protocols that lack authentic conversations when exploring students' language use.

Definition of Terms:

- **Academic language:** Academic language refers to "the language that is used by teachers and students for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge and skills…imparting new information, describing abstract ideas, and developing students' conceptual understanding" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, p. 40).

- **Academic language functions (ALF)**: Academic language functions are the uses or purposes of language in academic work such as defining classifying, and hypothesizing (Kidd, 1996). Chamot and O'Malley (1987) describe academic language functions to have an important role in developing students' academic language proficiency through their Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), and indicate that academic language functions are an integral part of academic communication, such as explaining, informing, describing, classifying, and evaluating (p. 239).

- **Comprehensible input:** Comprehensible input really stands for linguistic knowledge and how the learner makes sense of this knowledge by being exposed to it, making sense of it, and integrating it into their present pool of rules governing language formation (Krashen, 1994).

- **Graphic organizers:** Graphic organizers are visual tools for increasing comprehension of academic language by giving students a better visual understanding of the concepts and helping them perceive the textual structure (Novak & Govin, 1984).

- **Knowledge structures:** Knowledge structures are the underlying logical sequencing of the material based on different discourse structures, such as cause-and effect, classifying, and comparing and contrasting for organizing a topic within different types of academic or non-academic texts (Mohan, 1986).

- **Language socialization:** The process of being socialized or acculturated into a specific community of practice such as 'academic' social practice through the use of language and socialization to use language (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

- **Language scaffolding:** According to Vygotsky's theory, language acquisition takes place through collaborative dialogue where the learner has the motivational goal of receiving the necessary knowledge from the tutor in an exchange of utterances through collaborative meaning making. Having received the skills necessary to operate within the language and cultural community, the learner extends this activity to the other members of the community, and this process is called scaffolding (Newman & Holzman, 1993). Language scaffolding is a term that describes the modified interactions and language support provided by English

language learners when students engage in dialogue with one another in a collaborative language learning task.

- **Negotiation of meaning:** Negotiation of meaning is a process that participants in a conversation go through to reach a clear understanding of each other. In second language acquisition studies, negotiation of meaning involves the negotiations around the use of linguistic devices necessary to ask for clarification, rephrasing, and confirming (Pica, 1994). Collaborative activities provide English language learners the opportunity to improve their communicative competence and helps them socialize into different types of social and academic discourse (Foster & Ohta, 2007).

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

English language learners in academic settings have to demonstrate academic performance sufficient to keep up with their peers who speak English fluently. Graphic organizers can help facilitate ELLs' conceptual and linguistic development by providing students opportunities to see how concepts are connected to one another, to understand the discourse structures within the academic texts visually, and to increase their awareness of academic language use. Furthermore, when used in interactive tasks that require learners to communicate collaboratively in English, graphic organizers can serve as tools for acquiring academic language and for enhancing ELLs' second language production skills.

This chapter will examine related literature on the use of graphic organizers both as an instructional tool to support student learning and as a pedagogical tool for second language development with an emphasis on collaborative classroom discourse. Table 2.1 depicts the organizational structure of Chapter 2, starting with graphic organizers as a general topic and leading up to discourse analysis and research in collaborative dialogue in the classroom.

What are Graphic Organizers?

Ausubel's learning theory is one of the major contributions to the use of graphic representation of knowledge structures enhancing student learning. According to Ausubel (1963), we process new information under already existing more inclusive concepts in cognitive structures called "subsumers." Meaningful learning takes place in proportion to the strength of these anchoring ideas. If the base of this anchoring system is clear and stable, better learning and retention takes place, as meaningful learning is

anchored and rote-learning is not. In this manner, learners with well-organized cognitive structures successfully integrate the new information into their cognitive systems and those with weak cognitive structures experience difficulty in retaining of the new information. Ausubel (1960) posits that advance organizers facilitate the subsumption that is necessary to bridge the gap between what the learner already knows and what he/she is about to learn.

Ausubel's theory on advance organizers claimed that advance organizers would help connect what students already knew and what they were about to learn, but the academia was not satisfied with his explanations as to how this goal gets accomplished, and this opened the door for criticism. Ausubel's understanding of advance organizers was taken as a crude omission of specific detail and failure to promote critical thinking. Barron (1984) proposed a change in the structure of the advance organizers by adding a tree diagram to represent the concepts and named "structured overviews". With the use of lines, arrows, and spatial arrangement techniques, Barron's organizers were able to capture the connection within the structure of the text more visually than Ausubel's prose in outline form.

Barron's modifications gradually took an even more pictorial and visual form, visually representing the cognitive process of connecting new material to previously learned concepts. Such graphic organizers involved two different forms: participatory graphic organizers that require students to fill out the spaces that were left blank intentionally for student participation, and a final form that has all the information already filled in (Hawk, 1986). Today graphic organizers have evolved into more customized forms with changes that have taken place based upon teachers' and researchers'

instructional needs and goals, and the definition of graphic organizers today is more comprehensive and includes a multitude of different visual and auditory material, such as slides, objects, games, videos, maps, manipulatives, and computer programs.

Paivio's (1981) Dual Coding Theory is another foundational piece in explaining how graphic organizers can help with cognitive processing. Dual Coding Theory (DCT) stems from cognitive memory models and is an extension of the Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) studies of how the mind processes information. Paivio's DCT mainly posits how visual information is processed and stored in memory with an equal emphasis on verbal and non-verbal processing to represent human cognition. Cognition involves two subsystems that work simultaneously, one processing visual input (i.e. imagery) and one processing with linguistic input. The verbal subsystem is responsible for processing and storing linguistic information. The visual subsystem is responsible for processing and storing images and visual information. The two systems are inter-connected and work together, hence triggering the dual coding of information. Just as the case in Ausubel's subsumption theory, graphic organizers can serve as tools to improve the functioning of this dual coding process with both linguistic and visual input presented at the same time and allowing for deeper processing of both language and content information. According to a study by Olinghouse and Graham (2009), elementary school kids wrote essays with the help of graphic organizers for the purposes of helping students' gain a better understanding of discourse structures, and the study showed graphic organizers helped improve students' writing development.

According to Merkley and Jefferies (2000), teachers need to find ways to activate students' background knowledge for learning to take place with the necessary

connections. Graphic organizers provide students with an opportunity to see the bigger picture with such connection on how the material relates to their existing schema. Hawk (1986) lists the following benefits for teaching and learning:

a) An overview of the material to be learned
b) A reference point for putting new vocabulary and main ideas into orderly patterns
c) A cue for important information
d) A visual stimulus for written and verbal information
e) A concise review tool.

From an instructional perspective, graphic organizers can be used as visual tools to reveal connections between concepts that would otherwise be opaque and hard to see for students with low levels of reading comprehension. Graphic organizers may thus increase the quality of recall, since students learn concept relations better because of the content structure, and in this way graphic organizers may turn out to be more resistant to forgetting than are a collection of facts (Robinson & Kievra,1995).

Graphic Organizers as Tools for Content Learning

Graphic organizers can serve as effective instructional tools that help students better understand the subject matter with deeper processing of concepts. Graphic organizers have been most commonly used to support reading comprehension (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2001; Gunning, 2003; Hatch & Dwyer, 2006; Robinson & Kievra, 1995; Thresher, 2004). During a reading comprehension task, we process words and their meanings in our working memory, but the capacity of our working memory is limited, and paying attention to words may overload the capacity of the working memory if the explicit connections are not provided. Baddeley (1986) defines “working memory” as a limited capacity central executive system that is responsible for holding information over a short period of time helping with cognitive activity and increasing the amount of information for permanent storage. Hence, graphic organizers can alleviate the limited

capacity of the working memory and provide more room for the processing of the symbols by providing a structure for nodes to connect.

In a study by Hatch and Dwyer (2006), advance organizer strategies facilitated student achievement and enhanced the recall of previously learned information. According to the results of the study, the three experimental treatment groups who studied text with the help of the graphic organizers produced effective results with an increase in students' comprehension of the study material in comparison to the control group who studied the material with the existing visuals in the text that did not include any graphic organizers. Hatch and Dwyer (2006) conclude that advance organizers have a positive impact on learning outcomes since they increase comprehension by presenting direction and focus as well as providing opportunities for learners to make use of their already existing cognitive structures, which helps with the assimilation and integration of the newly learned material.

In another study, Robinson and Kievra (1995) explored what types of text information graphic organizers and outlines helped college students to learn with three different types of study materials: text only, text plus outlines, and text plus graphic organizers. According to the results of their research, the experimental group studying with graphic organizers learned more and were able to apply their knowledge more successfully in writing integrated essays than students studying with outlines or texts alone. In other words, when a text is chapter length and well organized, and when students are given enough time to study and review, use of graphic organizers is more effective for reading to learn than outlines or the text alone.

In a different study by Boothby and Alvermann (1984), fourth-grade students in an experimental group worked on graphic organizers displaying the structure of a passage from their social studies textbook. They were tested to find out how much they could remember of the main ideas in the text. According to the results of the study, the experimental group who studied the text with graphic organizers scored higher on the test than the control group who studied the text without the help of the graphic organizers.

In light of the sample studies noted above, we can conclude that graphic organizers have been used as instructional tools to support students' reading comprehension skills. When given graphic organizers that support the subject matter, students remember more from the materials, which may indicate that graphic organizers can enhance comprehension and recall.

Collaborative Use of Graphic Organizers for Content Learning

In the mainstream literature on the use of graphic organizers, individual learners are assessed for reading comprehension in an activity that involves graphic organizers, and the process does not involve verbal exchanges with actual opportunities for students to use language, so there is no peer-interaction about the content material. However, collaborative formation of graphic organizers, such as concept maps and other types of visual display of content material can be an effective instructional strategy based upon communicative peer interaction (Ostwald, 1996; King, 1999). Concept maps or other types of graphic organizers, such as KWL charts or Venn diagrams that students create as a group, can result in meaningful learning and collective construction of knowledge in a teacher-coordinated classroom setting.

MacKinnon and Keppell's study (2005) analyzed the effectiveness of concept mapping as a tool for negotiating meaning. In this particular study, concept mapping is defined as a type of graphic organizer that extends beyond the simple listing of ideas, composed of a hierarchical distribution of ideas with visible connections between adjacent concepts. In this sense, a concept map serves as a tool for engaging students in critical higher order thinking about the topics, increasing students' metacognitive thinking abilities by requiring them to analyze the structure of their content learning during the process of preparing the concept maps. Additionally there are three different ways that MacKinnon and Keppell (2005) explain a concept-mapping program can be used in teacher-student activities:

1. Teacher asks students to construct a concept map at the beginning of a unit in an effort to access prior knowledge,
2. Teacher has students engage in two types of activities where they design a pre- and post-concept map for a unit of study,
3. Teacher works with the students in an ongoing exercise that gradually builds the map as the units unfold.

In MacKinnon and Keppell's study, graphic organizers were used more interactively. The intervention was a structured process with multiple stages where students received guidance from the teacher about both the technical and conceptual aspects of creating concept maps, and the instruction involved constant negotiations of meaning and ideas between the students and the teacher. At the end of the semester, the students were given a survey with questions inquiring about their perspectives on using concept mapping as an instructional strategy as part of their learning experiences. The researchers elaborated on the data gathered from the questionnaires, conducting an ethnographic interview with randomly selected five students from three different

sections of the same course. According to the results of the questionnaires, students held positive attitudes towards the activity of Negotiative Concept Mapping (NCM), where students create concept maps collaborative by interacting with each other. In NCM, students make decisions collaboratively about the content and the layout of the graphic organizer as well as the connections between concepts on the graphic organizer. The interactive nature of creating the NCM helped them understand the complexities of relationships between concepts, and helped them build their confidence with the content.

In a qualitative study by Ryve (2004), four groups of college students in engineering were videotaped during a concept mapping activity. The researcher explored the characteristics of their discourse in light of the following two questions: Do students communicate in an effective way? Do students' communications involve mathematically productive discourse? According to the results of discourse analysis methods, the researchers concluded that the communication among students during collaborative concept mapping produced effective and mathematically productive discourse.

This study was conducted with a focus on communication with the assumption that mathematics should be learned through conversation, emphasizing the benefits of working in groups and communicating concepts verbally for a better and deeper understanding of the content material. The researcher intended to explore whether creating concept maps as a group would create mathematically productive discourse in which students are able to integrate concepts into their conversations as a result of the requirements of the collaborative concept-mapping event. Therefore, in this study, the

role of concepts maps was based on their use as a tool for creating communication about mathematical concepts and their interrelationships.

Rinehart and Welker (1992) found that advance organizers increased test recall when the students receive oral presentation of the material accompanied by the advance organizers. In this study, graphic organizers were supported by teacher-guided discussions, and this technique increased recall more in comparison to instruction where students were presented with a graphic organizer without any discussion. In this study, just as in other studies where there are multiple variables affecting the end result, using graphic organizers supported by carefully constructed participation and an interactive environment increased student success in reading comprehension.

Graphic organizers can be used in collaborative settings for different instructional purposes, and as the sample studies suggest, collaborative use of graphic organizers can help students further explore the subject matter by analyzing the relationships between the concepts. Such interaction may also help students integrate the concepts into their vocabulary knowledge, so that they can converse or write about their knowledge as well as comprehending the concepts.

Graphic Organizers as Tools for Second Language Acquisition

In academic settings, being proficient in conversational English may not be adequate without the requisite academic language register, for students to participate in academic tasks. Therefore, teaching content without making the content comprehensible and without providing explicit instruction on academic language may not be sufficient for second language development because content instruction and language instruction need to go hand in hand in order for ELLs to be successful in academic settings (Chamot & O'Malley, 1986; Mohan, 1986; Wong-Fillmore, 1989).

In order to help with ELLs academic content and language development, teachers need to provide comprehensible instruction, so that ELLs can understand the academic content and participate in tasks that require them to produce academic language (Krashen, 1988). Graphic organizers can serve as visual frameworks in reading and provide assistance for ELLs in understanding the structure of the text. Such visual tools provide more explicit and comprehensible forms of texts in English and make the content more meaningful for deeper processing (Pierce, 2003).

Teachers need to be able to analyze the discourse structures and rhetorical devices in texts from different disciplines, and provide opportunities for students to become aware of these structures and devices to be able to help them improve their academic language skills necessary for academic success (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

Mohan (1986) states that explicit teaching of text/knowledge structures by means of visual representation enhances the acquisition of a second language for academic purposes. Academic language functions are associated with academic tasks and purposes, (Bailey, Butler, Stevens, & Lord, 2007) and they provide students with the skills for comprehending written texts, asking and answering informational questions, asking and answering clarifying question, making connections between concepts, relating information, comparing, contrasting, explaining cause and effect, predicting, drawing conclusions, summarizing, persuading, etc. (Dutro & Moran, 2003, p. 233).

As can be seen in Table 2-2, Mohan's "knowledge structures" indicate the six underlying logical structures of the content material and the corresponding discourse structures used to express cause-effect, classification, and comparison-contrast.

By making these structures and the type of language used in expressing these structures more explicit and visual, graphic organizers have the potential to lower the language barrier and make the content more comprehensible (Tang, 1992). Such visual tools foster higher levels of understanding of the content material by providing links showing connections and relationships between different concepts presented within the reading material. Hence, students can retain the information in their long-term memory longer by forming associations and connections visually thanks to explicit presentation of the information in the graphic organizer (Dye, 2000). Figure 2-1 is a group of graphic organizers depicting how many information texts are organized:

According to Mohan (1986), becoming aware of the knowledge structure equips students with necessary skills to manage content learning tasks more independently. This goal can be facilitated with the use of graphic organizers. However, the graphics should be different from the pictures that accompany almost every lesson, thereby conveying the underlying structure of knowledge in order to help students see links between and within subject areas. ELLs often spend a great deal of time and energy on decoding the meaning from text, and they experience challenges in understanding the material (Cummins, 1995). Graphic organizers can help students who are faced with such challenges without watering down the content. They can help both ELLs' and struggling readers' academic language development and increase their learning without the teacher having to neglect more skillful readers (McCoy & Keeterlin-Geller, 2004; Tang, 1992).

Using graphic organizers as tools to increase the comprehensibility of written or spoken language is in line with input-based theories of second language acquisition,

which view language learning as a process of decoding comprehensible input with an emphasis on the learner's receptive skills. According to Krashen (1994), language acquisition takes place incrementally with the help of comprehensible input with the learner processing structures that are at a slightly higher level of linguistic competence. Graphic organizers can make the language in academic texts more comprehensible through visual depiction of how ideas are connected and how the text is structured.

Within this framework, Mohan (1986)'s knowledge structures can also be used in conjunction with the use of graphic organizers to help students practice academic language associated with each knowledge structure. Graphic organizers in the following forms fall under the main knowledge structures within Mohan's taxonomy (p. 37):

- Pictures of parts of individual fruits and vegetables to be used as flashcards (description).
- Pictures of food groups (Classification)
- An illustration of the digestive process (Sequence)
- Instructions for testing for nutrients (e.g. for vitamins), and charts to fill out for the text results (Cause-effect)

According to Mohan, there is a close relationship between the knowledge structure of a topic and the questions people ask about it. Therefore, graphic organizers that are used in a particular language learning activity can be predicted to trigger certain types of questions from language learners, depending on the knowledge structure that is represented. Within this framework, knowledge structures fall under two major categories based on how specific or general the topic is. These two major categories align with the types of questions people ask about a topic.

Mohan (1986) argues that the goal of the language teacher should be for students to learn the language of a given topic, but the language teacher should also be

interested in students learning both the language of food classifications or insurance classifications and the language of classification in general. When students develop the language resources necessary to talk about description, sequence, and choice, teachers have an opportunity to develop linguistic competency that can be used in academic English in all content areas.

For instance, classification as a type of knowledge structure is based on the task of organizing information. Academic situations that require classification are organizing elements in chemistry, sorting materials for an experiment, and grouping numbers in math. The academic language of classification involves language that is necessary for expressing statements during the function of classifying. According to Mohan (1986), this type of language should be taught explicitly so that students get adequate exposure to the language of classification. Teachers need to design tasks that help students not only hear but also practice the language patterns related to classifying. The following conversation that is accompanied by a graphic organizer is an example of linguistic exchanges between students and teacher where the teacher is providing students with prompts to put use the language patterns they have learned to express classification based on the graphic organizer that students have worked on collaboratively (Early, 1990):

> **T:** How would you explain to someone in words the ideas displayed in the tree?
>
> **S1:** Animals can be divided into two groups, vertebrates and invertebrates.
>
> **T:** What about another way? There are lots of ways to express an idea.
>
> **S2:** There are two main kinds of animals, vertebrates and invertebrates.
>
> **T:** What about something else?

S3: Vertebrates and invertebrates are two main types of animals.

S4: In science they divide animals into two main groups. They talk about animals with backbones and animals with no backbones.

Graphic organizers can be used as a way to facilitate the presentation and production of language structures more explicitly so that language learners develop a conscious awareness of the usage of such language and start using these linguistic expressions productively (Mohan, 1986). Providing students with opportunities to use the linguistic expressions related to different types of graphic organizers helps students focus on academic language directly. Graphic organizers can provide explicit contextualized practice using linguistic forms and expressions of academic discourse with meaningful language learning experiences rather than learning the same type of language through mechanical grammar drills.

Research on Graphic Organizers and Second Language Learning

Graphic organizers can be promising tools for making academic language more comprehensible through the integration of visuals, charts, and timelines embedded into the linguistic input presented on the graphic organizer. Within this context, the focus would rest upon the use of graphic organizers as a tool for helping second language learners understand the meaning of the language by presenting language forms in an understandable manner with extended contextual support so that the learner is exposed to meaningful input. The language that is necessary to represent different knowledge structures, such as linguistic forms and expressions for description, classification, or cause-effect, can be pointed out and taught explicitly through the use of graphic organizers because students may not be able to detect, learn, and practice, such discourse without explicit instruction. Therefore, graphic organizers can be used as

tools to help students understand concepts in academic texts and participate in academic discourse through the successful use of these linguistic devices.

Within the field of second language learning, graphic organizers are also defined as visual representations of information that depict the conceptual relationships between the key elements in a text (Pierce, 2003). Compared with the amount of research that has been conducted exploring the impact of graphic organizers on reading comprehension with a focus on native speakers of English, there has been very little research about graphic organizers' effects on second language learners' comprehension of academic reading materials and academic concepts with a focus on linguistic and conceptual development.

In a quasi-experimental study involving the use of graphic organizers with ELLs, Tang (1992) explored the effect of graphic representation of knowledge structures on 45 intermediate ESL students' comprehension of content knowledge and their academic language learning process. According to the pre-post test results, visual representation of the knowledge structure of a passage used as a reading strategy facilitates students' comprehension. Students in the graphic group reported that graphical presentation of knowledge fostered their learning of conceptual knowledge.

In addition, a task using a graphic representation of the knowledge structure of a passage significantly increased the total amount of information that students were able to retain in their memory. The results of the written recall protocols indicated that there was a significant improvement in the structure of students' writing. Semi-structured interviews also revealed that students were able to comprehend the reading passages better with the help of graphic organizers. Some students pointed out that graphic

organizers helped them perceive the connections within the text more easily and allowed them to recall the information more easily from memory during the recall protocols.

Bahr and Dansereau's (2005) study of bilingual knowledge maps, which are a form of graphic organizer and fall under the category of concept maps, to investigate the acquisition of foreign language vocabulary. In this study, 82 undergraduates were trained on either lists or BiK maps, and the goal was for them to study 32 German-English word pairs with the help of BiK. The researchers traced their framework on Paivio's dual coding theory (Paivio & Desrochers, 1989; Paivio & Lambert, 1981), which suggests that learners form visual images of vocabulary words as well as storing their forms and their meanings. Figure 2-3 is an example of graphic organizers designed to increase student recall of the vocabulary.

According to the results of the study, the students who received BiK maps during study scored higher than students who were given lists. BiK students displayed greater use of elaborative recall strategies, such as thinking about stories, main ideas, images, pictures, and diagrams when trying to recall vocabulary. BiK students also reported that they were thinking more and more about how English words related to each other by making use of the spatial locations of word pairs on the paper.

As can be seen in the sample studies, graphic organizers can be useful tools for second language learners when they are used as part of instructions. Graphic organizers can help second language learners remember ideas in written materials as well as remember newly learned vocabulary. However, independent use of graphic organizers can undermine the communicative aspect of language learning, and studies

on the collaborative use of graphic organizers are needed in the field of second language learning.

Collaborative Use of Graphic Organizers in Language Learning Tasks

An issue that has received very little attention is the use of graphic organizers in increasing interaction and language production for second language learners. As mentioned earlier, language generated during collaborative activities that are based on the collaborative analysis and/or formation of graphic organizers has not been thoroughly researched. Table 2-3 displays the gap in research on collaborative use of graphic organizers for second language learning. Such research can help us understand the use of graphic organizers for academic language development in a second language.

In a collaborative learning environment where the task is to design a graphic organizer, learners are expected to represent their knowledge linguistically as well as visually to a degree that satisfies the other group members. This allows the learners to present their knowledge more explicitly. The learners have to get a deeper understanding of the content/concepts in order to be able to help peers make better sense of it, resulting in a better activation of prior knowledge as well as in stronger connections between the newly learned material and background knowledge. Therefore, collaborative knowledge construction may create opportunities for more meaningful learning (Ostwald, 1996; King, 1999).

Similarly, successful second language acquisition takes place during collaborative interactions as opposed to form-focused language activities that neglect language production for purposeful communication. According the results of a study by Brooks (2009), when students' conversations were analyzed qualitatively through alternative

assessment as part of a collaborative task where they engaged in conversations with each other, they produced more interaction and complex language as opposed to the type of testing when students could only interact with the examiners.

Collaborative tasks where students interact with one another using the second language for actual communicative goals can scaffold second language development more effectively than form-focused language activities. Furthermore, activities that are designed to get students to form graphic organizers collaboratively can increase students' participation and help students use the academic language. Graphic organizers depict these concepts and connections with spatial elements such as idea, boxes, arrows, and lines. For instance, when students interact with each other by working collaboratively on filling in or forming a graphic organizer, they not only get to understand the layout of concepts and their connections but also get to hear and practice the language of comparing and contrasting.

Role of Interaction in Second Language Acquisition

Interacting in English as part of an academic task is a useful tool that provides ELLs with practice in using academic language (Gibbons, 2002). Students may ask each other questions for clarification, and the meaning gets communicated more clearly during the exchanges because of the contextualization of the language (Pica, 1994). Speakers can extend their conversations by expressing their confusion and asking for further clarification, which can lead to an increase in comprehensible input and meaningful language learning. In this sense, interacting and negotiating meaning in the second language is beneficial for second language learners as it allows them to revise language, which gives them an opportunity for increased comprehension and production (Long & Porter, 1985).

Pica (1994, p. 494) defines negotiation of meaning as “the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility.” According to Pica, negotiation of meaning helps with second language development by facilitating learners’ comprehension and structural segmentation of L2 input, access to lexical form and meaning, and production of modified output” (p. 493). Swain’s definition of comprehensible output is based on the same notion of interaction leading to second language development. Swain (1985) states that comprehensible output pushes the second language learner from comprehension into the level of communication and production, and during the communication process, language learners become attuned to what they know or what they do not know by responding to and resolving linguistic problems. Long (1996) views the process of negotiation of meaning through interaction as conducive to linguistic development. Linguistic problems that learners face during such negotiation direct learners’ attention to linguistic forms, which is beyond the level of comprehending messages.

Long and Porter (1985) list the following reasons for group work (p. 221–222):

(1) increased quantity of practice, especially in two-way communication tasks;

(2) increased range of language functions utilized;

(3) similar levels of accuracy in student production as in teacher-led activities;

(4) increased error correction in group work

(5) increased negotiation of meaning.

Research on Interaction and Second Language Acquisition

A number of studies suggest that participating in conversations in the second language leads to successful acquisition of second language competence by providing opportunities for learners to receive comprehensible input by revising and modifying their output, which serves as a resource for effective grammar building and exposure to language forms (Foster, 1998; Gass, 1997; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Long, 1983, 1996; Pica & Doughty, 1985). Pica et al.'s (1987) study shows the importance of comprehension of clarification requests, conformation checks, and the restructuring of contributions. When learners were free to seek clarification from each other, they were able to retrieve a greater degree of comprehensible input for language acquisition.

Varonis and Gass (2002) found that during conversations between NNS and NS the turn-taking sequence runs smoothly when the interlocutors have a common background and language use. Conversations flow in a reciprocal manner with each speaker giving responses and keeping track of the direction of the conversation. When the speakers do not share the same background and/or language, the conversational exchanges are interrupted preventing interlocutors from establishing "equal footing" in the conversation. Varonis and Gass define "equal footing" within a conversation as one interlocutor's ability to respond appropriately to another interlocutor's last utterance—in other words, to take a turn when it becomes available with full understanding of the preceding turn and its place in the discourse" (Varonis & Gass, 2002, p. 73). Both native speakers and non-native speakers compensate for such breakdowns in communication in order to keep the conversation going as smoothly as possible. Indicators are signals of non-understanding as a response to an utterance (Varonis &

Gass, 2002, p. 76) and responses to the requests are given for additional information on the implicitly or explicitly stated indicator.

During negotiated interaction with non-native speakers of English and native speakers of English, language learners achieve linguistic development through negative evidence about an utterance in terms of grammaticality and acceptability by receiving feedback from native speakers (Long, 1996; Long & Robinson, 1998; Schachter, 1984). Negative evidence can be in explicit or implicit form. Implicit negative evidence can be an indirect type of form, such as asking for clarification by getting additional information or rephrasing the original utterance to make sure that the original utterance has been correctly interpreted with an attempt to provide the correct language forms (e.g. “She has a dog.” as a recast for “She have a dog.” Explicit negative evidence is on the other hand a direct response to the erroneous form, as the example in “No, not ‘have’. It is ‘has’.”) Long (1996) claims that negative evidence can only lead to linguistic development if the learner notices the negative evidence, attends to it, is able to hold it in memory in order to compare it to the erroneous form and formulate the correct form.

In another study, Pica (1988, p. 54-55) describes NS-NNS negotiations as one-signal negotiated interactions and as extended negotiated interactions in terms of the length of negotiation. In this study, Pica found that, in one-signal negotiations where the lack of comprehension gets resolved in one attempt, NNSs produced modifications on 50% of their original erroneous utterances with 91% percent native-like utterances. Therefore, one-signal negotiations are likely to result in output with correct modifications indicating an easier negotiation process. On the other hand, according to the results of Pica’s study, an extended negotiation resulted in fewer modifications of their original

utterances with only semantic modifications in the first attempt rather than a structural correction in the message. The second attempt was a confirmation of the NS's correction but did not involve modifications.

Following list is a step-by-step list of the sequence of one-signal negotiated interactions that involve one signal of difficulty in comprehension:

1. Trigger utterance
2. Signal of lack of comprehension
3. Response to signal
4. Resolution

On the other hand, extended negotiated interactions last longer where the interlocutor indicates more than one instance of a lack of comprehension. At the end of the process, the conversation flows in a direction in which the participants either resolve the miscommunication or abandon it and move on:

1. Trigger utterance
2. Signal of lack of comprehension
3. Response to signal
4. Signal of lack of comprehension
5. Response to signal
6. Resolution, continued signals of incomprehension, or abandonment of negotiation.

Pica (1998) claims that in such instances NNS either do not know the form or the form is too complicated for their competency level. Another possible explanation is that confirmation of the correction is necessary, but actual modifications may hinder the fluidity of the conversation and may sound inappropriate.

As can be seen in the studies on interaction and second language acquisition, interaction is an important aspect of second language learning, and collaborative

activities can provide opportunities for students to interact in the second language. However, studies that emphasize interaction typically emphasize language production from a form-focused perspective, and they neglect exploring the sociocultural aspects of communication. Therefore, studying collaborative use of graphic organizers from an interactionist perspective may give us a limited explanation of how students use language.

Sociocultural Nature of Collaborative Communication

From a sociocultural perspective, graphic organizers can be valuable in helping ELLs not only to better communicate in English for the purposes of generating linguistic exchanges but also to build a language learning community where speakers feel comfortable about communicating with one another. Therefore, in terms of sociocultural aspects of language learning, graphic organizers should not be viewed in isolation based on solely linguistic production with a focus on form, but as part of the sociocultural context in which communication is taking place. In this sense, sociocultural theorists understand that not all effective language learning tools function satisfactorily in creating opportunities for students to interact and use the language (Platt & Brooks, 2002). In other words, according to sociocultural theorists, not every group will generate the same type of language during their use of graphic organizers as part of their language learning process. Therefore, in terms of collaborative use of graphic organizers, for instance, the effectiveness of graphic organizers as a language learning tool will be determined by how the group perceives it, uses it, and collectively makes meaning using the graphic organizer. Furthermore, collaborative learning tasks need to involve certain elements that differentiate them from traditional group activities for the purpose of increasing student participation in the task (Kagan, 1992). In order to

achieve positive interdependence and individual accountability, the task needs to be structured, so that students are in smaller groups where each student gets an opportunity to perform the task and interact with the group members, and each student has a role in the task that s/he is accountable for.

From a sociocultural perspective of learning (Vygotsky, 1978), collaborative environments can trigger even more complicated means for learning because such environments allow students to get exposed to one another's experiences and knowledge. With the help of collaborative use of graphic organizers, learning language and learning through language becomes a simultaneous process where students can have an opportunity to better comprehend concepts and interact with the concepts in an effort to represent these concepts graphically. In a setting where the ELLs are all the same level as far as English language development, there will be variations based on background knowledge and linguistic development. Some students may have more knowledge than others about certain concepts because of experience and exposure. In such environments, we reorganize our mental structures based on our own meaning making and connections. Learning is a process in which each individual builds mental structures within his/her own unique organization. As students interact socially, their mental structures are reorganized (Vygotsky, 1978). In this sense, collaborative use of graphic organizers can also help with language production, so that students can enhance their knowledge structures in light of the graphic organizers and develop their language skills by interacting in the academic language. However, most research on the influence of graphic organizers on learning focuses on comprehension and recall of different types of prose and topics.

The socio-cultural nature of communication helps us understand conversations that take place in different classroom settings where members interact with one another to negotiate and resolve communication issues, such as misunderstanding of questions, off-task talk, counter-questioning, and other types of activities for understanding and using language (Markee, 2004). Donato suggests (1994) that language learning strategies take form as a result of the socialization process in a language learning community, unlike the cognitive approaches that claim that language learning strategies are directly related to an individual's cognitive style, personality, or hemispheric preference. In this sense, strategies arise out of a collaborative process where the individual develops the skills by interacting with more competent members within the community. Second language learners deal with a multitude of factors besides striving to develop their ability to understand and speak another language with the appropriate linguistic code.

Language is a socially constructed phenomenon that takes place through the daily social interactions among members of a particular social group, and signs can only be interpreted when their social connotations are taken into account. Any word when analyzed as a sign in isolation will not be able to satisfactorily provide us a true understanding of what its meaning entails. We will only be limited to the sterile dictionary meaning of the word removed from the discourse community that uses, defines, and redefines the word. Dialogue is an exchange of signs among participants shaped by social interaction and constant collaborative meaning making. Communicating messages through language helps individuals form society, which in turn shapes individuals and allows them to exist as members of that society (Berger &

Luckmann, 1966). In this sense, meaning is a socially constructed phenomenon that comes into existence in a social situation through an exchange of abstractions that human beings experience and share through conversation (Holquist, 1990).

An utterance never comes into existence in isolation, as it is always a response to another utterance or sign, so dialogue is what creates utterances and gives them a reason to exist in different levels of connections to previous and upcoming utterances (Holquist, 1990). “When speakers are interacting with one another in a conversation, each person produces different utterances that may involve similar words and sentence structures, and yet the differences become part of a mutual field of shared experiences held together within dialogue.” (Holquist, 1990, p.49)

Donato (1994) suggests that from a socio-cultural perspective, learners have different roles in every learning situation where power relationships can differ and influence learners’ behaviors and their identities, leading to different forms of participation. According to Donato, certain contexts allow an increased number of possibilities for language development with equal roles and power relations within the members of the learning community. Other contexts may devalue ELLs’ identities and their realities, including the affective factors associated with trying to communicate in another language.

When second language learners participate in language and literacy practices, they construct and revise their understandings and interpretations based upon the power relations and roles within the activity both in class and in their social community outside the classroom (Lantolf, 1996). Because of the unique demands of each cultural activity, language learners are in a position not only to interact by verbalizing their

thinking but to take over different roles in steering the conversation as both parties change their roles during their cultural exchanges. In this sense, each language exchange takes place in a certain cultural setting that shapes the dynamics of the conversation as well as the choice of words and expressions.

The way we use language shows our stance toward the interlocutors we communicate with, indicating our social positioning within the local interaction and in response to larger sociopolitical forces. Critical theorists see the role of power relations as important for understanding the social world, both in broader and local context of social practices (Zuengler & Miller, 2006).

Studies on Sociocultural Aspects of Second Language Acquisition

A growing body of second language research shows that linguistic scaffolding leads to successful second language acquisition under circumstances where peers provide each other opportunities for collaborative scaffolding. Collaborative activities create opportunities for second language learners to participate in dialogue in the second language in authentic instances of meaning making, creating hypotheses, problem solving about language, and building social relations with one another.

Watanabe and Swain (2007) investigated the influence of the differences in second language proficiency on the types of interaction that took place during pair work. In this study, participants from different proficiency levels engaged in collaborative dialogue involving pair-writing and individual writing with a stimulated recall after the task. According to the results of the study, the patterns of interaction were influential in students' post-test scores indicating that collaborative patterns of interaction increased students' test scores regardless of their partners' proficiency level. In other words,

proficiency differences were not influential factors affecting the nature of peer interaction and L2 learning in this study.

According to the findings from a task-based second language acquisition study by Platt and Brooks (2002), given explicit instructions, language learners restructured the communicative tasks that involved information gap and jigsaw activities, and talk took place as a natural outcome of the core goal of problem-solving in each task. At times, language learners produced speech that was defined as “self-regulated speech” in Vygotskian terms with a possible indication that such talk is necessary for language learners to better internalize the situation, the language, other members in the group, and the requirements of the task itself. In this sense, Platt and Brooks (2002) claim that during communicative tasks “what learners are doing is not simply rehearsing linguistic forms for their eventual acquisition but trying to solve problems by using their language” (p. 499). Platt and Brooks observed that learners also used language both to verbalize their frustrations with the activity and to reach commonalities among one another in order to understand and confirm where each member stands. Platt and Brooks explain that “joint speech activity” not only serves the purpose of “message transfer” but helps learners internally construct the activity collaboratively. In another study where foreign language learners worked on an information gap task collaboratively, Walz (2008) found that high-language-use can be achieved by structuring the task in a such a way that students help each with their linguistic skills and as well as their cultural knowledge.

As previously mentioned, unlike sociocultural theorists, Long (1985, 1996) claims that the comprehensible input that learners gain through interactional adjustments helps trigger second language acquisition. These claims caused teachers to design their

classroom activities around this type of interaction based on negotiation of meaning and modifying output to resolve communication breakdowns with the three Cs: Comprehension Checks, Confirmation Checks, and Clarification Requests. However, according to the results of a study on negotiation for meaning and peer assistance, Ohta and Foster (2005) found that recordings from learners during an interactive classroom task revealed the incidence of actual negotiating meaning was rather low. Instead, learners actively helped each other to execute the task through co-construction and prompting by showing interest and encouragement with several instances of asking for and providing assistance as well as making self-repairs. All these instances of scaffolding took place in the absence of communication breakdowns.

Ohta and Foster conclude that the number of instances of negotiation of meaning is not an accurate depiction of the value of interactive tasks. Language learners may not initiate negotiation of meaning as defined by Long because acknowledging a breakdown and interrupting communication to resolve such breakdown may be discomforting and both parties may not want to come across as pushy or needy. Ohta and Foster criticize the fact that activities that emphasize communication breakdown invite frustration, which may hinder successful and nurturing language learning. Furthermore, Sato (1986) and Foster (1998) found that lexical problems related to word choice are more often the cause for communication breakdown rather than morpho-syntactic errors. Consequently, Ohta and Foster conclude that in contrast to all other NfM studies, from a sociocultural perspective, the processes that support negotiation of meaning can also be beneficial “when learners are not stuck in some comprehension-related impasse and using a focus-on-form to get themselves out of trouble” (p. 425). In other words, the

second language learning opportunities do still exist when learners support one another during peer interaction by communicating with and assisting a partner.

According to the results of Storch's (2002) longitudinal investigation into the nature of pair interaction in an adult ESL classroom, four patterns of interaction amongst pairs emerged. In these collaborative interaction patterns, both learners have equal footing working together throughout the task by helping each other to complete the task. On the other hand, dominant/dominant pairs are much less willing and not as capable of engaging with other's contributions. Dominant/passive pairs have a dominant partner who wants to be in charge of the task, and the passive partner is left to be subservient. In expert-novice pairs, the more knowledgeable learner helps the novice to engage in the task. The results of the study indicated that the pairs with a more collaborative orientation displayed more knowledge transfer, and there was a greater number of instances with no knowledge transfer or missed opportunities in pairs with a non-collaborative orientation. According to her observations, Storch concluded that the pairs with the highest proficiency difference tended to collaborate the most whereas the pairs with highest degree of homogeneity of English proficiency level were non-collaborative dominant-dominant pairs.

According to Firth and Wagner (1997), the field of SLA is highly oriented towards psycholinguistic approaches to understanding second language development, which places more importance on the impact of individual processes in language learning, such as the acquisition of syntactic, morphological, and semantic rules. However, human beings use language for collective purposes, and the goal is to share and communicate messages and create meaning collectively rather than in isolation. Even

in individual writing, the language learner is a “participant-as-language-‘user’ in social interaction” (p. 286) and is expected to produce language by himself/herself, the presence of an invisible target audience cannot be denied as the audience is an important factor influencing the form and content of the output.

In short, sociocultural theory helps to explain the language development process of an individual in terms of the socialization process of language acquisition through interactions with the members of a social group (Donato, 1994). In other words, language learning involves participation in a social and communicative exchange of messages where the language learner takes in and processes linguistic messages, and then rebuilds them as part of the interaction process, and revises the language appropriately for different social contexts. In this sense, collaborative activities involving the use of graphic organizers need to be designed and studied carefully to better understand the dynamics within each group provide a better picture of what types of collaborative situations provide the best opportunities for communication and second language development.

Discourse Analysis and Studying Collaborative Classroom Interactions

Discourse analysis is one of the most effective tools for studying classroom language and interaction among students and teachers (Bloome et al., 2005). As a qualitative research method, discourse analysis emphasizes daily interactions in a classroom where teachers and students are active agents in meaning-making and shape their own discourse community through their on-going dialogues (Bloome et al., 2005). In this sense, studying classroom language events sheds light onto how people use language in collaboratively constructing meaning in classrooms, and the interactions are analyzed through sociocultural as well as linguistic lenses.

Gee makes a distinction between “discourse” with a lower case “d” and “Discourse” with an upper case “D”, the former referring to “how language is used on site” to enact activities and identities” (Gee, 2005, p. 7) while the latter refers to “different ways in which we humans integrate language with non-language ‘stuff,’ such as different ways of thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, believing, and using symbols, tools, and technologies – to recognize yourself and others as meaning and meaningful in certain ways” (Gee, 2005, p. 7). We can try to make sense of cultural situations through discourse analysis with an in-depth study of Discourse that involves the linguistic features and social structures situated in everyday life.

Language is a tool for reflecting upon the situation as well as building and shaping the situation in which social interaction takes place. Besides linguistic resources that we use during social meaning making, we also use cultural models as guides that shape our language practices when forming situated meanings. We can only explain why words have the types of meanings that they have acquired and how words gain new meanings in every new social interaction by developing a thorough understanding of cultural models that are held by the participants in language exchange.

Classroom discourse includes interactional units that are the smallest units of joint social activity involving both the actions and reactions of participants toward each other. It can be defined as a series of conversationally tied message units (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 6). All literary practices in classroom setting involve literacy events, which can be defined as “bounded series of actions and reactions that people make in response to each other at the level of face-to-face interaction (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 6). In order to study language and culture in literacy events, we need to build a better explanation of

how participants in any type of conversational discourse make meaning collectively as well as how they understand and interpret each other's messages in different types of situations.

In line with those few studies that integrate interaction and collaboration into the graphic organizer research (MacKinnon & Keppell, 2005; Ryve, 2004), one way to understand how graphic organizers actually influence student learning is by designing activities that give students opportunities for collective meaning making where they can voice their comments and their questions. In an effort to gain a deeper understanding of collaborative interaction among students in classrooms and students' second language learning, this study explores the possibilities the collaborative use of graphic organizers can facilitate interaction in English.

Table 2-1. Review of literature on graphic organizers and second language learning

TOPICS ON GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING
WHAT ARE GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS?
GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS AS TOOLS FOR CONTENT LEARNING
COLLABORATIVE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS FOR CONTENT LEARNING
GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS AS TOOLS FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING
COLLABORATIVE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING
- Role of Interaction in Second Language Learning - Research on Interaction and Second Language Learning
- Sociocultural Nature of Collaborative Communication - Research on Sociocultural Aspects of Second Language Learning
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH ON COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM INTERACTION

Table 2-2. The knowledge framework categories (Mohan, 1985)

THE KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORK		
	THEORETICAL	
Classification	Principles	Evaluation
	PRACTICAL	
Description	Sequence	Choice

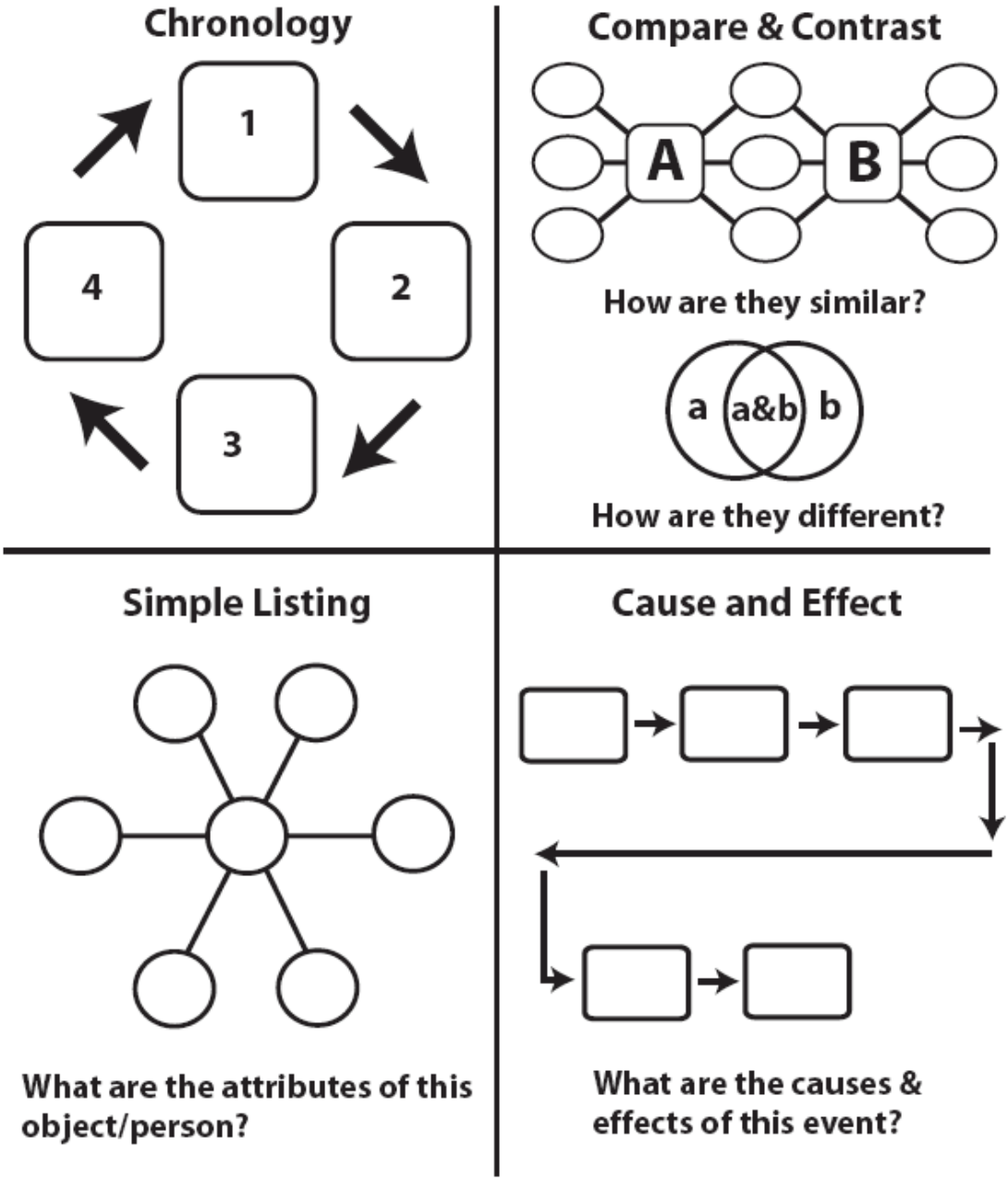


Figure 2-1. Common organizational structures of information texts (Jameson, 2003)

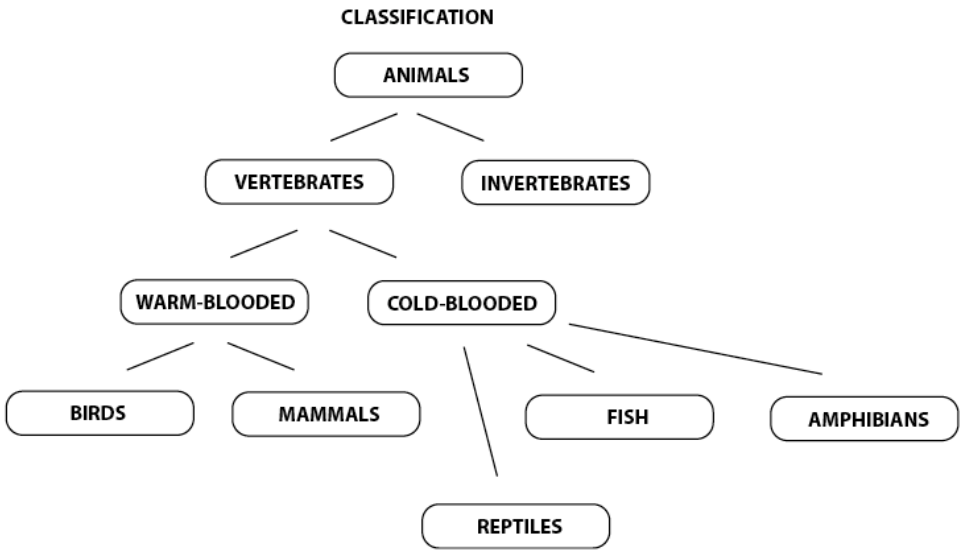


Figure 2-2. Example of a student-generated graphic organizer (Early, 1991)

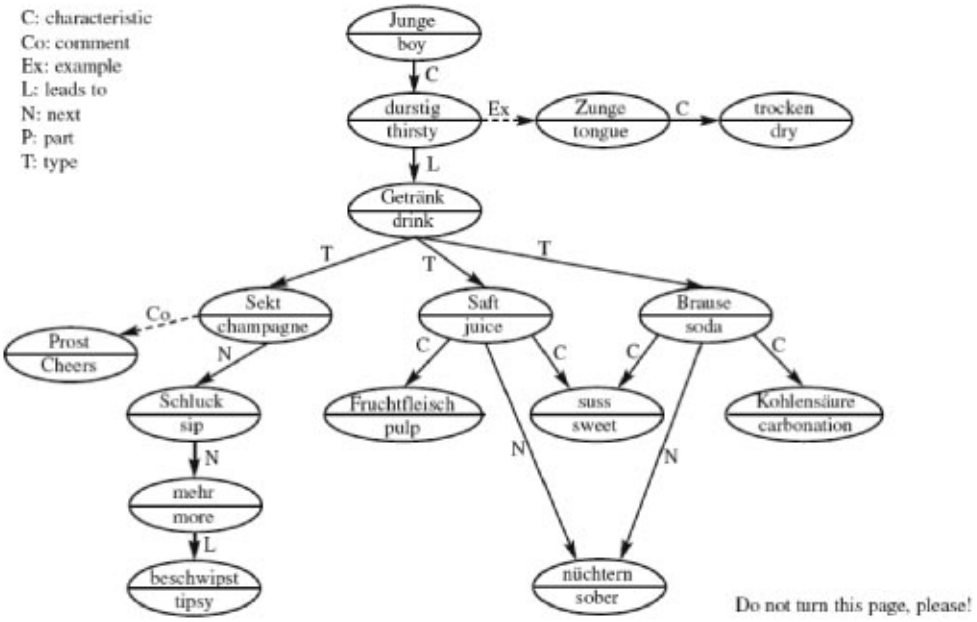


Figure 2-3. German-English bilingual map

Table 2-3. Conceptual framework on collaborative use of graphic organizers with second language learners

Graphic Organizers as Tools for Content Learning)	Graphic Organizers	Graphic Organizers as Tools for Second language Learning	Collaborative use of Graphic Organizers for Content Learning	Collaborative Classroom Dialogue	Collaborative Use of Graphic Organizers for L2 Learning
EXAMPLE STUDIES	FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES	EXAMPLE STUDIES	EXAMPLE STUDIES	FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES	EXAMPLE STUDIES
Blachowicz & Ogle (2001); Gunning (2003); Hatch & Dwyer (2006); Robinson & Kievra (1995); Thresher (2004	Subsumption Theory -- Ausubel (1960, 1963) Dual Coding Theory – Paivio (1980) Learning through Concept Mapping – Novak (1984)	Tang (1992); Bahr & Dansereau (2005)	MacKinnon & Keppell (2005); Rinehart & Welker (1992); Ryve (2004)	Collaborative Dialogue in L2 acquisition—Swain (1998, 1985, 1995); Gibbons (2002, 2009); Donato (1994); Storch (2002); Ohta (1999) Sociocultural Scaffolding – Vygotsky (1978) Collaborative Learning – Bruner (1986) Social Dialogue and Language Learning – Bakhtin (1981, 1986) Social Construction of Culture and Language -- Berger and Luckmann (1966)	*No Studies*

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

This study aims at better understanding the nature of interactions in a collaborative graphic organizer task in light of theories on academic language development in English. This study uses discourse analysis as a research method for understanding classroom dialogue with ELLs using graphic organizers in a collaborative task. Classroom discourse generated during the interactions between students is the primary data, and transcriptions of student interactions were analyzed based on Gee's (2005) discourse analysis model according to the methodological concepts and terms introduced by Gee, including characteristics of the language students generate, their social roles, and other factors that are at play. Students' conversations were constructed socially as a result of the collaborative meaning-making process during the use of graphic organizers as part of a group activity. Table 3-1 is a depiction of the study design based on Crotty's principles of qualitative research design from the broadest elements to the most specific elements representing the theoretical framework of the study (2005, p. 5).

This study followed a constructionist epistemology, according to which human beings construct meanings in the course of a constant interaction between each other and the world. Reality is neither objective nor subjective as it evolves and is transmitted within a social context (Crotty, 2005). Hence, this study is based on a social constructionist theoretical foundation with a particular focus on the social construction of knowledge, echoing the importance of human interaction in building new

understandings and interpretations of cultural and linguistic exchanges that shape our daily lives (Gergen, 1985).

Methodology

In line with the tenets of social constructionism emphasizing the importance of social exchanges in building meaning, this research study involves an in-depth analysis of student discourse generated during collaborative use of graphic organizers as part of classroom activities. Discourse analysis is a powerful method that has been used for identifying and studying the processes of meaning making during human interaction, with the goal of better understanding the dynamics of conversation and the layers and landscapes of meanings that participants create in the process of communication (Bloome et al., 2005).

Overview of the Dissertation and Research Problems

Graphic organizers can serve as educational tools to increase comprehensibility of subject matter. Graphic organizers can also be used as tools to trigger conversations that include language scaffolding and negotiation of meaning. Such collaboration may foster ESL students' conceptual and linguistic development and improve their understanding of different language patterns associated with discourse structures such as comparison-contrast, process, cause-effect, etc. In cooperative activities designed around the use of graphic organizers, teachers can increase student-to-student interaction in class. Also, collaborative study of graphic organizers may help students learn how to recognize discourse structures and discourse markers during reading comprehension in order to achieve higher levels of reading in English. Furthermore, working on discourse structures and discourse markers collaboratively can also help English language learners first converse about and then write about different types of

academic discourse as well as scaffold each other's conceptual learning and language learning processes. In collaborative graphic organizer activities, graphic organizers can also increase students' higher order thinking skills because students can actually perceive the discourse structures in academic texts and the overarching relationships between ideas during the process of studying graphic organizers and creating their own graphic organizers. These processes may boost students' self-confidence, increase student participation, and make way for increased language production.

In order to build a research foundation that is based on understanding the nature of classroom dialogue as a way to improve students' academic success, it is imperative to examine the interaction among students closely. This study explored classroom discourse generated during a set of collaborative concept-mapping activities. Classroom discourse is in general composed of multiple layers of meanings and varied forms, and the diversity in students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds increases the diversity in the linguistic and sociocultural nature of collaborative dialogue. Social groups form situated meanings collectively, and these meanings get incorporated into the culture of the group and shapes the group's identity on a social and individual level. Gee (2005) defines a situated meaning as "an image or pattern that we assemble 'on the spot' as we communicate in a given context, based on our construal of that context and our past experiences" (p.47). When we are producing language, we are actually gathering all the situated meanings we have formed about the world before we proceed with our actions in the world (Gee & Green, 1998). Accumulation of situated meanings is composed of our socioculturally shared experiences, and when we are producing language, we refer to cultural models that have been formed during different social

practices and established by the particular social group that we are part of (Gee & Green, 1998). In this sense, actively participating and drawing from the situated meanings of a social group not only entails being able to produce utterances in a certain language but also being able to recognize the words used in multiple settings and being able to differentiate how the meaning of a word can change within different contexts. Similarly, as the students in this study participated in the collaborative graphic organizer task, they formed new identities, play different roles that changed at different instances of the task, and used language in order to execute the collaborative task according to their own situated meanings being formed during the task.

The collaborative graphic organizer task in this study involved ELLs conversing in English and filling out graphic organizers collaboratively. The graphic organizers were based on two textbooks used in the classroom: *Making connections: A strategic approach to academic reading*, the main textbook with authentic academic texts, and *From great paragraphs to great essays*, a support textbook with five paragraph essay with a simplified structure. The first graphic organizer used in the first lesson of Week 1 was based on an essay from the supplementary textbook with the format of a simple five-paragraph essay, and the second graphic organizer was based on a longer passage from the main textbook that is more like authentic academic texts lacking an explicit organizational structure that displays the discourse structure visually. The purpose of using a simple five paragraph essay and then switching to a more complicated academic text is to scaffold students' understanding of discourse structures and related language first through a structurally less complicated text where both the structures of the discourse and the language signaling that structure are more salient for

ELLs before they move into an actual academic text where the language and the structures are more opaque. In the final stage of the task, students were assigned to fill out a graphic organizer that lead them into a final independent writing task, so that students can become more autonomous in producing written texts in the English language. The graphic organizers were based on comparison-contrast and cause-and-effect discourse structures, and the study of these structures is already integrated into the regular classroom instruction in the intermediate reading/writing curriculum at LLC each week. Therefore, these particular discourse structures were selected in accordance with the existing curriculum and aimed at improving students' reading comprehension and writing skills with academic texts that use these two discourse structures across the curriculum. The following research questions guided the research process in the qualitative research study:

- How do English language learners use language in a collaborative graphic organizer activity?

Setting

LLC (Language Learning Center) is a language school for students from around the world who are adult learners of English as a second language at post-secondary level. Its mission is to help students improve their English language skills with intensive language study that addresses the linguistic needs of students at different levels of English proficiency. The goal of the LLC Language School is not only to assist with the learning of the English language but also the culture of the United States of America. Students are taught to

- read university-level materials;
- write academic papers and exams;

- speak more fluently in both formal and informal settings;
- take good, clear notes at lectures;
- take timed, objective tests;
- function knowledgeably in a North American culture and,
- establish and maintain productive relations with fellow students, professors, and other members of the host community.

Most classrooms are equipped with a computer, a DVD player, and an LCD monitor in line with the latest technology. Students sit in chairs that can be moved around during group work. All classrooms are sound-proof and carpeted with air-conditioning and heating to provide a comfortable learning environment.

Participants

Students at the LLC language school come to the United States to further their professional development by improving their English language skills, and they mostly enroll in higher education after graduating. When students arrive to the LLC, they are given a placement test that includes a listening section (CELT-or Comprehensive English Language Test-section I) and a structure section (CELT II) and a writing test using an in-house checklist that was designed by the testing coordinators at LLC. The levels placement for listening and structure is based on a breakdown of scores. For writing, the levels are determined based on the learning objectives that are revised and improved every year. The listening test determines LS levels and structure, grammar levels. An in-house writing test determines initial grouping, and then when the LLC testing coordinators do placement based on ranges of students' scores. If a student is Level 40, s/he may be high or low within that level. Some students may get placed in a higher level 40 or a high 30. Then, once placed, the students take diagnostics, which

ensures if students are appropriately placed. If any changes are needed, the LLC testing coordinators make new decisions accordingly and place the students in a different class before the end of the second week of the term.

Three different criteria were considered for participating selection in this study. First, the study needed to be conducted in a classroom that regularly incorporates interaction and collaboration during instruction for the purpose of improving students' academic proficiency in English. Second, the study needed to be conducted in a classroom where the teacher either a) used a collaborative concept-mapping strategy as part of the regular classroom routine or b) was willing to incorporate a collaborative concept-mapping strategy as part of their classroom instruction. Third, the focus of the class needed to be on the use of academic language where students were expected to acquire a higher command of academic language in English as opposed to the more colloquial language used in shopping or traveling. Therefore, the Reading/Writing class was selected. The task incorporated both academic speaking and writing skills to provide students with extensive opportunities for academic language production. Using these criteria and with the help of the school's coordinator, the researcher recruited a teacher of one of the Reading/Writing classes. The intermediate proficiency level was selected because the language skills needed to recognize and produce the academic language in academic texts would be too advanced for earlier levels.

Students at this level were not proficient in writing an essay yet, and the class started from how to write a paragraph, gradually moving students into how to write an essay. The students were assigned to the intermediate level of reading and writing due to their need for improving their writing skills and for learning how to write an essay

according to the conventions of the English language. One of the main goals in this class was learning how to write a paragraph and moving towards learning how to write a standard five-paragraph essay. In this class, students were taught different types of discourse structures in academic texts, so that they could recognize these structures in reading materials and also write academic texts that reflect these structures. As can be seen in Table 3-2, the researcher used pseudonyms for each participant in the study to protect their anonymity.

Ayumi and Dawud were the partners in Pair 1. Ayumi was born in Japan and she lived there all her life until she came to the United States. She has an undergraduate degree from Japan, and she took English classes in Japan as part of her education, but in these English classes, the emphasis was on grammar drills as opposed to communication and listening. She was attending LLC to improve her speaking skills, so that she could pass the Test of Spoken English and the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) to be able to start graduate education at the University of Florida. Dawud was from Saudi Arabia, and he came to Gainesville with his wife to continue with his PhD education. He had a master's degree that he completed in Saudi Arabia, and he was attending the ELI to be able to pass the TOEFL and to get into a PhD program at the University of Florida. He received a scholarship from the Saudi Government for his language education with a condition to finish his PhD degree and go back and work at a university in Saudi Arabia. Neither of the students had lived in an English speaking country before.

Hyun and Miguel in Pair 2 had similar goals in that they both wanted to pass the TOEFL and start a graduate program in the United States, but they were flexible with

their choice of universities. Hyun was from Korea, and Miguel was from Venezuela. TOEFL was a big hurdle for them, and they liked the LLC because of its emphasis on both academic language skills to pass the TOEFL and conversational skills to engage in conversations with native speakers of English. Hyun had a very good writing teacher when he was in Korea, but he could not improve his speaking skills because the emphasis was mostly on writing, grammar, and vocabulary. Miguel is relatively more fluent in English because of his American friends back in Venezuela, but his English language skills were not high enough to be able to pass the TOEFL exam. Neither of the students had lived in an English speaking country before.

Roberto and Akram in Pair 3 were also preparing to take the TOEFL. Roberto was from Colombia, and he was preparing for the TOEFL, so that he could apply for a graduate school in a good university of his choice in the United States. Akram was from Saudi Arabia, and he needed to pass the TOEFL not only to be able to get into a graduate program of his choice but also to able to get the funding from the Saudi Government to pursue graduate studies. Both of these students took English language classes in their home countries, but the emphasis was vocabulary and grammar, so they could not improve their productive skills in English. Neither of the students had lived in an English speaking country before.

The study took place during the regular schedules of class periods. Prior to the study, students had been assigned to work in pairs by their teacher as part of regular classroom instruction because pair work allows more opportunities for language production for both parties compared with larger groups where the time and the opportunity for interaction needs to be shared among more participants. All students in

class participated in the collaborative graphic organizer task because it was integrated with instruction as a part of the instructional sequence, but only those six students who had volunteer to participate in the study were recorded with an audio recorder and a video camera. Students were paired up at the beginning of each class, and the six focal students remained pairs for the duration of the task. The study focused on only six participants (three pairs) in the class in anticipation of the large amount of data that would be generated during student interactions in class, and so that the conversational data could be analyzed in greater depth.

Because student pairing took place four weeks into the semester with the help of the teacher, the teacher was more familiar with the students. Teachers at the LLC strive to pair students' from different language backgrounds, because many students stay in the USA for only two months, and LLC teachers want students to use English as much as they can in these two months. Classroom meetings are often the only opportunity for LLC students to communicate extensively in English. When paired with someone from the same language background, students tend to speak in their own language. Therefore, the researcher informed the teacher which students had agreed to participate in the study. The researcher asked the teacher to pair up students based on their fluency in spoken English, so that higher proficiency students were paired with lower proficiency students. Also, both students were from different cultural and linguistic background. Neither of these pairs may have typically sat next to each other as most students prefer sitting by someone from their own culture. Another pairing factor was the level of collaborative tendency among the pairs since during the pilot study some pairs did not talk to each other at all since they were both less collaborative students

who were mostly quiet. All of these arrangements were for the purposes of increasing opportunities for scaffolding among the partners.

Before pairing the students up, the teacher rated the students based on their collaborative style. The teacher also rated the students in class based on their standing within the group in terms of their speaking skills and their writing skills. After the pairing process was complete, the researcher selected three pairs randomly by asking each pair to draw numbers from a hat, and the pairs who picked the numbers one, two, and three participated in the study, but the researcher recorded two additional pairs of students just to ensure that she could fall back on a different pair who were present at all times in case of an absence.

Task Description

The task that is studied in this dissertation is based on graphic organizers that depict comparison-contrast and cause-and-effect discourse structures. The following is a list of the stages and steps involved in the instructional sequence of the collaborative graphic organizer task that the researcher and the teacher followed, and the teacher and the researcher were to jointly decide on the timing and allocation of the stages and the steps in fourteen class periods over seven days. During Stage 1 and Stage 2, the researcher and the teacher selected texts from students' textbooks in order to comply with the requirements of the reading/writing curriculum. In Stage 1, the text was taken from a supplementary textbook with essays that follow the regular five-paragraph essay structure. For instance, the essay for the first week was a five-paragraph essay written in comparison-contrast genre. On the other had, in Stage 2, the text was taken from the students' main textbook written in an authentic academic prose style where the structure of the text does not necessarily follow the structure of a five-paragraph essay,

and the thesis statement and the topic sentences are not clearly laid out. In other words, the structure of the text was more opaque in comparison to the essay in Stage 1. The goal for such scaffolding was that the students were expected to learn how to write five-paragraph essay because it was one of the objectives of this course, but they also need to get used to the more complex structures of academic texts. In other words, not every text they encounter in academic settings, i.e. in graduate school, will be texts that have been adapted to their own language level, and the students need to get used to comprehending academic texts that are written for a general audience.

STAGE 1 - Discourse Structure Analysis: Simple 5 Paragraph Essay

1. Researcher explains the purpose of the study and presents graphic organizers reflecting four different types of discourse structures: comparison-contrast genre, cause-and-effect genre, descriptive genre, and sequence genre.

2. Researcher models how to use a graphic organizer based on the discourse structure of a selected text from the supplementary textbook. Teacher and researcher do a brief demonstration of the collaborative graphic organizer task on another empty graphic organizer based on the text from the supplementary textbook.

3. Students read the text in their supplementary textbook first for ten minutes and they start to fill out the rest of the blank graphic organizer designed around the text in the supplementary textbook in pairs collaboratively.

STAGE 2 - Discourse Structure Analysis: Authentic Academic Texts

4. Researcher models how to use a graphic organizer based on the discourse structure of a selected text from the main textbook. Teacher and the researcher do a brief demonstration of the collaborative graphic organizer task on another empty graphic organizer based on the text from the main textbook.

5. Students read the text in their main textbook first for 10 minutes and in pairs collaboratively they start to fill out the rest of the next graphic organizer designed around the text in the main textbook.

STAGE 3 - Discourse Structure Analysis and Application:

Interaction and Essay Writing

6. Teacher assigns a new topic and the researcher presents a new graphic organizer based on the new topic.

7. Students fill out a blank graphic organizer collaboratively by interviewing each other based on the new topic as a preparation for the essay writing. This step helped students to recognize the discourse structure and to produce writing that reflects the discourse structure.

8. Students are given an assignment to write an essay based on the same topic.

9. Students are interviewed by the researcher in pairs for thirty minutes per pair.

Pilot Study

In order to prepare for the actual study, the researcher conducted a pilot study with non-native speakers of English and native speakers of English based on similar tasks used in this research. All the findings and experiences from the pilot study helped the researcher to improve the design of the instructional sequencing in the collaborative graphic organizers task by assigning roles to participants and clarifying the instructions to the task. Furthermore, the researcher benefited greatly from the data analysis process as it served as a simulation before the analysis of the actual data. Thanks to the data analysis experience from the pilot study, the researcher had an opportunity to see how Gee's framework would guide the data analysis process effectively.

The experience provided insight into the execution process of the task and provided better understanding of the potential outcome and problems that may take place during the implementation of the task. The researcher audio-recorded conversations while students were filling out graphic organizers collaboratively. In the actual study, the researcher used a video camera as well as a digital voice recorder in order to capture the scene better and to understand how students utilize graphic

organizers during the task. The researcher compiled the following observations from the collaborative graphic organizer task.

Contrary to the researcher's expectations, the conversations did not involve much error correction or scaffolding around language errors. On a few instances, the native speakers helped the non-native speaker with pronunciation and vocabulary, but the non-native speaker did not repeat the word with the correct version. In other words, the NS may have acknowledged the mistake but did not act upon it. For instance, in one of these scaffolding incidents, the NS got the ELL to repeat the word "technical" a few times, but the ELL did not integrate the correct pronunciation in his/her utterance.

There was more scaffolding towards helping the ELL produce output. NSs seemed to make the ELL feel confident about his English language skills by giving a lot of praise and making comments about the weakness of their own language learning experiences and abilities. There were comments that are not always about the topic, but having to fill out the GO (Graphic Organizer) sheet as a task seems to keep the conversation on target. Comparison and contrast is the over all genre, but there was very little use of signal words for comparison-contrast. Native speakers asked many questions to get the ELLs to talk, but there were not many questions from the ELL until towards the end of the conversations. The ELL listened to them quite a lot initially and responded to questions. The reason for this could be cultural, for instance, he may be listening more than talking out of respect.

Native speakers built upon ELL's conversation by commenting on what the ELL says or by adding their own experiences about the same point with expressions such as: same here as well, it is similar, but, etc. The researcher observed that the

participants did not talk about the graphic organizer at all until the very end, and based on the conversations, one person (NS) had been filling it out all along the conversation. The researcher decided that pair work could be a more effective way to make sure that everybody in the group were conversing and engaging in discussions verbally.

The speakers did not switch to irrelevant topics or add more to a certain topic by using signal words, conjunctions etc. They just built on each other's responses by taking turns and adding sentences in. It seemed like the ELL did not do any type of copying of NSs' answers onto the GO. The ELL may have been under the impression that he was helping the NS with their task by responding to their questions and that he had the GO sheet for extra information about the task. This result is expected because it is very hard to achieve collaboration in classroom activities without structuring the task for positive interdependence and individual accountability.

In the actual research study, the researcher assigned roles to each participant to prompt collaboration. The researcher took into consideration these roles when analyzing and interpreting discourse data from student conversations during the collaborative graphic organizer task.

Data Collection

The researcher worked closely with the teacher at LLC by guiding the teacher before the study early in the semester in preparing graphic organizers and designing group activities based on the use of graphic organizers. The researcher and the teacher worked together during the application of the stages, and they modeled the tasks within the task so that students could have a better understanding of the instructions.

The task was designed to elicit collaborative language production, and in the final stage of the task, for purposes of positive interdependence and individual accountability

(Kagan, 1992), students interviewed each other by asking questions about each other while completing the graphic organizer. The final step of the task involved a take-home essay writing assignment on the topic that students worked on during the last stage of the collaborative graphic organizer task where they gathered all the information they needed through the interviews in order to be able to write their essays. The students' writing samples from the final stage of the task where students wrote essays independently at home were collected in the following class in order to have a better understanding of written language use following a collaborative graphic organizer task. The researcher used these written language samples during the data analysis process when looking for connections between students' conversations and their written language production.

Data collection took place in fourteen class periods over nine days from 05/27/2009 until 06/12/2009 over a period of three weeks. The first week of the study was spent piloting the task one last time and to be able to introduce graphic organizers and the collaborative graphic organizer task, so that the students were already familiar with the task when the researcher started collecting the data. Data collection took place in the second and third week of the study. The classes were held every day of the week for two fifty-minute periods with a 10-minute break in between the two sessions. Based on the feedback from the teacher as to how to integrate the task into her pre-existing curriculum and lesson plans, the sessions for the collaborative graphic organizer task took place on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. For the purposes of establishing a firmer ground and adding more rigor to the study, audio and video recordings of students' interactions were supported by data gathered from observational notes,

samples of graphic organizers produced by the students, students' writing samples during the collaborative graphic organizer task, and interviews with students that were conducted at the end of the three weeks.

Students' Interactions: The conversations that took place between all students in class were recorded during the graphic organizer task, and interactions were videotaped for a clearer understanding of the students' level of engagement and body language during the conversations. However, only conversations from three pre-selected pairs were transcribed in order to allow more depth in the analysis of the discourse. The classes took place every day for two hours every day. The study took place on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays for three weeks, and the researcher took specific observational notes during the study, which took place over three weeks from 05/27/2009 until 06/12/2009.The researcher recorded each session every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday for two weeks, but she transcribed the conversations during the collaborative graphic organizer task prior to the independent essay writing stage. The collaborative graphic organizer task lasted for thirty minutes every Friday for three weeks in the first hour of the total two-hour class period. The students worked on their essays independently in the remaining half hour and the second hour.

Graphic Organizers: The graphic organizers that students worked on during the collaborative task were used as archival materials for the purpose of shedding further light onto the collaborative use of graphic organizers as educational tools for academic language socialization and use. At the end of the collaborative graphic organizer task, the researcher collected a total of twelve graphic organizers from the six participants, made copies of each graphic organizer, and returned them back to the teacher in the

following week. The researcher was able to collect all the graphic organizers from the pairs each week, so the researcher collected a total number of 6 graphic organizers in the week of the comparison/contrast genre and another 6 graphic organizers at the end of the week of the cause and effect genre. Each of these graphic organizers were also accompanied with students essays because the graphic organizer included two additional blank pages for student essays, so that the students could write their essays by following their notes on their graphic organizers.

Observational Notes: Early in the semester, the researcher began observing the class, so that students could get used to her presence and the presence of the camera and recording devices. She took raw pre-observational notes about the seating arrangements, the types of activities in the classroom, the materials the teacher used in class, and how students interacted during collaborative activities. In the first week of the study, which was spent as a training period to help students get comfortable working with graphic organizers collaboratively and get used to how the instructions of the task, the researcher took observational notes on the general nature of the classroom, such as the classroom routines, the types of collaborative and independent tasks the teacher conducts in the classroom in general as well as students' cultural and language backgrounds, students' interactions with each other and the teacher by observing and conversing with the teacher and the students. This information was used to supplement students' conversations during the collaborative graphic organizer tasks. It is important to consider how individual student and classroom context may influence the nature of the interactions. During the collaborative graphic organizer activities, the researcher also took observational notes in order to better describe the events in each phase of the

task. These observational notes helped in analyzing and explaining student discourse generated during the collaborative graphic organizer task.

Writing Samples: After each of the collaborative graphic organizer task, students were given a writing prompt that was an extension of the topic and based on the same discourse structure. The writing task was completed as homework, and the writing samples were collected in the following class period. As samples of students' language production, the graphic organizers and the written essays helped the researcher to understand how students use the academic language after the integration of collaborative graphic organizer task into the instruction (See Appendix G).

Interviews: As a follow-up to the task, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the students who participated in the study immediately after the final session of the collaborative graphic organizer task. The interviews were used to shed light onto the students' perceptions of how the collaborative graphic organizer task had helped their academic language skills in English. Interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder (See Appendix E for a list of the interview questions.).

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the conversations, the writing samples, and the graphic organizers collected from students together, and observational notes. All of these components were essential to understand how graphic organizers assist students' academic language development. The conversations provided discourse data that can give a clearer picture of macro and micro structure with micro level tools such as function words, content words, information, macro level tools, task buildings, connection buildings, roles, and hierarchical setting of student conversations (Gee, 2005). The

writing samples provided insights as to how the discussion process during the task was reflected in the students' essays as well as the nature of the academic language in their writing samples. During the data analysis process, the researcher used Gee's (2005) three categories: semiotic building, sociocultural identity building, and task building as a set of lenses for analyzing the data. The researcher was able to synthesize Gee's categories together with her research questions, and she started detecting new categories and patterns within the data.

When she looked at the data closely, she could identify different types of scaffolding, different types of interactional styles, and activity structures. She also detected various interactional roles in light of the academic language functions the students were using during their interactions. After finalizing the list of all of the academic language functions present in students' conversations, the researcher generated categories of interactional roles based on the patterns of academic language functions. For instance, if the students repeatedly asked questions, the researcher formed a functional category for *asking questions* and labeled the role category *inquirer*. She compared the language functions represented in each role category and constructed a definition for each category of interactional roles. Through this process the researcher expanded upon Gee's categories of semiotic building, sociocultural activity building, and activity building. In other words, new categories began to emerge within Gee's three categories.

Kidd (1996) tentatively divided academic language functions into two categories for the purposes of providing a framework for second language teachers and second language researchers: Microfunctions and macrofunctions. Microfunctions are small-

scale functions involving the performance of a specific language task for narrow purposes, whereas macrofunctions are large-scale uses of academic language serving a more general purpose. Macrofunctions encompass various microfunctions. The researcher analyzed the academic language functions in the collaborative graphic organizer task based on this macro vs micro hierarchy.

The set of conceptual categories of academic language functions and interactional roles was later reviewed and refined by peers experienced in discourse analysis. The researcher benefited greatly from consulting with peers, which allowed the researcher to filter the initial categories through multiple lenses and clarify the interactional landscape. An explanation of how each type of data follows:

Students' Interactions: When analyzing classroom discourse collected during the collaborative graphic organizer task in LLC Language School, the researcher took into consideration two kinds of components: 1. linguistic structures (micro level tools such as function words, content words, depth of concepts, sentence structure, connectors) 2. social structure (macro level tools, task buildings, connection buildings, roles, hierarchical setting) with the following three building tasks that students carried out. These tasks are part of all dialogue that takes place when a group of people are collaborating and negotiating with others in interaction. Discourse generated during the task was analyzed using Gee's (2005) three aspects of discourse (p. 85).

Semiotic building: Using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what semiotic (communicative) systems, systems of knowledge, and ways of knowing, are here and now relevant and activated.

Activity building: Using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what activity or activities are going on, composed of what specific actions.

Socioculturally-situated identity building: Using cues and clues to assemble situated meanings about what identities and relationships are relevant to the interaction, with their concomitant attitudes, values, ways of feeling, ways of knowing and believing, as well as ways of acting and interacting.

Stress and intonation were not emphasized in the data transcription due to interlanguage. Interlanguage is a term used to refer to the developmental state of English language that English speakers from different language backgrounds speak when learning English, and interlanguage is based on a second language system that has not reached a level of native-language proficiency (Selinker, 1972), particularly in patterns of intonation and stress in oral language. Because the researcher does not speak the students' native languages, it would have difficult to make definitive statements about these data. Instead, morpho-syntactic features, discourse features, and the communicative functions of linguistic structures were used for the purposes of understanding how the participants are integrating and tying in conversations.

The researcher first identified stanza lines with function words and content words, and then she identified meaning units based on Gee's three building tasks (Gee, 2005). Based on an in-depth analysis of the data in terms of the three building tasks (semiotic building, activity building, and sociocultural identity building), themes began to emerge, and the themes were organized in relation to the research questions. Micro level language data with a focus on semiotic aspects with an emphasis on linguistic and conceptual meanings were used to illuminate the sociocultural dimensions and uncover

the social factors that make up the macrostructure of the Discourse (Gee, 2005). This process helped the researcher to understand how meaning was carved, formed, and patterned within the text with emerging insights as to how meanings were designed socially and linguistically in the data (Gee, 2005). The researcher constantly compared the findings with the archival data involving the graphic organizers that the participants completed. Observation notes were also used as part of data triangulation process.

Writing Samples: The researcher analyzed the writing samples from Gee's (2005) semiotic building aspect with a focus on language use. Writing samples helped in understanding students' awareness of discourse structures in the writing samples and in showing how students connected their ideas with transitional phrases, the complexity of the sentence structures, the level of the academic vocabulary about the topic, and the visibility of the discourse structure within the essay. As the goal of the task was to understand students' interactions, written data shed further light into the outcome of the collaborative graphic organizer task and the partner's accomplishment of and engagement in all the steps in the task.

Graphic Organizers: Analysis of graphic organizers helped the researcher understand the nature of language that was generated among partners during collaborative work and the nature of classroom discourse that took place during the completion of these visual materials. Through graphic organizers, the researcher was able to confirm that the participants were engaged in the task, understood the purpose of the task, and completed the task successfully by making use of the concepts they listed in their graphic organizers.

Observational Notes: The researcher used the observational notes to confirm the findings from the analysis of student interactions. Observational notes helped better explain the digital recordings of students' conversations with more visual input. The researcher incorporated the observational notes with the video recordings of the conversations in order to capture a more complete understanding of what was actually happening based on factors such as the participants' body language and level of engagement.

Interviews: Transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed in order to obtain students' perspectives about the instructional benefits of incorporating graphic organizers into the reading/writing classroom using a collaborative task. The researcher used the thematic analysis method for analyzing the interview data with a constant comparison of the themes and the data under different domains generated through the thematic analysis method (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Hatch, 2002).

Subjectivity Statement

I am a second language learner of English of a Turkish origin, and I have always been interested in studying reading comprehension processes in a second language. During my doctoral studies, I have become more interested in studying language and interaction as part of the interactive meaning making process. Because of the difficulties second language learners experience with academic language, I have become more and more interested in finding ways and means for helping students acquire academic discourse and become active participants who function well in academic settings. I believe that we need to find ways of tapping into students' language use by analyzing student discourse, which may give us a deeper understanding of students' linguistic and conceptual development and of the types of

misconceptions, self-corrections, and collaborative scaffolding that take place in group environments. I have also been interested in visual materials for making academic language in texts easier to understand. Over the course of my graduate studies, gradually my knowledge of graphic organizers and my interest in collaborative work began to merge and connect with in multiple possibilities for content and language development for English language learners.

As a doctoral student, I worked on different research projects where I analyzed student interviews, reading group discussions, and interactions during tutoring sessions. I believe that discourse analysis can shed light on many aspects of student learning as well as classroom culture. My goal as an ESL researcher is to understand more about dialogue that is generated during the collaborative use of graphic organizers, its contribution to content and language development, and how collaborative work can serve as a tool for providing opportunities for ELLs both to understand content topics better and use English language effectively with their peers.

Validity

Discourse analysis as a method within qualitative research settings from a constructionist view is not built upon the notion that one reality exists and can be interpreted the same way by everyone. Therefore, my goal in this study is not to make truth claims about different categories through which student discourse can be described. According to Stratton (1997), researchers display different characteristics in their "motivational factors, expectations, familiarity, avoidance of discomfort" (p.116). In this regard, the interpretation of the data within this study is subjective as it will be filtered through the researcher's educational background and experiences. Another researcher may interpret and label the data with different conceptual representations.

Nonetheless, in an effort to check the reliability of the research tools, the researcher sought other researchers' perspectives on the codes and accuracy of the conceptual representation of the codes. The codes and the conceptual representations of concepts were reviewed by two doctoral candidates who have taken ten credit hours of the qualitative research methods classes, and a University of Florida instructor with a PhD, who also specialized in qualitative research methods during her doctoral education, and the researcher made changes in her categories and added new categories. All the reviewers have a strong understanding of the qualitative research methods and discourse analysis in particular because they have been using qualitative research methods in their own research.

The goal of this study was to understand the nature of student dialogue; therefore, a discourse analytic method was a highly valid tool for the researcher as she examined samples of actual dialogues from student interactions. The researcher triangulated the data analysis through multiple sources of data in answering the research questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Hatch, 2002), and so the discourse analysis method was supported by detailed field notes taken during student interactions and samples of student work that students completed following the graphic organizer task. The researcher also collected different types of data sources such as interviews with students, a collection of students' writing samples, graphic organizers created by groups, and observational notes.

Limitations

The study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged and should be considered in research that may build upon the findings of this study. First of all, the data were collected in the presence of the researcher with an audio recorder and a

video camera. In spite of the fact that students typically grow accustomed to the presence of a researcher and recording equipment over time, even after a number of observations, their conversations may have been influenced by the presence of the audio recorder, the video camera, and the presence of an outsider. This limitation needs to be taken into consideration and as one of the natural consequences of conducting discourse-based research in classrooms.

A second limitation stems from the fact that the participant population may not be a true representation of any ELL population; therefore, the results of the study may not be generalized to ELLs of all ages. Some ELLs can be children of migrant families who do not speak English as their native language. Also, some ELLs come from background with moderate means with very little exposure to print at home. The students in this study are young adults from educated middle class families, and this group is a post-secondary school population, so their goal in learning English is to further their education by going to graduate school or to get promotion in their current jobs. Their exposure to print and their prior school experience with “academic language” may have affected the nature of the dialogue that took place during collaborative concept mapping.

Finally, data collection period in this study had a limited duration of only three weeks for the purposes of achieving a more in-dept analysis of students’ conversations. The researcher had to adapt the research design and data collection period to the teacher’s plans and needs. Future research may include a larger number of students and data collection conducted over a longer period of time during which the researcher and the teacher prepare lessons that involve more extended use of graphic organizers

in both collaborative and independent activities. The researcher could chart the students' progress during an entire semester and include the help of the teacher and his/her assessment tools in order to further depict and explain students' academic language development through students' work and student dialogues collected over time.

Table 3-1. Theoretical framework of the study

Theoretical Framework		
Epistemology	⇒	Constructionism
Theoretical Perspective	⇒	Social Constructionism
Methodology	⇒	Discourse Analysis (DA)
Methods	⇒	Gee's DA Method (2005)

Table 3-2. Participants

Pairs and Pseudonyms	Language	Country of Origin	Proficiency Level in Writing	Proficiency Level in Speaking	Collaborative Style
AYUMI	Japanese	Japan	Upper Intermediate	Lower Intermediate	Collaborative
DAWUD	Arabic	Saudi Arabia	Lower Intermediate	Upper Intermediate	Collaborative
MIGUEL	Spanish	Venezuela	Upper Intermediate	Intermediate	Collaborative
HYUN	Korean	South Korea	Upper Intermediate	Lower Intermediate	Less Collaborative
AKRAM	Arabic	Saudi Arabia	Upper Intermediate	Upper Intermediate	Collaborative
ROBERTO	Spanish	Columbia	Intermediate	Intermediate	Collaborative

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH RESULTS

This study examined ELLs' academic language use during a collaborative graphic organizer task. The qualitative analysis of data included students' recorded conversations supported with their completed graphic organizers, students' comments about the task elicited in follow-up focus group interview(s), and the researcher's field notes taken during observations of the collaborative group discussions, and students' essays based on their completed graphic organizers written. Gee's three aspects of discourse were used to examine student dialogues from a sociocultural and linguistic stance. As can be seen in Table 4-1, the researcher identified and defined new categories based on work by Gee (2005) and by Bloome et al. (2005).

The data revealed that students used a wide range of academic language functions in their dialogues. The researcher referred to the categories of language function created by Bloome and Egan-Robertson (1993) and labeled clusters of repeated functions as interactional roles. Interactional roles led to a better understanding of the participants' interactional styles and the structure of the collaborative graphic organizer task in terms of how it was performed by each pair. Linguistic analysis of students' dialogues informed the researcher on vocabulary use, word and sentence structure, and topical depth explored by the students during their interactions. The researcher expanded the categories further with peer-checks, concluding that the collaborative discussion activity provided opportunities for different types of scaffolding between peer partners.

Sociocultural and Structural Analyses of Students' Interactions

The research question: "How do ELLs use language in a collaborative graphic organizer activity?" was addressed using sociocultural and structural analyses of students' interactions during the collaborative graphic organizer task. The first part of this section highlights the types of scaffolding in students' interactions. The subsequent focus on language functions, interactional roles and styles, and task structure help us to understand the dynamics of students' interactions. They illuminate the sociocultural context of the collaborative graphic organizer task and the ways this task facilitates language use among students.

Types of Scaffolding

After a thorough analysis of the students' interactions during the collaborative graphic organizer task by applying Gee's concepts of semiotic, sociocultural building, and activity building, the researcher detected three types of scaffolding that the students provided for one another:

- Linguistic scaffolding
- Conceptual scaffolding
- Strategic scaffolding

The linguistic and conceptual scaffolding categories stemmed directly from Gee's semiotic building as the researcher analyzed each turn and found that the students provided support for each other to further one another's language proficiency and conceptual understanding. The researcher also detected a third type of scaffolding that did not fit into either of these categories. This third category was labeled strategic

scaffolding because the type of support that the students were providing for one another appeared to serve the purposes of executing and continuing the task.

Linguistic scaffolding

This type of scaffolding refers to peers helping one another by implicitly modeling or explicitly pointing out the language errors of their peers. The researcher analyzed the instances of linguistic scaffolding and decided to divide them into two sub-categories: lexical scaffolding (focused on word meanings) and morpho-syntactic scaffolding (focused on word and sentence structure).

Lexical scaffolding: Lexical scaffolding involves help at the vocabulary level with an emphasis on the meaning of the word. When the intention is to provide support with choosing a better or more correct word, peers tend to repeat or rephrase their partner's statements. In both of the following excerpts, we can see instances of lexical scaffolding where one partner provides language support to the other by suggesting an appropriate vocabulary term.

In Turn 15 below, Akram asks Roberto if he can think of any examples of traditional Colombian cuisine. His description of what he means may not be sufficient, and he rephrases his message so that Roberto can better understand what he means.

(15) A: No. Specific (.) do you have specific food? Very popular. Something very popular. Everyone go to Colombia to eat it in every restaurant.

(16) R: The Colombian dish?

(17) A: Yeah (.) dish.

From Roberto's response to Akram's question, we can tell that he is not only conceptually processing the statement, but he is also linguistically analyzing Akram's words, which may indicate that he has a critical awareness of vocabulary use in

different contexts. He may have decided that what Akram is referring to with “food” in his statement is a actually a “dish” which is semantically narrower and more specific than “food.” Therefore, he asks for confirmation by posing the word “dish” in Turn 16. In this sense, Turn 16 may serve as a language support to scaffold Akram’s description with a more appropriate word in English.

In the following excerpt, Akram provides lexical scaffolding for Roberto as Roberto did for Akram in the previous excerpt when they were talking about traditional cuisine. In this excerpt, the pair is talking about the political systems in their respective countries. Roberto is explaining the system in Colombia. In Turn 14 he is listing all the positions in the parliament and asks for help with a word. In Turn 15 Akram provides lexical support with the word “minister,” helping Roberto to continue with his statement in Turn 16.

> **(14) R:** We have senator and camera (.) same as the United States. Two cameras, senator and representer camera, senator represents two cameras. We have other things, how can I say it in English? We have what do you say (.) they are meeting to decide (.)
>
> **(15) A:** *Minister.*
>
> **(16) R:** Yeah, minister, thank you, we have ministers. Yeah, we have the same, like the United States. We have representers, they call two cabinets, we have senators and representatives, 200, 205 something like that. The law goes here, and after that, it goes to the senator. OK, in the kingdom, the king does not have a minister.

Morpho-syntactic scaffolding: Structural scaffolding refers to assistance with the structure of words and sentences. This type of scaffolding is often accomplished through rephrasing or repeating as partners give implicit support to their peers. In the following excerpt, Ayumi is talking about the traffic lights in Japan and uses an incorrect form of the word *automatic.* Dawud appears to be paying attention to both the content and form of the message because in Turn 6 (below), he uses the word correctly in a

sentence without singling out Ayumi's error, and in Turn 8 he asks a confirmation question again using the correct form of the word. We cannot be certain of Dawud's intentions and whether he is consciously correcting the error, but in Turn 8, he uses the word correctly again. In Turn 11, Ayumi has integrated the correct form into her response, which may mean that she has noticed her error. Typically English language learners may take some time to make such corrections in their speech, so Ayumi's prompt use of the correct form may indicate that she is already familiar with the correct form, but the word has not localized in her lexicon with the correct morphological form. Dawud's scaffolding may provide her with the input she needs to use the word with accuracy.

> **(5) A:** Because the signal is not automatical, you have to push the button, and then yeah (.) because in Japan everywhere is automatical (.) here you have to push the button.
>
> **(6) D:** *Everything automatic in Japan (.) yeah yeah (.) I know it.*
>
> **(7) A:** So I didn't know that.
>
> **(8) D:** *How it's automatic when you want to cross the road?*
>
> **(9) A:** I didn't know it.
>
> **(10) D:** *Here?*
>
> **(11) A:** Here. Yeah (.) yeah (.) yeah. Only automatic and if the signal is blue, you can go.

In the following excerpt, Miguel poses a question to Hyun about his religion. Hyun seems initially confused by the question, which is similar in structure to other personal information questions, such as "Where are you from?" or "What city are you from?" Possibly to make sure that Miguel is asking where he is from or about his religion, Hyun asks for clarification and Miguel rephrases his question in a more standard form. Hyun

responds by giving a definitive answer to Miguel's question. In this instance, we can say that both Miguel and Hyun are providing language support to one another. In asking for clarification, Hyun may be providing support for Miguel by having Miguel restructure his question grammatically, and Miguel may be benefiting from this signal by trying to find a better way to verbalize his question so that it can be better understood by his partner. If both partners were unaware of the linguistic structure of their statements, Miguel would have repeated his question using the same words, thinking that Hyun could not hear him clearly. Also,

(1) M: What religion are you from?

(2) H: *What?*

(3) M: (.) What is your religion?

(4) H: *No religion.*

In the following excerpt, Miguel is talking about his challenges when he came to the United States the first time. Hyun is asking for confirmation by posing a question about Miguel's speaking skills when he first came to the United States. Miguel seems to be aware of Hyun's error, and he restates Hyun's question with a long sentence instead of a yes/no type of confirmatory statement. In Excerpt 6, Miguel is forming a sentence that corrects Hyun's mistake by adding a verb and a preposition to the noun that Hyun used as a verb by mistake. Miguel seems to already know that conversation is not a verb, and he is aware that he cannot correct Hyun's statement by simply turning the noun into a verb since the verb is a transitive verb that is always used with a direct object. Therefore, Miguel's structured correction provides structural scaffolding for Hyun.

(2) M: Because I speak Spanish, English was very difficult the first time.

(5) H: *So it was difficult to conversation?*

(6) M: Yeah, it was difficult to have conversation with people.

Conceptual scaffolding

Conceptual scaffolding refers to the type of help that partners provide for one another to help the partner understand a concept or an issue by providing further explanations and examples. Instances of conceptual scaffolding during students' interactions fell under two different categories: topic choice and exploration / discussion of concepts. The two categories derived from the students' decisions on the types of subtopics they chose to discuss as well as the depth of these discoveries during the interactions.

Topic choice: Pairs provide each other scaffolding by choosing topics that both partners can discuss by exchanging information about each other. Choosing a topic helps the other partner start pondering all the possible options and examples to talk about and prompts multiple questions that they could ask their partner. Furthermore, once one partner picks a topic, both partners participate in the exchanges, and each partner starts assuming several of the interactional roles, such as *Inquirer, Topic Expander, Clarifier, Information Seeker*, etc. As can be seen in the following excerpt, Ayumi announces the main topic by posing a question and asking for confirmation. Dawud answers her question partially by giving the location of the Arabic food store in Tampa, but indicates that he has never been there. He may have thought of Ayumi's question as a general question seeking information about how Arabic people in Gainesville have access to food from their own culture, so he lets Ayumi know that there is an Arabic store in Tampa, but he also adds that he has never been to that store.

(1) A: How do you get Arabic food? Arabic store is in Gainesville?

(2) D: *In Tampa. There is one in Tampa. In Tampa, there is an Arab store, but I haven't been there.*

(3) A: But what do you get at the Arabic store?

(4) D: *We buy rice.*

In the following excerpt, Hyun and Miguel 's turns focus on food, and the pair is working on their graphic organizers for differences of cultural background within the genre of comparison-contrast. In Turn 1, Hyun seems to be thinking aloud and then raises a question about the main food in Miguel's country. Miguel seems to be confused about the question, so Hyun seems to interpret Miguel's response as a clarification request, so he rephrases the question.

(1) H: Cultural background? Cultural background? What is your main food?

(2) M: *Uhm (.) wait a minute.*

(3) H: The most common food you usually eat?

(4) M: *Arepas.*

In the following excerpt, Roberto asks Akram whether he can think of another subtopic under the main topic of challenges that they experienced when they came to the United States for the first time. After Akram's response, Roberto builds on the same topic by indicating some of the difficulties he experienced about food.

(1) R: Do you have another challenge?

(2) A: *Yeah when I came here, I didn't have enough time (.) so I couldn't learn new culture. This was a challenge for me.*

(3) R: When I first came here (.) I ate strange things (.) German style (.) food (.) it tastes very sour (.) but I tried. Bad taste for me (.) but I tried.

Exploration and discussion of concepts: During the collaborative organizer task, pairs chose different sub-topics within the main topic, and they chose to explore the subtopics in different directions based on the mutual decision of the group. Students assumed roles such as Roles such as Topic Expander, Inquirer, Responder, and Proposer, etc. to extend the depth of the discussion of topics. In the following excerpt, Dawud is clarifying that, although finding an apartment was easy, he had challenges with furnishing the apartment. Ayumi seems to be confused about Dawud's statements perhaps based on her own experiences. For clarification, she expands the topic with additional questions. Dawud provides conceptual scaffolding for her by clarifying what he means, adding further depth to the topic.

(40) D: No no (.) it is not hard to find the apartment (.) it is hard to furnish the apartment and hard to make contract to the electric because I have to go there to pay deposit (.) to the department of electric GRE.

(41) A: It is hard to find a good apartment.

(42) D: *Uhm let me explain (.) Ayumi (.) Ayumi?*

(43) A: It was hard for you to make a contract?

(44) D: *It was easy.*

(45) A: But you said it was difficult.

(46) D: *To find furniture and bring the furniture to my apartment because I didn't…*

(47) A: Where did you buy?

(48) D: *From somewhere.*

(49) A: Wal-Mart?

(50) D: *No (.) from somewhere on the main street (.) on thirteenth.*

(51) A: It is a shop?

(52) D: *Yeah. And I didn't have a car (.) that's why it was hard for me.*

(53) A: Oooohhhh.

Hyun and Miguel talk about language when talking about the challenges they experienced when they came to the USA for the first time. In the following segment from their dialogue, Hyun may be asking for help from Miguel to introduce another subtopic. In Turn 1, Hyun asks a question that invited Miguel to expand the main topic of cultural challenges with another subtopic. Miguel responds, but Hyun poses another question asking information on a particular aspect of English, which extends the depth of the subtopic.

(1) H: Yeah. What is your challenge?

(2) M: *Because I speak Spanish, English was very difficult the first time.*

(3) H: Listening, when you are listening, you can't understand?

(4) M: *Uhm….I can understand a little bit.*

In the following excerpt, Roberto is extending the depth of the topic by asking which of the king's sons qualify to be the king in Saudi Arabia. Akram expands the topic by providing further examples, which enhances Roberto's understanding of the complexity of the monarch system in the royal family in Saudi Arabia.

(12) R: Which one is the? (.) I don't know. (.) Richest one?

(13) A: *Yeah. Between themselves they change. Before it was King Abdul Aziz, King Abdul Aziz have thirteen child, so some of them become a king, some of them die already. Now it may change, for the son, I don't know.*

As can be seen in the previous examples, partners explore the subtopics through different language functions by asking each other questions and by responding with explanations and examples. Partners achieve extended interactions through the roles of

Proposer, Inquirer, Responder, etc. Such interactions may not occur in tasks that do not allow sufficient opportunities for extended interaction.

Strategic scaffolding

Strategic scaffolding is the type of help that peers provide to one another in order to successfully execute the task together. Through strategic scaffolding partners get the task started, keep each other on task, and find ways of continuing the task for successful completion. Instances of strategic scaffolding have been grouped into two categories: task initiation and task continuity. Both of these categories are important operational factors that help the task to take place.

Task initiation: This type of strategic scaffolding stems from the motivation to get the task started. As the name suggests, the *Initiator* role is the most common role that associated with strategic scaffolding. In the following exchange, Dawud begins the task by announcing the task goal and the main topic, and Ayumi responds by making a factual statement about the place of religion in her country. Both partners seem to be engaged in the task, and they seem to be aware of the need to start the task. They scaffold each other by following the directions together and finding a subtopic.

(1) D: We are going to write about your culture.

(2) A: *In Japan, religion is not important, (.2) it is not important.*

In the following exchange, Miguel starts the task by sharing one of his challenges regarding language, and then assumes the role of *Inquirer* by inviting Hyun to speak up about his challenges regarding language. Hyun responds with a different subtopic, but provides no elaboration. Miguel assumes the role of *Topic Expander* and he asks why weather was a challenge for Hyun in Gainesville. Turn 3 in the following excerpt

involves the academic language function for *asking for a reason*. Hyun provides two reasons and takes on the role of *Topic Expander*.

(1) M: I couldn't understand language, it was challenge. What about you?

(2) H: *Weather.*

(3) M: Weather? Why?

(4) H: *Because it is too hot here and daytime is too long.*

In the following excerpt, Akram introduces the topic of politics and poses a question. Roberto and Akram's manner of initiating the topic differ from the other two pairs. However, unlike Hyun and Miguel, Akram poses a question to his partner without introducing any information about himself on this chosen topic. Unlike Dawud who announces the topic by stating a decision he has made on behalf of himself and partner, Akram simply poses a question. Roberto answers this question and extends the topic, and Akram asks another question to get more information about the topic.

(1) A: What about politics? (.) Do you have presidents?

(2) R: Yeah, presidents, separate government system.

(3) A: Political system, you have presidents and do you change the president every four years?

(**4) R:** Every four years. You select the government. So the political system is democracy. So we have an election for every four years (.) election for the president.

Task continuity: *Topic Expander* and *Inquirer* are the roles that support task continuity. The *Topic Expander* provides in-depth information with examples and explanations that extend the length of conversations and the amount of information that the partner needs to be able to write a well-informed essay at the end of the task. The

Topic Switcher is another role that provides strategic scaffolding for task initiation. When a conversation runs out, *Topic Switcher* initiates a new subtopic to keep the conversation going.

Dawud and Ayumi also maintain the dialogue in the task and explore the topics by posing questions and providing extended answers. For instance, in the following dialogue, Dawud poses a question to Ayumi, and she responds, but she does not provide an example. Akram introduces the topic with a question, and he starts describing traditional women's clothes in Saudi Arabia.

(4) D: You have traditional clothes?

(5) A: *Yeah (.) yeah we have traditional clothes.*

(6) D: We also have traditional clothes.

(7) A: *Yeah yeah sure.*

(8) D: Yeah, we wear black and black (laughing) yeah (.) girl wear black. This is called Abaya. Outdoor clothes (.) but indoors, it is just the same.

In Hyun and Miguel's conversation below, Hyun informs Miguel that Korean people eat rice. Miguel asks him to provide additional information, probing for details and extending the reasons for it. Miguel assumes the role of *Inquirer* by asking questions, and Hyun assumes the role of *Topic Expander* by providing further answers. Miguel's questions create an opportunity for a quiet person like Hyun to use the English language for communication purposes and they complete the task successfully. If Hyun had been paired with another person like himself, both partners may have given one-word answers and not even asked questions seeking further information.

(23) H: We eat rice.

(24) M: *Rice. Rice and finish?*

(25) H: We always eat rice but we eat rice with many kinds of dishes like, not just dishes, everyday it's different so.

(26) M: *OK. What do you put on rice?*

(27) H: Rice with something, but I can say our main food is rice because everyday we eat rice.

(28) M: *OK, so the main food is rice.*

As can be seen in both of the following excerpts, Roberto is achieving task continuity by offering a topic as well as reminding that they are switching from one topic to another. Akram is adding fluidity to conversations by introducing a new topic, and in Exchange 24, Roberto is letting Akram know that they are now starting a new topic for discussion. Both partners are making an effort to maintain task continuity successfully.

(1) A: Another main idea. What is it? What is it? How about food?

(2) R: *Food…*

(22) R: In my country, everything is with popular election, everything, senator, represents, governor, government position is with popular election.

(**23) A:** Free hospitals, free schools?

(24) R: *Wait (.) that's another topic. Free School? Free for everybody?*

During the collaborative graphic organizer task, the partners supported each other's learning in different ways. They provided linguistic scaffolding for one another, which created opportunities for language development at a lexical and morpho-syntactic level. They provided conceptual scaffolding by elaborating explanations and provided additional examples that got the partner to think about the topics from different perspectives. They also scaffolded for one another in terms of the logistics of the task, making sure that each partner was engaged in the task and that each partner got the necessary information during the collaborative graphic organizer task to be able to

complete the independent writing portion of the task. The task structure as well as the sociocultural context created among partners in each pair allowed for these scaffolding opportunities. Through the discussion of topics and extended interactions, the partners discussed more topics, which provided more opportunities to talk and exchange new information and ideas. During these exchanges, partners experienced confusion surprise. As the task was set up to trigger academic language, the partners achieved opportunities for academic language use and they formed a sociocultural context that allowed for such interactions to take place. In other words, the sociocultural context of the interactions among the pairs supported the main purpose of the task, which was to provide the students with opportunities to use language for conversing, exchanging ideas, and improving their academic language skills.

Interactional Dynamics in the Collaborative Graphic Organizer Task

Sociocultural analysis of interactions is necessary in order to be able to understand the dynamics among the participants because the activity itself is a social event in which the members create certain patterns of interaction as well as a system of roles and rules. This system is created as the activity is taking place, and the system is shaped in accordance with the members' identities and their relationships as well as their concomitant attitudes, values, ways of feeling, ways of knowing and believing, as well as ways of acting and interacting (Gee, 2005). A close analysis of the dialogues helped the researcher understand the sociocultural aspects of the collaborative graphic organizer task. The researcher was able to identify successful collaboration patterns among pairs as well as the dynamics in communication that may fail to take place as collaboratively.

Table 4-2 and Table 4-3 display the patterns of students' use of academic language functions detected in each partners' language during the collaborative graphic organizer task. The data depict the number of instances that the researcher identified as representing samples from dialogues of comparable length from each pair. The first dialogue for example is based on a comparison-contrast knowledge structure, and the second dialogue is based on a cause and effect knowledge structure.

Table 4-2 presents each pair's use of academic language functions during these sample dialogues. This information was used to generate the categories of interactional roles and to better understand the task structure. Repeated occurrence of academic language functions revealed the interactional roles that the students assumed during the graphic organizer tasks. Based on these patterns of language use, the researcher was able to identify interactional styles of students. Identification of interactional roles also shed light on the structure of the collaborative graphic organizer task. According to the results of the task structure analysis, pairs used different interactional roles to start the task, to continue the task, and to finish the task

Table 4-3 depicts the frequency of each partner's use of academic language functions. The degree of the frequency that the participants used each academic language function revealed information about the types of interactional roles assumed by the participant. Based on the interactional roles frequently assumed by participants, the researcher was able to identify the interactional style of each partner.

Analysis of the participants' dialogues through the lens of language functions revealed different sociocultural elements shaping dialogue on the partners' interactions during the collaborative graphic organizer task. In light of the academic language

functions, the researcher was able to take a closer look at the different sociocultural elements that shape the dialogue. The following section of Chapter 4 will focus on these elements starting with academic language functions and moving into interactional roles, interactional styles, and task structure.

Academic language functions

Academic language functions are necessary for academic success in that students need to be familiar with the type of language required at school for comprehending written texts, asking and answering informational questions, asking and answering clarifying questions, making connections between concepts, relating information, comparing, contrasting, explaining cause and effect, predicting, drawing conclusions, summarizing, persuading, etc. (Dutro & Moran, 2003, p. 233). The researcher analyzed students' interactions in terms of the purposes of language use and was able to identify different academic language functions in students' conversations.

Academic language functions helped the researcher detected different patterns of language use, and the researcher labeled the interactional roles based on these repeating patterns (See Table 4-2 and Table 4-3). For instance, asking questions is a very important academic language function, and when a speaker used this function repeatedly, the researcher associated this behavior with an interactional role and labeled it as an *Inquirer*. In other words, academic language functions helped the researcher analyze the socicultural dynamics within the collaborative graphic organizer task at a deeper level, and the range of language functions in the task helped the researcher understand the extent of purposes for which the students used language during the task. As can be seen in Table 4-4, the researcher grouped the academic

language functions used in the collaborative graphic organizer task into two categories according to these macro vs micro levels.

The concept of macrofunctions and microfunctions furthered the researcher's understanding of each academic language function. The academic language functions listed under each macrofunction were categorized based on the language samples and the overall purposes of each function. In the following section, each (micro)function is defined and illustrated with an example from the students' conversations to show how each falls under Kidd's (1996) four macrofunctions.

Macrofunction – Informing

Informing is a very broad category that includes functions such asking for information, giving information, and asking for further information. The language that the partners used under this particular category of macro functions served to seek information and to give information without getting into details about the characteristics and examples, etc. Informing included the following academic language functions:

- Asking for information
- Giving information
- Asking for further information
- Giving further information
- Asking for a reason
- Giving a reason
- Presenting contrary evidence
- Predicting
- Reporting others' words

Asking for information: Asking for information is a basic requirement for participating in conversations in academic settings. We raise questions to find out about a concept, an experience, a phenomenon, or an event, etc. Students ask for information from their peers as well as from the teacher in academic settings, students are expected

to raise questions about different topics. Being able to ask questions to request information is therefore a very important academic language function. As can be seen in the following excerpt between Akram and Roberto, the pair is exploring the topic of politics and posing questions to one another in order to understand how the government systems in their home countries are similar or different. During the exchanges, they discover that the government systems in the two countries are similar in certain aspects and different in others. The conversation progresses smoothly as the partners ask each other for more information, as can be seen in the excerpt below.

(1) A: What about politics? (.) Do you have presidents?

(2) R: *Yeah, presidents (.) separate government system.*

(3) A: Political system (.) you have presidents and do you change the president every four years?

(**4) R:** *Every four years. You select the government. So the political system is democracy. So we have an election for every four years (.) election for the president.*

(5) A: And that's for men? Your president?

(6) R: *Could be woman or man.*

(7) A: For us (.) it is the kingdom and the justice of men. Only men can be. Only the son of the king.

(8) R: *How many son have the king? Only one son?*

(9) A: Oh no.

(10) R: *A few sons?*

(11) A: Many.

Giving information: Being able to provide relevant information when posed with a question is a necessary skill in participating in classroom conversations and discussions. As can be seen in the excerpt under "Asking Questions" as well as in the

following excerpt, Roberto and Akram are exchanging information about different aspects of their countries, such as weddings and politics. Both are practicing their questioning skills as well as gaining experience in answering questions correctly.

(3) R: Wedding separate?

(4) A: *Yes (.) women alone (.) men alone.*

(5) R: How are they separate?

(6) A: *There is a party for women (.) and there is a party for men.*

Asking for further information: Academic tasks often require students to obtain further information about topics or events beyond the answers given to an initial question. Therefore, being able to request further information is an important skill in furthering students' understanding of academic content. As can be seen in the following excerpt, Hyun is trying to find out more about *arepas*, and he is requesting further information by raising multiple questions about the topic. We can see that he is interested in this particular food from his partner's cultural background because in Turn 13 he asks if there is a similar food in the United States. He also repeats the word to himself several times as he asks the questions.

(3) H: The most common food you usually eat?

(4) M: *Arepas.*

(5) H: Arepa? What is this?

(6) M: *It is uhmmmmmm it is something like (.) it is some kind of bread but it is not bread?*

(7) H: What is it from?

(8) M: *It is from corn. And you can put inside cheese or ham or whatever you want, you put inside something.*

(9) H: Inside where?

(10) M: *Inside the arepa.*

(11) H: Oh (.) arepa (.) so it look like bread?

(12) M: *Yeah (.) it look like bread but it is more strong (.) it's like uhmmm…*

(13) H: Is there a similar food in the United States?

Giving further information: Being able to provide further information about a certain topic as a response to a question or a comment is another important academic language function. Students who are not able to perform this academic function may simply repeat what they have already stated, but such repetition would not satisfy the expectations of most conversation partners. As can be seen in Turn 23, Roberto's questions for confirmation is a characteristic of the *Inquirer* role. Akram confirms that he likes eggs, and he can eat eggs as part of his religion. Through Roberto's questions for further information, Akram gives additional information about the subtopic.

(23) R: *You like eggs?*

(24) A: Eggs*?*

(25) R: *Eggs.*

(26) A: Yeah.

(27) R: No holy animals?

(27) A: *No, there is some rules. For example, we can't eat the three kinds of seafood. We can't eat, crabs, we can't eat gators.*

(28) R: No gators?

(29) A: *No gators. A lot of other things.*

(30) R: OK no holy animals like in India?

(31) A: *Not because they are holy (.) but because there are some rules about eating. For example, gators eat any kind of animal. If it eats meat, we don't eat it. For example, gators eat meat, so we don't eat it. One example.*

Asking for a reason: During academic conversations, continuous participation and engagement can take place when the speakers raise questions to explore the reasons behind the presented facts and shared opinions. This particular language function promotes more in-depth discussions and students make use of their critical thinking skills when forming questions of reason. In the following exchange between Dawud and Ayumi, Ayumi would like to find out why Dawud found it hard to make a payment for his power bill for the GRU. She not only asks for a reason but also suggests an explanation for why he may have experienced difficulty. Her proposal may be based on her own difficulty in setting up a payment for her power bill because of her limited English language ability.

> **(56) D:** GRU (.) yeah (.) I have to go there to pay deposit and the contact (.) and the Internet I have to go to Cox and pay deposit and make contract (.) horrible. My life was, and also my challenge…
>
> **(57) A:** Why it was hard for you? Because you can't speak English or?
>
> **(58) D:** No no (.) I have to go there to pay deposit, deposit, because I don't have social security and I have to go there to pay deposit to the electric.

Giving a reason: Being able to provide reasons is another important language function. When faced with a question that explores reasoning, the speaker is required to support their statements with reasons, which will help maintain the flow of the conversation. As can be seen in the following excerpt, Dawud's first question seeking confirmation prompts Ayumi to talk more about the difficulties she experienced when crossing the street in Gainesville for the first time. She gives reasons why it was different and difficult for her. She uses the connector "because" correctly. Dawud's questions give her an opportunity to express reason and to use the language for expressing reason.

(**2) D:** *Cross the road?*

(3) A: Yeah (.) yeah (.) across the road, but I didn't know how to across the road.

(4) D: *Ohh* (.) *OK.*

(5) A: Because the signal is not automatical (.) you have to push the button, and then yeah (.) because in Japan everywhere is automatical (.) here you have to push the button.

Predicting: Thinking of how an event may take place, what may have caused an event, or the outcome of an event is an important academic skill that involves critical thinking skills. For instance, students may be asked to predict the results of an earthquake or the effects of sun exposure or smoking. Predicting the ending of a novel or a story is a common academic task in English. In the following dialogue between Dawud and Ayumi, in Line 28, Ayumi is trying to predict the reason why the dealers in Gainesville would charge a higher rate to a foreign person.

(27) D: *I found lots but the dealers, you know, the problem, here my problem, dealers rise the price, and…*

(28) A: Because you are foreign?

(29) D: *Yeah, dealers rise their price also I know it is cheaper than what dealer told me*.

Presenting contrary evidence: Academic settings may require one to support his/her stance with contrary evidence. For instance, the partner may hold a firm belief about a topic that the other partner may not necessarily find persuasive or valid. Presenting contrary evidence strengthens one's position. In the following excerpt, Ayumi is answering Dawud's questions, but Dawud is presenting contrary evidence based on his general knowledge about Japan, and she is refuting his contrary evidence based on her own knowledge of her own country. When Ayumi indicates that religion is not important in Japan, Dawud reminds her that there are Christians as well as Buddhists in

Japan, which he sees as an indication that people in Japan do have religion, which may mean that he does not understand how Ayumi can claim that religion is not important in Japan for everybody in Japan.

(1) D: We are going to write about your culture.

(2) A: *In Japan, religion is not important (.) it is not important.*

(3) D: Yeah, but you have Christians.

(4) A: *Yeah yeah (.) but it is only one percent we have Christians [in Japan.*

(5) D: The majority Buddhist?]

(6) A: *Maybe (.) but we are not. We are not religious. I think Islam is very important for your country (.) but it is not very important in Japan.*

Reporting others' words: Reporting others' words is an important academic language function in any class since students will need to refer to a writer's words, the teacher's words, or a peer's words. Students should also be able to report ideas or words from other resources. Being able to transmit the message correctly and indicate that the message is not theirs but another person's are important skills in academic settings as well as in daily life. In the following excerpt, Miguel reports another person's words by using the correct sentence structure to be able to express this particular academic language function. The tense is not correct in the second part of the sentence, but he is practicing the use of reported speech successfully by reporting the information that he acquired from a different source.

(19) H: I should try Latin Café?

(20) M: *I don't know it's good arepa, but some people told me they sell arepas. I don't eat arepa too much, not my favorite food.*

Macrofunction – Describing

Partners used this macro function in order to provide detailed information on a process, characteristics of a place or food with specific examples, and to express frequency of certain events or to indicate quantities, etc. The following are a list of academic language functions that serve the macro category of describing:

- Describing a process
- Describing characteristics
- Describing a location
- Comparing/Contrasting
- Providing an example
- Expressing frequency
- Expressing quantity

Describing a process: Classes in the natural and social studies involve academic language for describing a process step by step. For instance, in social studies, students will need to describe the process of how a bill becomes law. In the following excerpt in Turn 4, Roberto describes the election process in Colombia. He is responding to a question from Akram. In Colombia, because of the democratic political system, there are elections every four years whereas in Saudi Arabia the king decides which one of his sons come to power next.

> **(3) A:** *Political system, you have presidents and do you change the president every four years?*
>
> (**4) R:** Every four years. You select the government. So the political system is democracy. So we have an election for every four years (.) election for the president.

Describing characteristics: Describing the characteristics of a city, an object, or a person is very important in academic settings. For example, students need to know how to form statements that involve adjectives and relative clauses in order to express the descriptive features. In the following excerpt, Hyun tries to understand the texture

and form of *arepas*, and Miguel describes the characteristics of *arepas*. In Turn 6, he explains that it resembles bread, and in Turn 8, he is explaining what it is made of and how it can be served.

(3) H: The most common food you usually eat?

(4) M: *Arepas.*

(5) H: Arepa? What is this?

(6) M: *It is uhmmmmmm it is something like (.) it is some kind of bread but it is not bread?*

(7) H: What is it from?

(8) M: *It is from corn. And you can put inside cheese or ham or whatever you want, you put inside something.*

Describing a location: Being able to describe a location of a place or an object can be an important academic language function in classes such as geography or biology. Students need to be able to understand and use expressions that indicate where a certain country or organ are located by using language such as “on, next to, across from, above, adjacent to, etc.” As can be seen in the following excerpt between Ayumi and Dawud, the collaborative graphic organizer task provides an opportunity to practice the use of prepositions describing a location.

(23) A: You live in a house or apartment?

(24) D: *Apartment, but it is kind of a house yeah.*

(25) A: Where, where?

(26) D: *You know Butler Plaza?*

(27) A: Yeah. Behind Butler Plaza?

(28) D: *No, in Butler Plaza, you know Regal Cinema?*

(29) A: Yeah, I know.

(30) D*:* *In front of Regal Cinema.*

Comparing/Contrasting: In order to fully understand the characteristics of a certain object, it is sometimes necessary to compare or contrast that object with a different one. Academic tasks often require students to make comparisons and contrasts between different events, processes, or concepts. In order to successfully participate in academic discussions, students need to be able to make such comparisons in both oral and written language. As can be seen in the excerpt below, Ayumi compares and contrasts the traffic lights in Japan and the United States. She points out that the signal automatically changes in Japan when pedestrians walk up to a traffic light, whereas in the United States one has to press the button. She uses the academic language function of comparing and contrasting successfully in spite of a word form error.

> **(5) A:** Because the signal is not automatical, you have to push the button, and then yeah, but in Japan everywhere is automatical, here you have to push the button.

Providing an example: Giving an example to support one's stance is a necessary academic language function. Classroom participation may require students to give specific examples when they describe a concept or present their opinions. In the following excerpt, Akram provides examples to further Roberto's understanding of his cultural traditions, speculating related to the types of meat that Muslim people are allowed to eat. Akram's use of the connector "for example" is a sign that he is able to use the languages for expressing the academic language function of giving an example.

> **(27) A:** No, there is some rules. For example, we can't eat the three kinds of seafood. We can't eat, crabs, we can't eat gators.

(28) R: *No gators?*

(29) A: No gators. A lot of other things.

Expressing frequency: In classes such as social studies and science, students are expected to express how often certain events take place. Being proficient in the language of expressing frequency helps ELLs to talk about the occurrence of actions and events. In the following excerpt, we see that Ayumi expresses frequency by using the word “every” as an indicator. Dawud also expresses frequency in this way. His language may be scaffolded through Ayumi’s earlier question.

(70) D: And when I wanted to OK to set the bill by my name, to my name, they told me you have to come to pay.

(71) A: *In every month?*

(72) D: No, now every month I pay my bill by Internet.

Expressing quantity: Students will need to indicate the number of certain objects or the amount of substances with language such as a few of, a lot of, a little bit of, and a couple of. Without the language necessary to expressing quantity, students will have to use numbers, and numbers may not work in every situation. Effective use of language to express quantities will help students participate in academic conversations more confidently. In the following excerpt, Ayumi uses this academic language function successfully even though she uses “much” instead of “many” with the count noun “people.”

(11) M: In my country, there are other religion, but the majority, the big religion in my country is Catholic, maybe you can find not too much people from other religion.

Macrofunction - Clarifying

The partners' dialogues included academic language functions that served the purpose of seeking or giving clarification. When the partners were confused about something or wanted to make sure that they were on the same page as their partner, they used language that served the macro function of clarifying. Following is a list of micro functions that fall under clarifying:

- Asking for clarification
- Giving clarification
- Asking for confirmation
- Giving confirmation

Asking for clarification: Asking for clarification is another important academic language function required in classroom work. Knowing the language of asking for clarification will help students express themselves more clearly and seek clarification when they are confused about an issue. Clarification questions typically involve "how" statements, as can be seen in the following excerpt. Dawud is asking Ayumi to clarify what she means when she says "many women." In his later exchanges, he provided Ayumi with a detailed answer as to why men are allowed to marry more than one woman.

> **(3) A:** Yeah, it is one guy one girl, but in your country it is one guy and it's many women.
>
> **(4) D:** *Yeah one guy. What? I didn't understand you, what did you want to ask me?*
>
> **(5) A:** In your country one guy have many wives.

Giving clarification: The language of clarification can be required during academic activities when peers are confused. Expressions such as "What I really meant was," "I was actually trying to let you know," "what I was trying to say was" can be used

in order to provide clarification for what one has just said. Being able to use such expressions could enable partners to overcome misunderstandings more easily. As can be seen in the following excerpt between Ayumi and Dawud, Ayumi is expecting Dawud to give clarification about how Dawud can be the only Arabic person living in that apartment complex when she knows of another Arabic person who lives there. Dawud provides the correction and resolves her confusion.

(31) A: Ohhhhhh (.) it's many Arabic live there?

(32) D: *N (.) no (.) just me.*

(33) A: No no *(.)* but you know Magrip?

(34) D: *Yeah he lives in front of my apartment (.) yeah only me and him but he left.*

Asking for confirmation: Asking for confirmation helps us to get the speaker confirm what s/he has just uttered perhaps to check for any misunderstandings. Questions such as "Is it really?", "Are you sure?", "Did I hear you say?" trigger a repetition or paraphrasing of the response typically starting with a yes/no statement. Academic discussions involve confirmation statements that serve the purpose of keeping the partners on the same page and making sure that there are no misunderstandings. In the exchange below, Hyun is trying to understand the linguistic challenges Miguel experienced when he came to the United States for the first time. In Turn 5, Hyun poses a question of confirmation to clearly express Miguel's challenges in the essay that he is supposed to write at the end of the collaborative graphic organizer task.

(3) H: Listening, when you are listening, you can't understand.

(4) M: *No, uhm (.) I can understand a little bit.*

(5) H: So it was difficult to conversation?

(6) M: *Yeah, it was difficult to have a conversation with people.*

Giving confirmation: Giving confirmation is another common language function that takes place in academic settings. When a group partner or the teacher asks for confirmation, s/he expects an answer that indicates approval or correction. A simple yes or no may be enough, but in certain cases, a one-word answer such as yes or no can be limited, and the speaker may need to rephrase or restate the original statement. In the following excerpt, Roberto is asking for confirmation from Akram. He is trying to understand if he heard it correctly, and he may be posing this question as a confirmation combined with an intent to understand the reasoning behind not eating alligators. Therefore, Akram is confirming that alligators are not allowed as food, but he also indicates that they are allowed to eat several other types of animals other than gators and crabs.

(27) A: No, there is some rules. For example, we can't eat the three kinds of seafood. We can't eat crabs, we can't eat gators.

(28) R: *No gators?*

(29) A: No gators. A lot of other things.

Macrofunction – Presenting

When students' academic language served the purpose of presenting a new idea or a new plan or emphasizing a point, etc., the researcher categorized it as presenting. The language that the students used for presenting involved the meaning of sharing and seeking information that was based on personal opinions or ideas that were generated by the students rather than facts. The following is a list of academic functions classified as types of presenting:

- Proposing an idea or plan
- Rejecting an idea or a plan

- Conceding a point
- Emphasizing a point
- Presenting opinions
- Agreeing
- Disagreeing
- Asking for advice
- Giving advice
- Showing preference

Proposing an idea or plan: Collaborative projects involve negotiating ideas and strategies as to how to complete a task together as a group. Students will need to know how to propose idea during a collaborative task. Therefore, the language of proposing an idea is useful for complete participation from the group. Expressions such as "Why don't we? I think we should. Shouldn't we?" can be very effective when proposing new ideas in a collaborative group task. ELLs may not be able to verbalize the ideas that they would like to propose in the same way that native speakers of English would. As can be seen in the exchange below, Roberto is proposing that they talk about marriage, and as soon as he presents the idea, Akram picks it up and comes up with a subtopic. Through his statement, Akram signals his partner that he would like to discuss the separate weddings in his country. Both partners agree and continue a discussion about how weddings are practiced in the two cultures.

(1) R: Culture. What can we talk about? What can we talk about? Maybe (.) marriage.

(2) A: Marriage (.) in our society (.) it is separate. Weddings are separate.

Rejecting an idea or a plan: Rejecting is an important language function in academic discussions. The language of rejecting can help language learners argue against what they do not accept. Students may not feel comfortable rejecting due to their cultural background, and they may accept decisions or propositions if they are not

able to reject an idea in a culturally appropriate or linguistically correct manner. As can be seen below, Ayumi is implicitly rejecting Dawud's stance for the importance of religion in Japan by indicating that Japan is different from Saudi Arabia. In Turn 6, she indicates that just because religion is given great importance in Saudi Arabia, it is not the same everywhere. Japan is one of those countries where religion is not very important, and it is accepted for people not to be religious.

(4) A: Yeah yeah, (.) but it is only one percent we have Christians [in Japan.

(5) D: *The majority Buddhist?]*

(6) A: Maybe (.) but we are not. We are not religious. I think Islam is very important for your country (.) but it is not very important in Japan.

Conceding a point: During academic conversations, students may find themselves in partial agreement with their peers. Expressing partial agreement can be challenging. Expressions such as "I can almost agree that, I agree to a certain extent but" etc. are commonly used among native speakers of English to express partial agreement. However, even without use of these words, ELLs in this task are able to express partial agreement. As can be seen in the following exchange between Ayumi and Dawud, from Ayumi's perspective as a woman, the fact that the groom takes care of all the wedding expenses makes the process very easy for females. Dawud points this out this type of an arrangement makes it hard on men since they handle all the expenses. Ayumi laughs and disagrees her that it is easy. In Turn 24, Dawud comments that the wedding process may be easy for her, but maintain that it is difficult for him.

(21) A: Yeah yeah yeah both, parents, some people by themselves.

(22) D: *Because in my country the groom, the man pay for everything and pay for wedding everything, that's why I am asking you. I think we have to change this because it is difficult.*

(23) A: Easy (laughter).

(24) D: *Yeah, easy for you but difficult for me.*

Emphasizing a point: When conversing about academic topics, it may be necessary to emphasize certain points in order to indicate that they are important and need to be remembered. For instance, "It is critical to…" and "I really think that it is important" signals that the speaker is going to make a significant point that is significant and expects the listeners to take note. Dawud emphasizes his point through repetition and paraphrase. In the excerpt below, Dawud places an emphasis on the wedding expenses by repeating the statement.

(14) D: So what we have to talk about (.) who pay money for wedding?

(15) A: *Wedding?*

(16) D: How can they get married? This is very important.

Presenting opinions: In academic settings, students may be expected to give their opinions. The language of presenting an idea varies, but certain expressions such as "I think, I believe, as far as I'm concerned, etc." more explicitly announce that the speaker is going to present an opinion as opposed to a fact or someone else's viewpoint. In the following excerpt, Ayumi uses "I think" to successfully present her opinion about how people view religion in Dawud's country and to contrast the two cultures.

> **(6) A:** Maybe (.), but we are not. We are not religious. I think Islam is very important for your country, but it is not very important in Japan.

Agreeing: Agreeing is an academic language function that would typically be necessary in a discussion/debate setting observed with classroom participation. ELLs may agree with other speakers, and they may want to express their standing regarding

the speakers' position. In the following excerpt, after a brief misunderstanding between Dawud and Ayumi, in Turn 41, Ayumi agrees with Dawud that it is difficult to find a good apartment in Gainesville by repeating Dawud's initial statement with an additional adjective indicating that finding a desirable apartment is difficult process.

(39) A: It is hard to find the apartment?

(40) D: *No no, it is not hard to find the apartment, it is hard to furnish the apartment and hard to make contract to the electric because I have to go there to pay deposit, to the department of electric GRE.*

(41) A: It is hard to find a good apartment.

Disagreeing: In academic settings, students may hold different opinions on topics and find themselves in disagreement with their peers or their teacher. Students need to be familiar with the language necessary to express their disagreements in order to continue participating in conversations. In the following excerpt, Ayumi disagrees with Dawud's misperception about the existence of other religions in Japan as a sign that Japanese people give importance to religion.

(6) A: Maybe (.), but we are not. We are not religious. I think Islam is very important for your country, but it is not very important in Japan.

Asking for advice: In academic settings, students will want to ask for advice from one another in accomplishing academic tasks. As can be seen below, Akram is trying to understand whether Colombian food is spicy. He indicates that he does not like spicy food and he asks for Roberto's advice as to whether he should try it. Roberto seems to understand that Akram is referring to hot and spicy food, and he explains that eating Colombian food is safe for Akram because the food is not hot in general. He gives additional information as to what other types of food are available that Akram could eat.

(19) A: *Is this spicy food? I don't like spicy. Can I try?*

(20) R: No, no spicy. For Colombian no spicy. No spicy food. Sometimes. Spicy but not hot, a lot of the spices but not hot. That's called Mayan food, Maya. And there is also American food like McDonald's, Kentucky.

Giving advice: Students need to learn the language of giving advice in order to successfully collaborate with their partners in group activities. Language forms such as "You should," "You may need to," "You may want to think about," or "You should really consider" will be necessary to be able to give advice without causing misunderstanding. In the following excerpt, Hyun is seeking advice, and Miguel explains that Latin Café does have arepas, but they may not be the best arepas.

(19) H: I should try Latin Café?

(20) M: *I don't know it's good arepa, but some people told me they sell arepas. I don't eat arepa too much, not my favorite food.*

Showing preference: The language of expressing preferences is a necessary component of academic language and daily language in general, and expressing preferences may be useful in collaborative activities as well. Students will need to let other members of their group know their preferences when decisions are made on behalf of the whole group. Expressions such as "I would prefer," I would rather," I would really like to," and "I would not be with," will allow the student to put forth his/her own preferences comfortably and appropriately. In Turn 18, Dawud expresses his preference using a complicated sentence structure: "It's not this one (that) I like."

(14) D: This kind of rice in the bazaar, we use it in Saudi Arabia, and it's OK. There is rice, and it is called Indian Gait. Indian Gait (writes it down) The brown this rice.

(15) A: *Similar?*

(16) D: This one we have the same in Saudi Arabia.

(17) A: *Same? (Laughing)*

(18) D: Yeah, but it's not this one I like.

The English language learners in this study used all four macrofunctions (informing, describing, clarifying, and presenting) with 30 different microfunctions while participating in the collaborative graphic organizer task. Results indicate that the participants in this study used a variety of academic language functions for multiple communicative purposes. This wide range of functions illustrates that the collaborative graphic organizer task provides broad opportunities for academic language use. The partners' interactive use of academic language functions can shed light into the nature of collaborative activities that promote academic language use.

Interactional roles

The researcher identified the interactional role categories through an in-depth analysis of the frequently-used patterns for starting the task and different subtopics and how the partners continued the task and the subtopics as well as how certain academic language functions were used repeatedly by the partners. During the collaborative graphic organizer task, the patterns of language functions use informed the researcher about the types of roles the partners assumed. The researcher was able to detect and identify these roles in light of prior studies exploring the sociocultural nature of student interactions in school settings (Bloome et al. 2005; Gee, 2005). These roles served to start a new topic under the main topic, continue speaking in-depth about this new topic, and end the topic to start a different topic. As can be seen in Table 4-5, the researcher identified and labeled each interactional role based on repeating patterns of language functions use. The partners for instance used certain roles to start the task e.g. *Initiator*

or *Inquirer*. With this list, the researcher wanted to identify and understand interactional roles that students assume in a collaborative graphic organizer task. The list may not be inclusive of all the possible roles, and some of the roles may occasionally fall under a different category. Rather, the roles may be useful as a tool for researchers and practitioners in making sense of student interactions in collaborative activities.

Roles for starting a task or a new topic

Partners assumed roles such as *Initiator* or *Topic Switcher*, and the language they used when they adopted these roles served to start the task or start a new subtopic.

Initiator - Introducing a new topic, a new subtopic, or starting the task: One or both of the partners take over the *Initiator* role at the beginning of each task. *Initiators* use different strategies to start the conversation. Some partners raise questions that pull the other partner into the task with an answer, and some partners utter statements that are in the form of announcements and plans. The following excerpt involves an example of mutual initiation where one partner explicitly announces the goal and topic of the task Ayumi accepts the task and topic proposed indicating by supplying the subtopic with statement about her country.

(1) D: We are going to write about your culture.

(2) A: *In Japan (.) religion is not important, (.) it is not important.*

In the next excerpt, Miguel initiates the task by posing a question. He may be assuming that the partner is already familiar with the topic and the task, and he attempts to directly engage his partner in the task. His partner answers his question and provides the reason for his challenge.

(1) M: What is your challenge?

(2) H: *When I came to Gainesville, I met my host family and I lived with them and I think it is kind of challenging because I never live with another family.*

Topic switcher - Changing the topic: Some partners changed the topic or the subtopic by using different techniques. In the following excerpt, Roberto tries to understand if the education system in Saudi Arabia is similar to the ones in Venezuela by describing certain characteristics of the dorms in his country. In Turn 21, he introduces the topic of high schools. Also, in Turn 23, he adds a new dimension to the subtopic of university education. Roberto is steering the conversation and expanding the subtopics with his questions.

(20) A: *You know (.) in universities men can teach women, but only by camera.*

(21) R: What about in high schools?

(22) A: *Never.*

(23) R: Do students live in the university? You know (.) the dorms. Student dorms, (.) where students asleep.

(24) A: *No no no. never. Everybody go home.*

(25) R: My country the same, you know, no dorms, this is popular here. Everybody go home. Everybody go home.

Proposer - Introducing a topic for further conversation: During the collaborative graphic organizer task, partners propose new topics. *Proposers*, just as the title indicates, suggest new topics and facilitates the process of carrying out the task for their partners. Partners who take over the *Proposer* role speed up the process of executing the task and leave more time for in-depth coverage of the subtopics. As can be seen in the following excerpt, as they begin the task, Roberto tentatively proposes a topic by presenting the idea of marriage as an option. Roberto is very direct in his style

of proposing an idea, and his proposal resembles thinking aloud or conversing with his partner.

> **R:** Culture. What can we talk about? What can we talk about? Maybe (.) marriage.

Roles for continuing a task or a new topic

The collaborative graphic organizer task continued for 20 to 30 minutes. The researcher did not provide any guidelines as to how much time the pairs needed to devote to each topic, so the partners made decisions on their own. The researcher observed certain roles that helped extend the duration of student interactions on different topics of their choice, such as *Responder*, *Inquirer*, and *Topic Expander*, and the researcher observed that the task may not have created opportunities for language use if the partners had not assumed the roles that helped continue the discussions during interactions.

Inquirer - Asking questions to further explore the topic: Some of the partners posed several questions to their partners and did not talk much about themselves. Ayumi is one of these partners whose goal was to elicit information about her partner, Dawud. All of her questions were relevant to the sub-topic, but she did not give her partner much opportunity to ask questions about her. She generated all the questions during the task while interacting with her partner.

> **(1) A:** You came here in March.
>
> **(2) D:** *Yeah.*
>
> **(3) A:** And then you find an apartment.
>
> **(4) D:** *It was easy when I found apartment, but uhm I have to…*
>
> **(5) A:** How did you get to your apartment?

(6) D: *Someone helped me.*

(7) A: Who is someone?

(8) D: *Someone I know helped me.*

(9) A: Some Arabic boy?

(10) D: *Yeah.*

(11) A: You have friend in Gainesville?

(12) D: *No, no, the ELI told me the guy, man, Saudi….*

Responder - Answering questions without changing the topic: *Responders* make the collaborative task a successful one by giving in-depth responses without changing the topic or posing more questions. They continue answering questions even when they are interacting with an inquirer who poses multiple questions. As can be seen in the following excerpt, Ayumi keeps asking questions one after the other. Dawud responds to her questions without changing the topic or complaining about the number of questions.

(1) A: When you want to buy a car, difficult?

(2) D: *Yeah.*

(3) A: Why?

(4) D: *Because I have to buy a good car and low price.*

(5) A: At low price? How much?

(6) D: *I was looking for a car 2000 dollars.*

Topic expander - Expanding the topic by giving additional information: When partners welcome questions, they extend upon these questions and comments with further explanations and examples. While a partner could choose to give one simple word or sentence as an answer to the question, he/she gives extra information to help

the other partner get a better understanding of his/her meaning. As can be seen in the following exchanges, Hyun asks a question to which a one-word answer would suffice, but Miguel embellishes the answer with further explanations about what exactly can be put inside the arepa. His explanation serve to correct the confusion about the arepa by explaining that arepa is a kind of bread.

(7) H: What is it from?

(8) M: *It is from corn. And you can put inside cheese or ham or whatever you want, you put inside something.*

Reorienter - Returning to the original topic after discussing a different subtopic: This particular role serves to steer the conversation back to a topic that needs to be discussed further. This role is a strategic role that is important in in-depth discussion of topics, and during the collaborative graphic organizer task the partners were cooperative in reorienting to the topic. In the following excerpt, Dawud poses a question in Turn 14 about the parties who are expected to pay for the wedding expenses in Japan. He may have thought that this was a potential area where the two countries may be similar or may differ. He rephrases his question in Turn 16, but Ayumi does not understand his first question and gives a different response. Therefore, in Turn 20, he brings up the same topic again to be able to get the answer to his question.

(14) D: *So what we have to talk about. Who pay money for wedding?*

(15) A: Wedding?

(16) D: *How can they get married? This is very important.*

(17) A: Just go to Law office (.) and paper and write down and then marry. Of course some people have wedding party (.) but some people just marry without wedding party. Everyone have wedding party?

(18) D: *Most of them.*

(19) A: We don't have religion (.) so some people have wedding party (.) but they are not Christian.

(20) D: *But I mean if they have wedding party (.) who will pay? Who is going to pay? Both?*

(21) A: Yeah yeah yeah both (.) parents (.) some people by themselves.

(22) D: *Because in my country the groom (.) the man pay for everything and pay for wedding everything (.) that's why I am asking you.*

Restater - Repeating one's words for emphasis or for better understanding:

The *Restater* role involves the act of repeating one's words for emphasis or for better understanding if the partner was not able to catch a certain word on the first attempt. As can be seen in the following excerpt, Akram repeats the fact that there is a separate part of the wedding for men and women in Saudi Arabia, and Roberto attempts to change the topic in Turn 7, but upon Akram's responses, he stays within the same topic for a little longer, giving Akram an opportunity to clarify what he means.

(3) R: Wedding separate?

(4) A: *Yes (.) women alone (.) men alone.*

(5) R: How are they separate?

(6) A: *There is a party for women (.) and there is a party for men.*

(7) R: Oh really (.) no party together? Society (.) it is about schools and marriage.

(8) A: *Wedding, wedding separate (.) but just the groom come to the women party.*

Corrector - Correcting the partner's statements for grammar and content:

Correctors add more information to make sure that their partner is exposed to the correct use of a word. *Correctors* can provide corrections explicitly or implicitly, but participants in this task typically provided corrections implicitly. They do not typically interrupt the partner's statement. Instead, they either use the word in another sentence

if they catch an incorrect use of a word, or they. *Correctors* are typically at a slightly higher level of English proficiency than their partners, and when they detect their partner's errors, they tend to model the correct form implicitly. As can be seen in the following exchange between Ayumi and Dawud, Dawud may implicitly be attempting to point out and correct Ayumi's mistake, and thus he provides linguistic support for Ayumi. This modeling may serve as opportunity for Ayumi to improve her English language skills.

> **(5) A:** Because the signal is not automatical (.) you have to push the button (.) and then yeah (.) because in Japan everywhere is automatical (.) here you have to push the button.
>
> **(6) D:** *Everything automatic in Japan (.) yeah yeah (.) I know it.*

Confirmer - Providing confirmation for questions from the partner: The *Confirmer* role involves the act of affirming the partner's statements. This role often co-occurs with the *Inquirer* role. The *Confirmer* is an important role that helps extend the conversations. Partners may ask for confirmation for different reasons, such as to indicate surprise, confusion, or misunderstanding. Pairs may also use this role as a way to indicate that they are following the other person's conversations carefully. Partners who respond to such confirmation requests typically provide the confirmation, such as in the example below.

> **(8) H:** In the summer, it is usually set like 5:00 o'clock.
>
> **(9) M:** Five?
>
> **(10) H:** Yeah.

Clarifier: Explaining one's words in a different way for better understanding: *Clarifying* is a strategy used when partners want to rephrase their statements or provide examples so that the other partner gains a better understanding of their prior statement.

Peers may provide help for one another through clarifying. Clarifications may also be response to a request for clarification. In Turn 42, Dawud attempts to clarify what he means. Ayumi asks confirmation questions to understand what he means, but she is confused, so Dawud clarifies what he means in Turn 47. Ayumi seems to understands what he means. She then moves forward and continues asking questions about the same subtopic.

(42) D: *Uhm let me explain (.) Ayumi (.) Ayumi?*

(43) A: It was hard for you to make a contract?

(44) D: *It was easy.*

(45) A: But you said it was difficult.

(46) D: *To find furniture and bring the furniture to my apartment because I didn't…*

(47) A: Where did you buy?

(48) D: *From somewhere.*

Opposer - Disagreeing with statements and answers: The *Opposer* role can be defined as the pattern of communication in which one partner constantly comes up with statements that negate their partner's statements. As can be seen in the following exchanges, Dawud's responses are contrary to Ayumi's answers. When Ayumi says that religion is not very important in her country, Dawud points out that there is a Christian population in Japan. He probably means that having Christians is a sign that religion is not unimportant, but Ayumi maintains her stance, and Dawud continues raising objections. He mentions that there are also Buddhists in Japan, which could make Japan a somewhat religious country. Ayumi seems to continually disregard his comments as she keeps repeating that no matter how many religions are represented in

Japan, it is not a religious country, unlike Saudi Arabia, where the majority of the population is Muslim.

(1) D: We are going to write about your culture.

(2) A: *In Japan, religion is not important, (.) it is not important.*

(3) D: Yeah, but you have Christians.

(4) A: *Yeah yeah, (.) but it is only one percent we have Christians [in Japan.*

(5) D: The majority Buddhist?]

(6) A: *Maybe (.), but we are not. We are not religious. I think Islam is very important for your country, but it is not very important in Japan.*

Interrupter - Interrupting the partner's conversations: The partners who act as *Interrupters* display a pattern of interrupting the conversation with questions or other types of statements. Such interruptions do not typically bring the topic to an end, and partners do not get offended or angry, but signs of frustration can be observed when the partner continues to interrupt. As can be seen in the following dialogue, Ayumi poses a question, but she does not give Dawud enough time to answer the question before she asks another question and interrupts Dawud in Turn. Ayumi's interruptions get Dawud to provide more explanations and clarifications, and her interruptions help Dawud to give more information about the subtopic.

(15) A: You find the apartment was easy.

(16) D: *It was easy, but I have to…*

(17) A: Better than your country?

(18) D: *It is easy when I found apartment, but it is hard to furniture.*

(19) A: Furniture?

(20) D: *Yeah. it was…*

(21) A: But they have furniture, no?

(22) D: *I have to buy, no, no, I have to buy, it is hard, when I contact electric department, I have to wait…*

(23) A: You live in a house or apartment?

(24) D: *Apartment, but it is kind of a house yeah.*

(25) A: Where, where?

Roles for ending a task or a topic

Students assumed different roles when they were ending the task or ending their discussion about a topic. These roles typically served to finish the task or end the discussion of a certain topic.

Finalizer - Finishing the task or topic: *Finalizers* typically end the task with a concluding question or a remark. They also give the signal that a topic has fully been discussed. Based on signals from a *Finalizer*, a partner often changes the topic, so a finalizer and a topic switcher may work well together unless the topic switcher changes the topics at points when the finalizer did not really intend to finalize the topic. As can be seen in the following excerpt, Ayumi finalizes the topic of transportation in Turn 11 after going over the list and looking at what they have covered before. Not only does she end the topic, but she also proposes another topic related to fashion.

(7) D: Only transport cars (.) trains.

(8) A: *Bus (.) train (.) taxi?*

(10) D: No no no (.) we don't have bus, car, train. Train (.) not for (.) between two city only. We use our own car (.) private car.

(11) A: *Religion (.) transport (.)* what about clothes?

(12) D: Fashion?

(13) A: Fashion, fashion.

Bypasser - Not acknowledging partner's comments: In certain instances during the collaborative graphic organizer task, the partners ignore their partners'

comments and carry on with a subtopic of their own choice changing the topic and creating the impression that they are not really listening to their partners. The *Bypasser* role occurs when the speaker is mainly focused on his/her own statements. The exchanges are typically short, and the proposed subtopic is either not covered or is superficially covered. In the following excerpt in Turn 7, Miguel is talking about the challenge he experienced when he was away from his family, and in Turn 8, instead of asking further questions about Miguel's challenges when far away from home, Hyun shifts the focus to himself, bypasses Miguel's point, and talks about the language problems he experienced when he started living with his host family for the first time.

(1) M: What is your challenge?

(2) H: *When I came to Gainesville (.) I met my host family and I lived with them and (.) I think it is kind of challenging because I never live with another family.*

(3) M: You just came to Gainesville?

(4) H: And I lived with family, host family.

(5) M: What?

(6) H: Host family.

(7) M: When I just came here, it was a big challenge because I was away from my family.

(8) H: When I first came here, it was difficult talking with my family because I didn't understand English, but I tried to talking with my family.

During the collaborative graphic organizer task, partners assumed various interactional roles. When the researcher detected certain academic language functions being repeatedly used, she started assigning labels for the most frequently occurring functions, and she built categories of interactional roles. These roles further improved her understand of the collaborative graphic organizer task as a communicative task, and ways the partners influenced the structure of the task based on the roles they assumed

during their interactions. Interactional roles helped the researcher further understand the types of roles that are associated with are influential for extended opportunities to use the language.

Interactional style

The researcher analyzed student interactions in terms of the interactional styles that each student displayed during the collaborative graphic organizer task. According to the researcher's observations, during their interactions, the participants interacted with each other in one of three different ways: a collaborative approach, an argumentative approach, and a hesitant approach. The researcher strived to understand how the partners interacted with each other in interactions that allowed continuous language production over an extended period of time, as opposed to interactions with only a few exchanges.

Collaborative approach

Extending the partner's responses by providing further information about a topic. When partners approach one another in a collaborative manner during the collaborative task, each partner responds to the other partner's questions and extends the idea with further examples and explanations. This type of interaction lengthens the duration of the exchanges and increases the interaction between the partners. In response to the partner's further elaborated information about a topic, the other partner comments and poses questions to explore the topic further.

Argumentative approach

Continuing the conversation by giving controversial examples or disagreeing with the partner. During the task, certain partners had a style of engaging their partners in the conversation by raising up controversial topics or questions and posing controversial

statements. In certain cases, the partner's goal was quite apparent in the sense that the questions were carefully selected to touch upon an issue that would make room for further questions. The partner may or may not intentionally bring up these topics, and in certain cases, the reason for such a style may be to avoid giving information about oneself because question statements are shorter strings of sentences than explanations and examples. Whatever the intention may be, we can observe in-depth exploration of topics, extensive use of academic vocabulary, and many questions to find out more about these issues with the help of the partner.

Hesitant approach

Completing the requirements of the task with the initiation of the partner without a participation interest in the task. In the hesitant approach, the partners fulfilled the requirement of the task to collaborate with the minimum effort possible. They do not ask further questions about the topics, and they do not extend questions with multiple examples or further explanations. The statements are relatively short, and the time spent on each topic is also very short. Since the partners do not delve deeply into the topics, the concepts are much general, and the topics are covered at a superficial level.

In the following section, each pair's interactional style is described according to the three types of interactional styles noted above.

Pair 1- Dawud and Ayumi: Collaborative-argumentative interactional style

Ayumi's interactional style can be defined as "argumentative" since she poses several controversial questions during the conversations. Dawud's style on the other hand can be described as collaborative as he responds to all her questions patiently and gives extensive information about each question as best as he can. Argumentative-Collaborative partnering seemed to work successfully in this particular

situation. A number of factors can be influential in Ayumi's preference for posing multiple questions as opposed to extending topics by adding examples about herself. First of all, at first sight, she seems shy in class, but her shyness may stem from her English language proficiency. Since her spoken English is at lower intermediate level, she may feel self-conscious about producing long strings of utterances in English due to a fear of making mistakes. Forming short sentences with questions may be easier for her because it generally results in language used by her partner. Another factor can be that her conversational style in general may be based on asking interesting questions to enrich conversations. She may also be more interested in hearing about others as opposed to talking about herself.

Dawud on the other hand has a truly "collaborative" conversational style. He patiently listens to Ayumi's questions. He is fully engaged in the task, and he provides extensive information in response each question posed by his partner. He provides further explanations when Ayumi is confused about the information he has provided. Since he is talkative, he answers Ayumi's questions easily. On occasions when she asks questions about sensitive issues, he steers the conversation in such a way that she gets the information she seeks without any conflict. Dawud's patient, engaging, and collaborative style may be supported by the fact that he is talkative person in general. His spoken English is fluent, and his proficiency level is at the intermediate level. He feels confident in his responses, and he makes jokes during the conversations. Ayumi's questioning style may have worked well thanks to Dawud's relaxed personality. If Dawud were a quiet person who was not very motivated to fully participate in the task, Ayumi's questions may have been bothersome and the conversations may not have

taken place at such an in-depth level. For example, in the following excerpt, Ayumi brings up a controversial topic, polygamy in Saudi Arabia, and she tries to elicit answers from Dawud about this sensitive issue.

> **(1) A:** Marriage (.) it is one guy one girl (.) but in your country it is one guy and it's many women.
>
> **(2) D:** *Yeah (.) one guy.*
>
> **(3) A:** No no no no (.) in your country one guy have many wives.
>
> **(4) D:** *The law allow to have…*
>
> **(5) A:** And the law so you can marry many?
>
> **(6) D:** *You can marry four (.) just four.*
>
> **(7) A:** But most people are like that?
>
> **(8) D:** *But but but (.) if he is able to give every woman the same (.) if he able to. If he is able to offer life for woman (.) the same house the same everything (.) if he is able to do that.*

Pair 2- Miguel and Hyun: Collaborative-hesitant interactional style

Hyun is hesitant most likely because he is a quiet person, and he is not the kind of communicator who would ask multiple questions or talk extensively about himself in any situation. He did not seem to be very motivated or excited about the task, but he would typically like to participate in class and be present. However, Miguel is talkative and he enjoys steering the conversations by asking questions. Hyun gradually became relatively more participatory as the dialogues progressed. In other words, he started to emulate his partner's style of communication. Miguel would start the task, pose a question, and raise several other questions while Hyun gave fairly short answers initially. After he answered Miguel's questions, he would pose the same question to Miguel and even ask questions that required further information about the same topic, as illustrated in the segment below.

(1) M: I couldn't understand language (.) it was challenge. What about you?

(2) H: *Weather.*

(3) M: Weather? Why?

(4) H: *Because it is too hot here and daytime is too long.*

(5) M: It is too long today?

(6) H*: It is sunset (.) too late.*

(7) M: Ohhhh (.) what is different in your country? Is it at 6:00 o'clock 6:30?

(8) H: *In the summer (.) it is usually set like 5:00 o'clock.*

(9) M: Five?

(**10) H:** Yeah. What is your challenge?

Pair 3- Roberto and Akram: Collaborative-collaborative interactional style

Roberto is a quiet person in general. During the task, he communicated in a "collaborative" style. He was able to initiate the start of the task and steer the task by proposing different topics and raising questions for his partner Akram to answer. However, he did not ask multiple questions sequentially. He gave enough time for his partner to respond, and very often he presented information about himself related the same question without even waiting for the same question to come from his partner. He was focused on the task, and he did not pay much attention to what was happening in the rest of the classroom. From his body language and posture, he appeared to be focused on his partner and the collaborative graphic organizer task. Akram also has a talkative communication style, often laughing and joking, and he was frequently the center of attention in class. However, he was slightly disengaged in the task relative to Roberto. He followed what the other pairs were talking about, and occasionally he made comments about the neighboring pairs' conversations. However, analysis of

conversations between Akram and Roberto revealed that he was able to focus on the task and carry out conversations with Roberto. Akram would not initiate new topics, but he asked questions about the topics that Roberto introduced and he gave extensive details and examples in response to Roberto's questions, as illustrated below.

(8) R: How many son have the king? Only one son?

(9) A: *Oh no.*

(10) R: A few sons?

(11) A: *Many.*

(12) R: Which one is the (.) I don't know the word (.) Richest one?

(13) A: *Yeah. Between themselves they change. Before it was King Abdul Aziz, King Abdul Aziz have thirteen child, so some of them become a king (.) some of them die already. Now it may change (.) for the son (.) I don't know.*

As can be seen in the examples above, the partners pursued different interactional styles based on factors that may stem from their personality, culture, and comfort with spoken English. However, the researcher avoided making generalizations based on cultural background in order to avoid stereotyping. Collaborative-argumentative style partnership as in the case of Dawud and Ayumi triggers the most opportunities for language use and in-depth discussion of topics. However, the researcher does not base the reason for extended language use solely on interactional style. The type of bonding that partners feel towards each other can stem from other factors such as how approachable the partner may seem, how compatible partners feel when working together towards a task, and how they view each other as colleagues or friends. These interpersonal factors are beyond the scope of this study, yet based on discourse data and observational notes, the researcher tentatively suggests that teachers consider

interactional style as a possible factor influencing the degree of collaboration during academic tasks.

Sociocultural analysis of students' writing samples

Finally, when we look at their essays from a sociocultural perspective, the essays were written based on the requirements of the TOEFL exam. Because this course prepares students for the reading and writing portion of the TOEFL exam, each essay was supposed to follow the five-paragraph essay format. The students were familiar with the expectations of the standards they were expected to meet, and the standards were driven by the requirements of the TOEFL exam. Among the six participants, as the students were adult learners and they all aimed at registering at a higher education institution, they followed the rules for writing a five-paragraph essay in TOEFL. Nonetheless, the essays are not an objective listing of all the information the students gathered from their partners. (See Appendix G for each of six sample student essays, one from each participant.) Participants include their own personal opinions when presenting the information to the audience, which may indicate the clear presence of the writer. This type of clear presence of the writers' opinions may not work well in academic writing, but the participants are not at a stage yet where they are expected to support a reference for their statements, which gave the students more room for self-expression.

For instance in the following sentences from Ayumi's essay, we can see that she is expressing her own personal opinion about how foreign people feel when they come to the United States for the first time. As the topic was the challenges experienced by those who come to the United States for the first time, she made a general statement as

to how people from different countries have their own cultures, and having to follow another country's customs may be difficult.

> Different country has different culture to own country. So it is difficult that foreign come to the U.S. and foreigners have to follow the U.S. culture, habit, and rule.

In another example from Hyun's essay on comparing and contrasting cultural differences between the partners' home countries, Hyun also expresses personal opinions about how advanced cultures can be created. Hyun makes his stance clear about accepting and valuing cultural differences. He may want to indicate his presence in his writing rather than writing a voiceless essay without any subjective statements.

> In conclusion, we are doing many common things as a human, however, there are a lot of differences in cultural background between Korea and Venezuela such as religion, main food and place of celebration. If we accept each cultural difference, it is going to be helpful for development of each culture. And as the culture develops, we can create various kinds of advanced culture.

Dawud's essay also indicates that he is aware of the audience because his essay follows the rules of a typical five-paragraph TOEFL essay. He ends his essay with a positive stance about cultural diversity, which clarifies his presence as a writer. However, it is hard to detect his personal style in this limited amount of writing where he knows he is supposed to adhere to certain expectations put forth by the teacher.

> In the end, there are big differences between Saudi Arabia and Japan. Our cultures are different, food, clothes and marriage. I believe that difference make our live enjoyable.

Miguel's voice in his essay is also present. He indicates that living abroad is just as difficult as learning a foreign language. In the following conclusion statement, we can see how he adheres to the topic of challenges more closely. He may have done so because he does not want to introduce a new aspect to the topic, but his style is

different from Akram, who perceives such first-time cultural experiences in a positive manner.

> For any partner learn English was difficult, but learn and living outside your country, it's always difficult.

Akram is also aware of the audience in the sense that he adheres to the rules of the five-paragraph essay. He ends his essay with a positive stance, adding a different dimension to the topic about living abroad in spite of the difficulties. His voice is clearly present in his essay because he also poses opinions about how it is necessary to live abroad just to be able to gain experience.

> In conclusion, living outside of your comfort zone is something that everybody have to experience it. Dispite its defecalties, but is comes back to the person with great benefits, as a result of his hard life.

Roberto also has a writing style where we can detect his own presence through his personal stance on the topic. Even though the topic focuses on challenges, he starts his essay with a positive attitude. Roberto mentions that living abroad for the first time can be difficult initially, but this experience makes people stronger. He is also adding that such experience can lead to a better life. These statements are his own additions, and they enrich the essay even though such opinions may not be appropriate in academic writing. As long as the message is in sync with the general topic, TOEFL exam allows such ideas, which may also be why the students are not afraid of adding a subjective dimension to the essay rather than a listing of facts about the partner's background and experiences.

> Going abroad to study, work, and to live can be hard sometimes at begin or during the first month, but as a result of be strong and keeping in the new country can be successful and get a new and better life.

In conclusion, the collaborative graphic organizer task provided the students with opportunities to use the English language both in spoken interaction and in writing. The study focused on the oral interactions between students, so the essays were used as secondary data. The collaborative graphic organizer task helped students generate ideas that were necessary to write an essay. When writing an academic paper, they may not have been allowed to voice their opinions, and they would have been expected to cite different studies or resources. However, in this case, they had the flexibility to add their own opinions and enrich the essay with their own perspectives and voice. Nonetheless, the task imposed certain rules and expectations, which may be limiting for their critical thinking skills. However, the purpose of the essay had to align with the typical TOEFL essays. As stated by Mohan (1986) and Wong Fillmore & Snow (2000), students need to be made aware of the rules of writing in English, so that they can be more creative once they know how to follow the rules. Without such explicit teaching, expecting non-native speakers of English to write as well as native speakers of English would be unfair and unjustly because non-native speakers of English are at a disadvantageous position as they are already frustrated with acquiring the basic knowledge about the mechanics of the English language.

Structural Analysis of the Collaborative Graphic Organizer Task as a Social Event

Collaborative graphic organizer task in this study is a social event, and each pair pursued the task in their own way and in their own style. The ELLs who participated in the study differed in terms of their interactional styles and assumed different interactional roles. Therefore, they pursued the task in their own way. When they were carrying out the task, they knew that they were supposed to complete the task by

interacting with each other for the purposes of gathering information from their partner, but each pair followed a different pattern in achieving this goal.

Types of Activity Structure

During the collaborative graphic organizer task series, each pair completed the task in their own way. The task involves certain steps, but the steps are flexible enough to allow room for variety in the way pairs start the task, continue the task, and to finalize it. For example, some partners chose to start the task with a question while others proposed an idea in the form of a statement. Another pair proposed a plan as to what the main topic would be. Pairs have different styles of communicating, and these different patterns of conducting the task may stem from personality differences and prior experiences with or observations of the way collaborative activities work. Personal styles, experiences, and observations are also a product of the socialization process in school or in other settings where such collaborative tasks take place.

In Tables 4-6, 4-7, and 4-8, you can see the task structure that the partners in Pair 1, Pair 2, and Pair 3 pursued while they were working on the collaborative graphic organizer task. In Table 4-6, Ayumi and Dawud are discussing food as a problem when a person moves to a new country. Ayumi initiates the task with a question, and Dawud ends the topic by presenting his preference for food. Ayumi is asking Dawud different questions about how he finds Arabic food in Gainesville. In his responses, Dawud is giving information about how he handles problems related with not being able to find Arabic food in Gainesville. Their exchanges abound in the following roles: *Inquirer, Topic Expander*, and *Confirmer*. Ayumi poses several questions that serve different functions, and her role as an *Inquirer* and Dawud's role as a *Topic Expander* are the most prominent roles.

Table 4-7 depicts the task structure in Pair 2 with Hyun and Miguel. Miguel assumes the role of *Initiator* and starts the task with a question inviting Hyun to give information, but his question may have confused Hyun, so he asks for clarification. Miguel may have also realized that his question had a problem because he rephrases it. This time, Hyun accepts his invitation and starts giving more information about his religion and the religious composition of Korea. As both partners learn from each other about their religious background, the task progresses, and Miguel ends the topic by describing the religious composition of his own country, which also serves as the academic function of comparing and contrasting.

In Table 4-8, Roberto and Akram are discussing the main topic of culture, and after Roberto's suggestion, they decide to focus on marriage in particular. As can be seen in Table 4-8, the partners took over different roles at every exchange and used different types of academic language functions. This figure displays the dynamics within the task setting formed by Roberto and Akram. Roberto gets ready to start the task with a general question, but then he proposes a topic: marriage. Akram assumes the role of *Topic Expander* and proposes a subtopic under the topic of marriage as he focuses on wedding ceremonies. Roberto finalizes the task by labeling the topic and announces this information verbally as well.

As can be seen in Figures 4-6, 4-7, and 4-8, no two pairs executed the task in the same way. Each pair displayed a different pattern of communication in terms of interactional roles, how they start the task, how they continue the task, and how they end the task. However, successful interactions that flow smoothly and achieve in-depth

discussions typically involve very frequent adoption of the roles of *Inquirer* and *Topic Expander*.

Forms of Task Accomplishment

Pairs pursued different strategies for continuing the conversation during the collaborative task. Partners were able to accomplish on-going academic conversations with minimum diversion from the topic, and even in such instances, one of the pair members managed to steer the conversation back to the topic. The structure of the collaborative graphic organizer task allowed the students to use English because of the specific guidelines in student pairing in terms of their interactional style and differences in their language proficiency within the intermediate level. Pairs kept each other engaged by asking questions, making comments, and expressing opinions at times as they continued the flow of exchanges. For example, the following dialogue between Ayumi and Dawud is full of questions by Ayumi, and Dawud answers all of her questions in spite of her occasional interruptions. Dawud's topic expansions with details and examples, and Ayumi's curiosity expressed through questions make the task a successful process with topical depth and multiple opportunities to use academic language skills.

> **(1) A:** Yeah. Arabic food. How do you get Arabic food? Arabic store is in Gainesville?
>
> **(2) D:** *In Tampa. There is one in Tampa. In Tampa there is an Arab store (.) but I haven't been there.*
>
> **(3) A:** But what do you get at the Arabic store?
>
> **(4) D:** *We buy rice.*
>
> (**5) A:** Rice?
>
> **(6) D:** *Yeah. From Publix or from….*

(7) A: But different yeah.

(8) D*: But if you go to Indian Bazaar.*

(9) A: Indian Bazaar (.) yeah yeah, (.) I know Indian Bazaar.

(10) D: *Similar (.) in Indian Bazaar (.) there is rice (.) the kind of rice (.) not the best but the rice.*

(11) A: [A little bit different?

(12) D: *This kind of rice (.) we use it in Saudi Arabia.]*

During Miguel and Hyun's interactions, each turn was relatively shorter because Miguel and Hyun did not spend a lot of time extending on each topic. They were able to complete the task successfully by interacting with each other and getting the information related to fill out their graphic organizers. In the following excerpt, Miguel proposes a topic, but he does not elaborate on his own challenge further. He simply mentions it and opens the floor for Hyun to talk. He introduces two topics: weather and duration of daylight. From Hyun's very first statement, we get the impression that he is not going to extend the topic, but with Miguel's prompting question asking for a reason, Hyun gives more information. Miguel may have found the issue of daylight being longer in Korea more intriguing as he focuses on this topic rather than the hot climate in Gainesville. Also, the task required the participants to go beyond collecting information on the challenges and get into details, which later would be used as the details and examples in the body paragraphs of their essays. This may have prompted Miguel to get Hyun to extend on the topic. However, the task structure cannot be the only factor for Miguel's questions because when he is seeking confirmation in his question "It is too long today?" he seems to be asking out of his own curiosity as this piece of information may

not be the best supporting detail in his body paragraph. Hyun's response triggers a question in Miguel's mind, and he verbalizes his curiosity.

(1) M: I couldn't understand language, it was challenge. What about you?

(2) H: *Weather.*

(3) M: Weather? Why?

(4) H: *Because it is too hot here and daytime is too long.*

(5) M: It is too long today?

(6) H: *It is sunset, too late.*

(7) M: Ohhhh, what is different in your country? Is it at 6:00 o'clock or 6:30?

(8) H: *In the summer (.) it is usually set like 5:00 o'clock.*

(9) M: Five?

(10) H: *Yeah.*

In the following excerpt, Akram is bringing up a new topic and Roberto realizes this situation and is pointing that out, but he accepts the new subtopic and they continue the task in this direction based on mutual agreement. As Akram shares information about the education system in his country, without waiting to be asked question by Akram, Roberto is presenting information about the education system in his country by pointing out differences and similarities, and in this way, both Akram and Roberto are maintaining the task successfully and they are exchanging in-depth information about each other's countries.

(1) R: Wait (.) that's another topic. Free School? Free for everybody?

(2) A: *Yeah. There are Islam universities (.) but many universities are government universities and separate.*

(3) R: In my country (.) some of the universities free. Some free some public. Mixed people. Universities just mixed. Some high schools (.) [sometimes mixed.

(4) A: *No mixed.] Separate all the time. What else about schools?*

(5) R: University used to take five years.

(6) A: *We have three kinds (.) elementary school and middle school.*

(7) R: How many years?

(8) A: *Elementary school (.) six years.*

(**9) R:** High school?

(10) A: *High school three years. We have another school before high school (.) three years.*

(11) R: University five years?

(12) A: *Four years (.) yeah.*

(13) R: In my country (.) elementary five year (.) high school six years.

Excerpts from each pair indicate that each pair differed in how they interacted and gathered information from each other. While Dawud and Akram extended topics on their own and through questions from their partners, Hyun needed prompts from Miguel. The sociocultural context of the task and the structuring of the task allowed for all kinds of questions and comments helping students use English to communicate on different topics and prepare for academic discourse. Conversations involved questions that asked for specific information that could be used as content material for the essay as well as questions that originated out of their own curiosity. Pairs achieved collaboration and interaction in unique ways, and they were able to gather enough information to write a final essay.

Linguistic and Conceptual Analysis of Students' Language Use

The researcher analyzed the spoken and written language samples from the students to be able to answer the research question of the study with a focus on linguistic and conceptual aspects of students' language use: How do English language learners use language in a collaborative graphic organizer activity? In order to explore the students' language use as part of the collaborative graphic organizer task, the researcher looked at the spoken and written data through Gee's semiotic building lens (2005) with a focus on content words, grammar structures, and conceptual depth of the conversations.

As the partners in this study interacted with each other, the topics expanded and the partners steered the conversations towards different sub-topics of their own choice. Since they determined the extent of their conversations, each pair varied in terms of their choice of subtopics. This type of open-endedness may have increased the amount of interaction because the partners may not feel limited to a certain number of aspects to be discussed. As they filled out the graphic organizer, they brainstormed about the possibilities and went beyond a listing of what to talk about. They did not list the topics but instead spent time on each topic finding examples, asking for reasons depending on the targeted topic and the targeted knowledge structure. Similarly, semiotic analysis of students' essays indicated that students' written language involved content vocabulary and grammatical structures with complicated morphological and syntactic formations.

Choice of Content Words

Analyzing the content words used by the pairs can inform us about the word choice during the conversations. As partners share and discuss different topics, their choices of vocabulary vary. For instance, in Table 4-9, during the exchanges between

Ayumi and Dawud about religion in Japan, the partners use the following words: culture, Japan, religion, Christians, percent, majority, Buddhists, religious, Islam, important, country. In other words, the task allows the partners to use content words at differing levels of complexity during their interactions. All of these words are used during the collaborative graphic organizer task for the purposes of exchanging information and completing the task. If we take closer look at the words in Tables 4-9, we can see that the Ayumi and Dawud used language by using words that express percentages, relative degree of importance, and different types of religions.

In Table 4-10, Hyun and Miguel also cover the topic of religion. During their exchanges, the pair uses various content vocabulary on religion. Although some of the word usage is incorrect, we can observe several attempts to describe facts, and the concepts are represented correctly in his statements. For instance, in Turn 8, as can be seen in his utterance, Hyun knows the meaning of the word “religion,” but he needs more opportunities in using the word in multiple contexts, so that he can improve his knowledge on various uses of the word with correct qualifiers and put this knowledge into practice through collaborative language use. The collaborative graphic organizer task may provide him to use language, which may allow him to further his vocabulary knowledge through both exposure and use.

In Table 4-11, Roberto starts the conversation, but Akram is the one who steers the dialogue. Roberto’s questions indicate that he is quite puzzled, and he would like to understand how this type of an arrangement works out in practice. Following are some of the content words they use during their conversations: culture, marriage, society, wedding, separate, and celebrations. The same topic was discussed with the use of

different content words in another group, but based on the proficiency level of this group and its impact on vocabulary choice, Akram and Roberto utilized more complicated content words listed in Table 4-11 as opposed to others. In Turn 11, Roberto labels the difference between the two cultures, and he is completing his graphic organizer, but as he is filling it in, he thinks of better words that express the same notion, and he rephrases his label on Turn 13. In other words, he may be conceptualizing the category in his mind, so that the phrases sound more scholarly, which may be an indication that he is aware of the difference between written and spoken academic English. Akram may be on the other hand trying to help Roberto understand his culture better by emphasizing the fact that men and women do not socialize together in Saudi Arabia. Akram may have also emphasized this particular information since he finds it to be a very important difference between his culture and Roberto's culture.

Students' writing samples reflect successful language use for intermediate level ELLs. For instance, Ayumi's essay in Table 4-12 involves a multitude of content vocabulary, reflecting the density of her lexical knowledge. The writing portion of the task provided an opportunity for her to use language in writing. Each word adds a different aspect to the bundles of meaning created in her essay and represents the semantic aspect of her language proficiency. In the first paragraph, she is introducing the topic and uses a large variety of words to express her message. The word *challenge* that she used in the title of her essay is a word that she most likely acquired from the reading material she worked on with her partner during Stage 2 during the third week of the study when the focus was on the cause-and-effect genre and the topic of the

reading was the challenges immigrants experienced when they first came to the United States.

In the Table 4-13 with a written language sample from Dawud, we can see that Dawud writes about the differences between Japan and Saudi Arabia. He chooses to focus on three different aspects: food, clothes, and marriage. He uses relevant content words in the correct forms. He also adds complex content words such as major, debate, and variety. He has a strong command over the vocabulary that is necessary to express the differences between the two cultures. He is able to label the concepts represented under each subtopic, and he lists the relevant examples from each culture. He is also aware of the appropriate use of complex vocabulary, such as variety, as he uses it appropriately: a variety of.

Hyun's essay in Table 4-14 also involves diverse content vocabulary with a focus on cultural differences between his culture and his partner Miguel's culture. Hyun starts his first paragraph with lexical items that transmit a general idea about the topic, and as he moves onto his second paragraph, the complexity of his vocabulary increases. He is using architecture-related words probably because in Stage 1 of this task, he and his partner worked on an essay that focused on the differences of architectural styles with the word *cathedral* and *temple*. The third paragraph mainly focuses on food as Hyun lists a new vocabulary item *arepa* that he acquired during his interaction with Miguel. He also provides a detailed description of this particular word in his writing. In the fourth paragraph, he is using the words *celebration* and *party* interchangeably, which may be an indication of his attempt to vary his word choice.

As can be seen in Table 4-15, Miguel's use of content vocabulary is diverse and successful. He chose to focus on communication, food, and weather as the three difficulties that his partner experienced when he came to the United States for the very first time. Miguel uses a variety of adjectives, verbs, and adverbs to express himself in writing. He uses the words in the appropriate forms, but he needs support with grammar. His paragraphs involve complex vocabulary such as *communication problems* and he uses compound expressions such as *gain weight successfully*. He uses vocabulary items successfully throughout his essays without unnecessary repetition. It is clear that he tries to add variety to his expressions by using synonyms such as *contact with others* and *communication problems*.

Akram's essay in Table 4-16 also involves complex vocabulary items such as communication, encounter, time-consuming, regulation, immigration. He may have acquired some of these words from the reading material in Stage 2 in which the topic was the challenges of the early immigrants in the United States. The text involved words such as immigration, regulation, foreign, etc. His essay reflects that he has a strong command of the topic and his lexical knowledge is highly sufficient for writing about this particular topic. Similar to Hyun's essay, his first paragraph starts with well-chosen vocabulary that present the main topic. His second paragraph involves vocabulary related to food, but the complexity of words on this particular topic is less in comparison to the third paragraph when he starts writing about communication. His lexicon may involve more diverse vocabulary items on this particular topic.

Roberto's essay in Table 4-17 involves different types of content vocabulary that add further depth to the topic. He gathered information about his partner's difficulties in

terms of food, transportation, and weather in Gainesville when he came here for the first time. He is also following the template for writing a five-paragraph essay. However, he did not provide enough examples for each paragraph, so his vocabulary is somewhat less dense compared with that of other pairs. He starts well in the first paragraph, but the following paragraphs could be improved by adding further dimensions to the topic. He may need support with vocabulary and expression of different ideas within the same topic in different sentences with specific examples.

The collaborative graphic organizer task was able to provide the partners with multiple opportunities for language use in both written and spoken English. Both their conversations and their writing samples depict the variety in their word choice while the partners expressing their messages during their interactions with each other as well as during the independent writing portion of the task. The partners were also able to integrate some of the vocabulary items that they acquired in the course of the collaborative graphic organizer task. Such lexical integration can be an indication that the interactions during the collaborative graphic organizer task allow students acquire new vocabulary items and incorporate them into their spoken language and written language.

Choice of Linguistic Structures

Linguistic structures can inform us about the syntactic complexity of students' language use during the academic exchanges. Pairs' conversations varied in terms of their choice of linguistic structures during their conversations. For instance, some partners were able to use connectors that directly reflect the nature of the knowledge/discourse structure covered in the graphic organizer during that particular session. Furthermore, depending on the proficiency level of the partners, some partners

used a variety of different tenses and sentences with different types of adverbial or adjective clauses as well as multiple sentences combined with connectors.

> **H:** When I came to Gainesville (.) I met my host family and I lived with them and I think it is kind of challenging because I never live with another family.

In this excerpt, Hyun is talking about the challenges he experienced when he came to Gainesville/United States for the first time. Since the knowledge structure for that week was cause-and-effect, the researcher presented topics to the teacher that would lend themselves to the production of sentences expressing cause-and-effect relations. Hyun uses complex sentences (Complex sentences with subordinate clauses are linked by subordinating conjunctions such as because, when, since. etc. Subordinating suggests the second clause depends upon the first for its meaning.) that indicate time with the use of the conjunction “when” and reason with the use of the conjunction “because.” His sentences are grammatically accurate except for his lack of use of the past perfect tense in his last sentence “because I never live with another family.” Second language learners who typically experience problems with the present perfect and past perfect tenses in general have problems with this type of a tense structure because their first language does not involve these tenses. Nonetheless, his statements are fairly grammatical, and he is able to express a reason in English, which is an important academic language function prevalent in essays with a cause-and-effect knowledge structure.

> **A:** Maybe (.) but we are not. We are not religious. I think Islam is very important for your country (.) but it is not very important in Japan.

In this excerpt, Ayumi is talking about the differences between her culture in her home country, Japan, and her partner’s culture in his home country, Saudi Arabia. For the purposes of the collaborative graphic organizer task, Ayumi and Dawud are

comparing and contrasting the two cultures and filling out their graphic organizer based on the information they gather from one another. We can easily observe the comparison-contrast academic function in Ayumi's words. In other words, she is following the conventions of comparing and contrasting in the language she uses when communicating with her partner. She is forming a compound sentence using the coordinating conjunction "but" in order to express how Japan is not a religious country unlike Saudi Arabia. (Compound sentences have clauses linked by coordinating conjunctions such as and, or, but, etc. Coordinating suggests a balance of equal weight between the two clauses.) She does not form any grammatical sentences. In general she keeps the structure and the length of her statements fairly short and prefers forming questions as opposed to giving further information about herself. In this particular statement, among other features of her language, we can tell that she is able to express opinions in the correct form with an "I think" statement. From this excerpt, we can tell that she is aware of the academic language of comparing and contrasting, and she is able to use her academic language skills during this task.

(13) H: Is there a similar food in the United States?

(14) M: Somebody told me that you can eat arepas in Latin Café (.) you know Latin Café? It is in 34th avenue.

In this excerpt, in response to Hyun's question whether one can find food similar to arepas in the USA, Miguel is sharing with Hyun that Latin Café has arepas. Latin Café is a well-known place, but Miguel wants to make sure that Hyun knows this place, so he is describing the location. When we analyze his language use, we can see that he is using a complex sentence structure with a relative clause, and he is also using reported speech grammatical structure: "Somebody told me that…" He is supposed to use

“could” instead of “can” in the relative clause due to the tense marker in the firsts sentence, but the structure of the sentence is intact. He is also familiar with the preposition markers, but as several English language learners do, he is confusing “on” and “in.” Nonetheless, he is able to participate in academic conversations with his partner, and he is able to fulfill the requirements of the task. In this pair, the interaction does not flow as predictably as with the other two pairs. Hyun and Miguel were either hesitant or collaborative at different instances of their dialogue, but they do make an attempt to complete the task. Miguel is able to describe a location, report conversations, and use relative clauses fairly successfully.

Students’ writing samples reflect successful language use for intermediate level English language learners. In the following writing sample from Hyun, we can see that he is using connectors quite successfully. He is starting the paragraph with an appropriate connector. His writing involves multiple connectors such as on the other hand, therefore, but, as. The majority of his sentences in his essay are compound sentences as can be seen in the following paragraph. This may be because he is becoming more aware of the connectors thanks to the sample texts he covered with his partner as part of the first two stages of the collaborative graphic organizer task, and he would like to show off his knowledge on different types of connectors that connect ideas in a paragraph for a smooth transition between the ideas.

> First, our religions differ in main belief in each country. Majority of Korean usually believe in Christian, Catholic, and Buddhism. Of course, our origin religion is Buddhism, but as time passes on, the rate of people who believe in God has been increased. And usually Christians go to church, catholic go to Cathedral and Buddhists go to the temple to pray. On the other hand, almost every Venezuelan believe in Catholic and they usually go to church for praying. And also their religion is Catholic. But Catholic usually go to

> church to pray differently from Catholic in Korea. Therefore, Korean believe in more kinds of religion than Venezuelan.

Ayumi's essay involves successful use of complex sentence structures. Unlike Hyun, she has a better command on complex sentence formation. As can be seen in the following paragraph, which is the third paragraph in her essay, she is using a relative clause in her first sentence: "He felt bad *that* he didn't have a car" which indicates her awareness of how to form complex sentences. She is continuing the same statement with a compound sentence with the use of the conjunction *so*, which indicates that she is also able to form compound sentences. However, she created more opportunities to use complex sentences as opposed to compound sentences in her essays. Ayumi's focus on compound sentence formation may improve with more exposure to the knowledge structures and the language related with each knowledge structure after collaborative use of graphic organizers with a different partner, such as Hyun.

> He felt bad that he didn't have a car, so he decided to but a car. But, now the U.S. economic is bad, so when he bought a car, his dealer was mean. His dealer went up the car price, because he is foreigner and he is rich. And then he gave up his favorite car and he bought a cheap car. He couldn't discount the car price.

Akram's essay is different from both Ayumi and Hyun's essays in the sense that his sentences involve both complex and compound sentences. He is able to form relative clauses as the subject of a sentence as can be seen in the following statement: "Maybe the hardest thing anyone could encounter is communication with other native speakers." He is also able to drop "that" in his relative clause, which requires a mastery of relative clauses. He is also using a number of compound sentences: "He gets frustrated when they (native speakers) don't understand him." He has well-command on

word structures, and he uses each word appropriately in his sentences. For instance, the word *encounter* is a complex word for a second language learner as he may have chosen a simpler word such as come across, and Akram is able to use this word correctly with a past tense modal *could*, increasing the grammatical complexity of his sentence even further.

> Maybe the hardest thing anyone could encounter is communication with other native speakers. Using different language to speak and listen sometime is hard especially when doing important things like asking for information, things that deal with money, housing and immigration regelations. Sometime Michael can't express his feeling well or what he wants. He gets frustrated when they (native speakers) don't understand him. It's really though but as a result, he is learning by the time goes by.

During the collaborative graphic organizer task, students used language in various manners with complex sentence structures. They also used the vocabulary items correctly. We may detect certain instances of mistakes, but such mistakes are beyond the scope of this paper. The collaborative graphic organizer task can be a useful tool in creating contexts for language use when students interact on different topics with their partners in an effort to complete the requirements of the task by speaking and writing in English.

Diversity in Main Topic and Subtopics

Since there were no guidelines as to which subtopics to discuss, pairs chose different subtopics based on their own mutual decision and the dynamics of the task. The decision was based on each partner's willingness to pursue a certain subtopic and to switch to a different subtopic. For instance, a partner may have intended to change the topic by asking a question or making a statement, but if the other partner is determined to stick with the same topic, he/she may pose further questions about the same topic instead of answering the partner's question or commenting on his/her new

subtopic. Partners were at times influenced by the subtopics covered by the other pairs as it was rather easy to overhear the conversation taking place among the other pairs, and they chose to pursue similar topics, but even within the same subtopics, the examples and the explanations were completely different as each individual came from a different cultural background.

Table 4-18 depicts the depth of the conversations between Ayumi and Dawud within a subtopic of the main topic of the task. Ayumi and Dawud's dialogues involved in-depth discussion of topics with the use of multiple roles and academic language functions. Both partners were able to steer the task appropriately, so that they can acquire maximum amount of knowledge about their partners in order to be able to complete the task successfully and to write a well-formed essay with enough subtopics and examples. Ac can be seen in Table 4-18, Ayumi and Dawud chose to talk about marriage as a subtopic for cultural differences between their home countries. Both Ayumi and Dawud asked questions and gave information about their cultural background regarding marriage, such as style of marriage, wedding ceremonies, age, and wedding expenses and persons responsible for paying these expenses, etc. Ayumi's questions helped increase the depth during the dialogues, and Dawud's motivation to help Ayumi understand his cultural background with detailed information enriched the task with a multitude of new information for Ayumi.

As can be seen in the Figure 4-1, Ayumi and Dawud display a true collaborative dialogue with multiple exchanges, and in their case, the task presents itself as an effective opportunity for exploring their subtopic in depth. Ayumi asks questions, and Dawud provides information for Ayumi's questions. She does bring up controversial

issues, but Dawud does not hesitate and answers all of Ayumi's questions. The compatibility between the partners in this pair in terms of collaborative dialogue may have helped them achieve extensive depth in their conversations.

In Figure 4-1, the depth of Miguel and Hyun's conversations are relatively shallow. The pair chose to talk about religion, but they were not able to achieve a significant depth when exchanging information about religion in one another' countries. Several factors could be at play at the setting of their interactions during the collaborative graphic organizer task. First of all, Hyun has a quiet style of communication, and he does not like talking very much. He is not introverted, but he is mostly serious and quiet. When he does speak up, his statements are very straight-forward. He never makes any tentative statements, and he does not ask a lot of questions. Miguel on the hand talks more, and he does his best to learn more about Hyun's religious background by asking questions. Hyun and Miguel gather information from each other by asking questions and providing detailed answers, which helps increase the conceptual depth of their conversations.

As can be seen in Figure 4-1, Akram and Roberto's discussions also remain at a shallow level similar to Hyun and Miguel's conversations because Akram and Roberto focus on one aspect of the topic and talk about that particular aspect for a period of time as opposed to further exploring the main topic with a different subtopic. Akram's role as *Clarifier* and *Restater* may have kept their conversations during this particular instance somewhat shallow because he may have sensed a need for conceptual scaffolding in Roberto's thinking and he may have wanted to provide more support for Roberto to better understand what exactly he means with the concept of separate wedding

ceremonies. Therefore, he devotes more time on making sure that Roberto understands this concept well. Roberto did not elaborate on the same topic with examples from his background or he did not ask further questions about the other aspects of weddings or marriages in Saudi Arabia, which are also reasons for why Roberto and Akram could not cover this topic in depth unlike how Dawud and Ayumi did during their interactions.

Conceptual depth of students' essay reflected the content of their conversations closely. As students conversed with one another, they filled out their own graphic organizers based on the information they gathered from their partners, and they used this information when writing their essays. Students' graphic organizers typically involved three levels mostly because each person was required to write a five-paragraph essay. The conversations more inclusive in terms of details for each subtopic, but the goal of the task was to be able to find enough content for the independent writing task, and the students succeeded in accomplishing this particular goal.

Figure 4-2 is an example of Dawud's graphic organizer. Dawud has more information on the left had column about his own cultural background, and he has three items on the right hand column because he needs three subtopics to be able to write a five-paragraph essay. In Table 4-19, His first body paragraph is about food, and he is providing different examples from his own culture and from Japanese culture, and he is also deepening the subtopic by mentioning Saudi rules for what not to eat or drink. In the second body paragraph, he is comparing the traditional clothes by providing specific examples from each culture. The third body paragraph focuses on marriage in Saudi culture and in Japanese culture. He gives detailed information on the aspects of

marriage that differ in both cultures. His essay involves more information than what he listed on his graphic organizer. He may have incorporated more information from his metal notes because he may not have been able to include all the information during the collaborative discussion stage of the task.

As can be seen in Figure 4-3, Miguel gathered more information than necessary for his essay while he was interviewing his partner on the challenges he experienced when he came to the United States for the first time. He then focused on three of these aspects to be able to write a five-paragraph essay. In his essay in Table 4-20, he focuses on language difficulties in the first body paragraph. He focuses on food as a source of adaptation problems in the second body paragraph. In the third body paragraph, he focuses on weather. He supports each paragraph with examples and details he gathered during his interactions with his partner as they were collaboratively working together and filling out their own graphic organizers with the information he gathered by asking questions to his partner. His essay is slightly shorter in length with fewer words per sentence, but it is comprehensive enough to communicate all the necessary points to communicate his notes on his partner's challenges when he came to the United States for the first time.

As can be seen in the above examples and explanations regarding the semiotic analysis of students' interactions and essays, during the collaborative graphic organizer task, students used various complex vocabulary and sentence structures. Both their interaction and their essays informed us on the nature of nature of language that ELLs use when communicating about their understandings and interpretations of the topic, graphic organizers, and the task. The students deeply explored the topics as well, and

they achieved a high level of conceptual density during their discussions of the topics. Their graphic organizers and their essays reflected the depth of the topics through detailed explanations and examples.

Participants' Perspectives about the Collaborative Graphic Organizer Task

The researcher analyzed the interview data gathered from the students for the purposes of understanding their perspectives on the collaborative graphic organizer task. After a thematic analysis of the interview data, the researcher was able to identify that the students' responses centered around certain themes such as support with productive and receptive language skills, opportunities for vocabulary learning, support with sociocultural connections among the partners. Gee's tools for analyzing discourse data also supported the researcher 's data analysis process as the researcher was well-informed about semiotic building, sociocultural building, and task building. The researcher formed a taxonomy based on the students' perspective. Each participant made different comments regarding how s/he viewed the collaborative graphic organizer task. The following section describes each category with the subcategories along with quotations from students' interviews.

Support with Listening/Speaking Skills

Provides opportunities to ask one's partner to repeat words. During the collaborative graphic organizer task, the partners were able to ask one another to repeat the words or sentences when necessary. Ayumi in particular indicated that her listening comprehension skills were weak. Ayumi indicates, "Hearing, yeah, I think my weak point is hearing, so I couldn't understand what did he say, what did she say, so I asked him to repeat." She greatly benefited from being able to ask her partner Dawud to give further explanation when necessary and even ask him to repeat what he said if she

was not able to capture what he meant. These types of collaborative activities provide opportunities for English language learners with developing listening skills to be able to ask their partner to repeat words or sentences when necessary. Such students may not be able to ask questions during the class since they may not want to attract attention or they may not want to disturb the flow of conversations, and unfortunately they may miss out on important messages during classroom instruction.

Provides opportunities to solicit partner's help with vocabulary. During the collaborative graphic organizer task, the pairs were able to ask each other the meanings of new vocabulary items that their partners may use or any new vocabulary items they are not familiar with in general. Ayumi was pleased that she could ask her partner the meanings of some words she was not able to comprehend, "if I don't know some words, I asked him and he described what this means." This task may have provided her with an opportunity to learn new vocabulary along with the information as to how the word is pronounced. Therefore, students like Ayumi may benefit from this task greatly for practicing their listening comprehension skills.

Provides practice with speaking skills. Because of the ample opportunities for interaction, several participants in the study mentioned that the collaborative graphic organizer task gave them a chance to speak in English. The topic was based on their own culture, so they got a chance to talk about a familiar topic. Dawud mentions that the collaborative graphic organizer task helped him both to practice his English language skills and to find ideas to talk about "Actually, it has helped me, yeah. I like talking, it gave me some ideas to talk about." Similarly, Ayumi also mentioned that the task required the partners to interact, "It is very helpful because you need to speak a lot

of times." Interaction was necessary for the partners to be able to complete the task successfully, and Ayumi may not have been able to obtain as much practice with her spoken English skills if the same task took place independently as opposed to collaboratively. Roberto also mentioned that speaking about culture allowed them to find multiple subtopics, and they were able to speak about these topics extensively, "When we speak about our culture, we speak about a lot of topics, so it is good, we speak more, so it was good."

Support for Writing Skills

Working with a partner may reduce the time needed to complete the essay. Essay writing can be an overwhelming task for English Language Learners because of the thinking and planning process involved in writing an essay as well as the actual writing process. The collaborative graphic organizer task may help students prepare a well-thought plan collaboratively, so that they already have all the ideas necessary to be able to write an essay. For example, pairs can collaboratively come up with the subtopics as well as the main points and the examples. Individual configuration and planning of both the ideas and the writing of the essay may take a very long time, causing students feel overwhelmed about the task of essay writing n general. In this sense, collaborative graphic organizer task can prepare students for the individual writing process and gradually help them become independent writers. As Hyun indicates, "I think alone I will take a long time, longer than if I am someone with me, share me my idea, it saved time to write the essay." As can be gathered from Hyun's words, Hyun feels more comfortable preparing to write the essay together with his partner. We can see his positive experiences about essay writing in his words. We may infer that the collaborative graphic organizer task may motivate students to write an

essay as it makes essay writing appear to be a less overwhelming task thanks to the initial collaborative planning of the content of the essay.

Helps improve the organization of ideas in the essay. One of the problems of English language learners is the organization of ideas in an essay. Different cultures have different ways of writing. Not in every culture essays are organized in the way they are organized in English. The materials used in the collaborative graphic organizer task helped the pairs analyze the structure of essays together and collaboratively fill out graphic organizers that depicted the structure of sample reading materials before they started preparing to write their essays. Miguel commented, “For me, it was very good because I have a problem to organize my ideas. I am like disorganized. I have a lot of ideas, but I don’t know how to organize my ideas, and this one is very good for me, now I know how to organize my ideas.” Dawud’s words also echo Miguel’s comments, “Actually it organized my ideas, actually it has helped me this graphic and this class yeah, with writing, before when I want to write paragraph, only paragraph, I found that difficult to write, because my ideas not organized, but with this graphic organized my mind.” As can be seen in Dawud’s comments, he used to have a difficult time even with writing a paragraph because the structure of a paragraph or an essay can remain mysterious for English language learners even after multiple examples as they may need more visual materials that clarify the technique as opposed to verbal and abstract explanations. (See Appendix A and B for example student work graphic organizer as an output of the collaborative graphic organizer task prior to independent writing.)

Improves their writing skills and makes writing an easier process. The collaborative graphic designer task is based on the study of the discourse structure of

an essay in pairs, ending with an independent essay-writing task. During the collaborative phase of the task, students get a lot of practice in first exploring the structure of an essay and later filling out a graphic organizer that helps them prepare the structure of their essay that the will compose in the upcoming phase of the task. Once they understand how the essays are laid out, English language learners can gain more confidence and feel more comfortable when writing their essays. Students may have been able to benefit from the collaborative graphic organizer task in improving their academic writing skills and also they may have started viewing the task of writing an essay a less overwhelming task. As Roberto puts it, "We can write good essays more easily, it's well-organized for college level, for academic writings. I think we are improving." As can be seen in Roberto's words, Roberto thinks that he can write well-organized essays with more ease and comfort since he is more familiar with the structure of an essay, and he can see the improvement in his essays. Miguel echoes Roberto's words, "For me, I like this task because it organize my thinking, it is step-by-step, and I do much better in this kind of task about writing, I like this process, it's more easy, make you're writing more easy." Roberto finds merit in this task due to the fact that the task presents a system that helps the student organize their essays better and helps them manage the task of writing essays more comfortably. (See Appendix G for example student essays following the collaborative graphic organizer task during independent writing.)

Provides opportunity to plan before writing. During the collaborative graphic organizer task, students analyzed the structure of an essay depending on how it is laid out based on the specific knowledge structure in focus for that week, such as

comparison-contrast and cause-and effect. As they were analyzing the essays collaboratively with their partners, they were referring to a complete essay and they were filling out a graphic organizer that showed the structure of this essay. The visual tool may have helped them see the structure of the essay more clearly, and the act of analyzing the structure of the essay more critically through this visual tool with the help their partners may have helped them become more aware of the steps involved in writing a well-organized essay. Furthermore, in the following phase of the task when they were brainstorming for ideas to write about, the graphic organizer was leading them to see the purpose of all these ideas and exactly where they are going to take place when they start writing their essays. In other words, the task provided them with intensive practice in preparing to write an essay, so that when students started the actual task of independent writing, all the pieces of information were available for them, and all they had to do was to form sentences that would make up the body of the essay with an introductory paragraph, developmental paragraphs and a conclusion paragraph. As Ayumi indicates, “It is very useful because brainstorm is very important before the writing, so it is important for planning.” Dawud also mentions, “Now I think in an organized way, so before I write an essay, I will think, not write, I will think only, I will plan, but before I just take my pencil and start writing, actually if I write an essay in the future, I am going to use the graphic organizer, plan the main ideas and the details.” As can be seen in both Ayumi’s and Dawud’s words, collaborative use of graphic organizers may prepare students to write well-organized essays by emphasizing the initial planning phase and helping students transition into essay writing more comfortably with structurally intact essays that are successful end-products of the whole

process of collaborative work on graphic organizers. (See Appendix A for example student work for brainstorming ideas on the graphic organizer collaboratively before independent writing.)

Support for Reading Comprehension Skills

Facilitates the reading process by directs attention to main ideas and supporting ideas. After the collaborative analyses of the essays through the use of graphic organizers, students were able to see the structure of the essay more clearly. Being able to detect how the essay is laid out may help students comprehend reading materials better and become more aware of the internal structure of reading materials with more attention to how each paragraph and example function in the whole essay. Miguel comments how he benefited from the collaborative graphic organizer task, “I think it is good because you can have a clean idea about the paper.” Hyun also mentions, “When we read some article, we can recognize the topic and the other parts more easier.” As the participants indicate, they can transfer their knowledge of the structure of essays to other reading materials, and they can capture the general topic of a reading material as well as the sub topics more easily. As Dawud put it, “I think organizer is kind of a technique, so you teach technique, how to read, how to find main idea, how to write things, I think very useful, so we are learning another language not our own language, so it is good, you teach technique and I can understand, oh this is main topic so what this article say to us so it’s very convenient.” As can be seen in Dawud’s words, the collaborative graphic organizer task teaches a technique that students can acquire during the task through collaborative practice, and they can extend this technique and use it in every situation where they are required to read materials and process information. The fact that they have to comprehend materials in English

places more load on students due to the language barrier, but through this technique, reading comprehension may be easier for them as the language load may decrease.

Helps locate the structure of the reading material. One of the goals of the preparation session in the collaborative graphic organizer task was to help the students see the structure of the reading material and be able to visualize the structure even after the task is over. This type of top-down approach can help students go from whole to the parts in reading comprehension as opposed to going from parts to the whole. In the absence of knowledge as to how the essay is structured, the students may rely on bits and pieces of information they can understand in the essay and may get lost when putting together all the pieces and fail to be able to reach a clear understanding the whole meaning of the essay. Especially the new vocabulary items and complicated sentence structures in a reading material can cause difficulty for students for perceiving the essay as a whole where each point and each example is there to support a bigger idea. Miguel also comments on the benefits of the graphic organizers in reading comprehension, “You have a graphic organizer, you can see the topic and the other parts, it’s helping for the people for reading, for organizing the idea what the paper is talking about, it is easier for reading because you can see the paper but it is more clear.” Furthermore, collaborative analysis of reading materials with the help of graphic organizers can help students improve their reading comprehension skills by allowing them to acquire habits of seeing the main point and sub-points in any reading material. As Hyun indicates, “H: I like pair graphic organizer because I could not recognize what is the topic or the main idea, I couldn’t recognize that even in Korean, so it is hard for me, it was easy.” Hyun appreciates the collaborative graphic organizer task for its

collaborative nature, and he admits that he was not even able to recognize the structure of reading materials in his native language. This task may have helped him acquire a top-down analysis skill in reading comprehension both in his native language and in English.

Sociocultural Relations

Provides opportunities for extended interactions between pairs. The collaborative graphic organizer task may be able to help partners interact with one another about different topics of their choice. As one of the participants in this study indicated, “For me, it’s good, it’s not like a regular class, it’s more like relaxed, I talk with my partner about topics, I like it a lot.” When each partner feels comfortable to share information with one another, which was mostly the case among pairs in this study, partners can ask in-depth questions to each other about a few topics or ask multiple questions about different topics. These types of activities where students can interact with their partners usually take place in Spoken English classes. However, in elementary and secondary school settings, English language learners may not have the opportunity to speak with their peers and practice their English language skills. The collaborative graphic organizer task can provide a purpose and time for focused yet flexible interactions where students can practice their English language skills as well as well as fulfill the academic requirements of the course by completing the task based on the topics teachers assign them to talk about.

Allows an exchange of in-depth information about partners’ cultural background and experiences. The collaborative graphic designer task was based on topics about partners’ cultural backgrounds for the purposes of allowing partners to find out more about each other by exploring different aspects of their cultural background.

For instance, during the comparison-contrast graphic organizer portion, the partners were assigned to interview one and find out as much about the other person's culture as possible, so that they could write a complete essay comparing and contrasting the two cultures. Hyun indicates, "When we speak about our culture, we speak about a lot of topics, so it is good." In his statement, Hyun seems to appreciate the fact that the task allows him and his partner to be able to speak about topics of their choice as long as it is related with their cultural background. As Ayumi mentions, "Culture is a big topic and there is a lot of stuff we can talk about." The researcher purposefully chose culture as the common theme in all the activities, because the partners were in a different country, interacting with people from different cultures, and they might have felt more motivated to share about their cultural background due to the fact that they are far away from home and they miss home. During all the interactions, the participants proudly talk about their own culture and are intrigued to find out about another culture and how people from different cultures have different styles and outlooks on the same topic.

Fosters stronger connections and bonding between partners. The collaborative graphic organizer task may have allowed people who would not otherwise interact with one another warm up to each other and become friends. The task prompts the partners to share a lot of information about each other. The topic of culture triggers conversations about eating preferences, customs, family, challenges experienced during their visit to the United States, etc. The task did work very well because the teacher assigned collaborative people with collaborative people, but not all pairs were matched based on this characteristic because not everybody in the classroom had a collaborative communication style. Surprisingly though, even those individuals who

have a less collaborative communication style worked well possibly because they were asked to speak about topics that they are very familiar with about their own culture. In response to the question as to whether he had any prior experiences with graphic organizers, Dawud uttered “Yeah, yeah, it was to do some exercise, just like this one, but this study had more than that, we do everything in this task, we are like friends, now I know everything about her and about her country.” As can be seen in his response, when left on his own devices, Dawud and Ayumi may not have not have sat next to each other or interacted a lot because Dawud is from a culture where men and women are mostly segregated. However, Dawud and Ayumi were one of the most successful pairs who participated in the collaborative graphic organizer task with full attention, enthusiasm, and energy. The teacher paired them based on their personal communication style, but if Dawud’s cultural background was more pronounced than his personal communication style, the task may not have worked among the partners in this pair.

Provides opportunities for reciprocal help and support regarding possible mistakes. The partners provided support for another during the collaborative graphic organizer task. The collaborative nature of the task may have prompted such support. The partners provided conceptual, linguistic, and strategic support for one another. They helped each other with the understanding of the topics they were discussing. For instance, if Partner A was having a difficult time following Partner B’s explanations, Partner B provided examples or clarified the wording by rephrasing his/her sentences. Also, the partners helped each other with the completion of the task by helping each other find new subtopics, asking one another questions for in-depth coverage of the

sub-topics, and also by keeping the conversations focused on the task through small reminder statements. As Akram expresses, “Actually, when we work in pairs, it’s, you know, two minds better than one. You help your partner fix your mistakes and you fix her mistakes, and we share our idea, it’s very helpful.” Akram’s words indicate the benefits of the collaborative nature of the task for both language support and conceptual support for finding new topics to talk about. If the same task were done individually, students would not only be unable to get to practice the language, but they would not also be able to get exposed to different ideas, expressions, and sentences structures. When asked what he likes best about the collaborative graphic organizer task, Roberto also emphasized the importance of collaborative work as well as all the other aspects of the task as a whole, “I don’t have an exact part, because I think all is important, the graphic organizer and the group, you work with some body in this case, you need all the parts together for it to work better.” Miguel also appreciated the collaborative nature of the task as he expressed the following words “I think I like it in pairs because you can come up with very good ideas because two people thinking better than one.”

Having a better understanding of the students’ perspectives about the collaborative graphic organizer task helped the researcher view the study from the participants’ perspective. The participants made comments about the task from different aspects. Akram emphasized the collaborative nature of the task with an emphasis on their writing skills while Ayumi focused more on how the task helped with her speaking and listening skills. The general consensus was that the participants benefited from collaborating with each other during the task, and both the task and the independent

writing portion of the task would have taken much longer time if they were working on their own.

Summary of the Results

The findings from the discourse analysis data indicate that the collaborative graphic organizer task provides students opportunities to engage in extended interactions with an opportunity for extensive language use. The data illuminated the sociocultural and linguistic nature of students' interactions and how such increased language use was achieved.

First of all, during the collaborative graphic organizer task, the partners provided different types of scaffolding to each other with linguistic and conceptual support as well as support for starting and continuing the activity. Furthermore, students' conversations involved uses of different types of academic language functions. The frequency of functions depicted what type of interactional roles the participants assumed when engaging in conversations with each other during paired discussions.

Also, participants' Interactional roles helped us understand each participants' interactional style. A close analysis of interactional styles informed us of the types of pairing that can be more conducive to interaction.

Additionally, interactional roles such as topic expander and inquirer were of primary importance in increased interaction and language use as such roles extended the conversations, which promoted further opportunities for language use. Interactional roles conducive to language use can shed further light on how to structure collaborative graphic organizers tasks for increased language use.

According to the interview results, the participants found different benefits in the collaborative graphic organizer task in terms of their language development. In addition

to several other outcomes of the collaborative graphic organizer task, participants expressed that the collaborative use of graphic organizers helped them write well-structured essays, and working with a partner on a graphic organizer as a brainstorming device helped them find better ideas to write in their essays. They also indicated that the collaborative graphic organizer task helped them understand the structure of reading materials through collaborative analysis of knowledge structures. Still another comment was that the task provides opportunities for help and support regarding possible mistakes in their language.

Finally, the findings also indicate that the interactions among the partners and their writing samples involved complex vocabulary and language structures. In other words, the participants were using academic discourse and discussing abstract topics such as cultural differences between different countries and challenges of moving into a new culture. When structured properly, collaborative graphic organizer task may allow extensive discussions on abstract concepts more common in academic discourse. The degree of depth achieved in each pair's conversations varied depending on the types of interactional roles they engage in, and this information can be useful in not only with the collaborative use of graphic organizers for increased language use opportunities but also for understanding what type of factors can be involved when tasks do not achieve the expected degree of interaction among partners.

Table 4-1. Hierarchical taxonomy of categories formed during data analysis

Sociocultural Analysis		Linguistic Analysis
Sociocultural Identity Building	Activity Building	Semiotic Building
CATEGORIES	CATEGORIES	CATEGORIES
Types of scaffolding	Patterns of activity structure	Choice of content words
Linguistic		
Conceptual	Forms of task accomplishment	Choice of linguistic structures
Strategic		
Academic language functions		Diversity in main topics and subtopics
Interactional roles		
Interactional style		
Cooperative		
Argumentative		
Hesitant		

Table 4-2. Frequency of academic language functions in sample dialogues per each pair

Academic Language Functions	Pair 1		Pair 2		Pair 3		
	Ayumi-Dawud Task 1*	Ayumi-Dawud Task 2*	Hyun-Miguel Task 1*	Hyun-Miguel Task 2*	Roberto-Akram Task 1*	Roberto-Akram Task 2*	Total
Giving further information	1	2	2	3	4	6	18
Asking for confirmation	1	3	1	3	3	2	13
Giving confirmation	1	5	2	0	3	1	12
Asking for information	3	2	1	1	1	1	9
Asking for further information	0	2	2	2	2	1	9
Giving information	1	0	1	2	3	1	8
Describing characteristics	1	1	3	2	1	0	8
Giving a reason	0	1	0	2	0	4	7
Giving clarification	0	0	1	2	2	1	6
Asking for clarification	0	0	1	2	0	1	4
Comparing/Contrasting	1	2	1	0	0	0	4
Presenting contrary evidence	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Describing a process	0	2	0	0	1	0	3
Providing an example	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
Proposing an idea or plan	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
Emphasizing a point	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Expressing quantity	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Rejecting an idea or plan	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Agreeing	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Disagreeing	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Conceding a point	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Presenting opinions	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Asking for reason	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Predicting	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Reporting others' words	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Describing a location	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Expressing frequency	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Table 4-2. Continued

Academic Language Functions	Pair 1 Ayumi-Dawud Task 1*	Pair 1 Ayumi-Dawud Task 2*	Pair 2 Hyun-Miguel Task 1*	Pair 2 Hyun-Miguel Task 2*	Pair 3 Roberto-Akram Task 1*	Pair 3 Roberto-Akram Task 2*	Total
Asking for advice	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Giving advice	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Showing preference	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

* C-C: Comparison-Contrast C-E: Cause and Effect

Table 4-3. Frequency of academic language functions in sample student dialogues per each participant

Academic Language Functions	Pair 1		Pair 2		Pair 3	
	Ayumi Total	Dawud Total	Hyun Total	Miguel Total	Roberto Total	Akram Total
Giving further information	1	2	4	1	2	8
Asking for confirmation	0	4	1	3	4	1
Giving confirmation	3	3	1	1	0	4
Asking for information	4	1	0	2	2	0
Asking for further information	1	1	0	4	2	1
Giving information	1	0	1	2	2	2
Describing characteristics	2	0	2	3	0	1
Giving a reason	1	0	2	0	2	2
Giving clarification	0	0	2	1	1	2
Asking for clarification	0	0	1	2	1	0
Comparing/Contrasting	2	1	0	1	0	0
Presenting contrary evidence	2	1	0	0	0	0
Describing a process	1	1	0	0	0	1
Providing an example	1	0	0	0	1	1
Proposing an idea or plan	0	1	0	0	1	1
Emphasizing a point	1	0	0	1	0	1
Expressing quantity	0	0	1	1	0	0
Rejecting an idea or plan	1	1	0	0	0	0
Agreeing	1	1	0	0	0	0
Disagreeing	1	1	0	0	0	0
Conceding a point	1	0	0	0	0	0
Presenting opinions	0	1	0	0	0	0
Asking for reason	1	0	0	0	0	0
Predicting	0	0	1	0	0	0
Reporting others' words	0	0	0	1	0	0
Describing a location	0	0	0	1	0	0
Expressing frequency	0	0	0	1	0	0
Asking for advice	0	0	1	0	0	0
Giving advice	0	0	0	1	0	0
Showing preference	0	0	0	0	1	0

Table 4-4. Academic language functions in the collaborative graphic organizer task

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS	
Macrofunctions	Microfunctions
Informing	Asking for information Giving information Asking for further information Giving further informatio Asking for a reason Giving n a reason Presenting contrary evidence Predicting Reporting others' words
Describing	Describing a process Describing characteristics Describing a location Comparing/Contrasting Providing an example Expressing frequency Expressing quantity
Clarifying	Asking for clarification Giving clarification Asking for confirmation Giving confirmation
Presenting	Proposing an idea or plan Rejecting an idea or a plan Conceding a point Emphasizing a point Presenting an opinion Agreeing Disagreeing Asking for advice Giving advice Showing preference

Table 4-5. Interactional roles during collaborative graphic organizer task

INTERACTIONAL ROLES DURING COLLABORATIVE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER TASKS	
Roles for starting a task or a new topic	Initiator - Introducing a new topic, a new subtopic, or starting the task Topic switcher - Changing the topic Proposer - Introducing a topic for further conversation
Roles for continuing a task or a new topic	Inquirer - Asking questions to further explore the topic Responder - Answering questions without changing the topic Topic expander - Expanding the topic by giving further information than what the partner has asked Reorienter - Returning to the original topic after discussing a side-topic Restater - Repeating one's words for emphasis or for better understanding Corrector - Correcting the partner's statements for grammar and content Confirmer - Providing confirmation for questions from the partner Clarifier - Rephrasing one's words for better understanding Opposer - Disagreeing with statements and answers Interrupter - Interrupting the partner's conversations
Roles for ending a task or a topic	Finalizer - Finishing the task or topic Bypasser - Not acknowledging partner's comments

Table 4-6. Pair 1- Ayumi and Dawud – Task structure

EXPLORATION OF TASK STRUCTURE THROUGH
INTERACTIONAL ROLES AND ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

	Interactional Role	Academic Language Function	Language
INITIATION TURN	Initiator	Asking for information, asking for confirmation	(1) A: How do you get Arabic food? Arabic store is in Gainesville?
CONTINUATION TURNS	Topic expander	Giving information, describing characteristic	(2) D: *In Tampa. There is one in Tampa. In Tampa, there is an Arab store, but I haven't been there.*
	Inquirer	Asking for further information	(3) A: But what do you get at the Arabic store?
	Responder	Giving information	(4) D: *We buy rice.*
	Inquirer	Asking for confirmation	(5) A: Rice?
	Confirmer	Giving confirmation	(6) D: *Yeah. From Publix or from….*
	Inquirer	Asking for confirmation	(7) A: But different yeah?
	Topic expander	Giving further information, describing a process	(8) D*: But if you go to Indian Bazaar.*
	Topic expander	Giving further information	(9) A: Indian Bazaar, yeah yeah, I know Indian Bazaar.
	Confirmer	Giving confirmation, providing an example	(10) D: *Similar, in Indian Bazaar, there is rice, the kind of rice, not the best but the rice.*
	Inquirer	Asking for further information, asking for confirmation	(11) A: A little bit different?
	Topic expander	Giving information, describing characteristics	(12) D: *This kind of rice, we use it in Saudi Arabia.*
	Inquirer	Asking for clarification	(13) A: Huh?
	Topic expander	Giving information, describing characteristic, comparing/contrasting	(14) D: *This kind of rice in the bazaar, we use it in Saudi Arabia, and it's OK. There is rice, and it is called Indian Gait. Indian Gait (.) the brown this rice.*
	Inquirer	Asking for further information	(15) A: Similar?
	Topic expander	Giving information	(16) D: *This one we have the same in Saudi Arabia.*
	Inquirer	Asking for confirmation	(17) A: Same? (Laughing)
FINALIZATION TURN	Finalizer	Giving information, showing preference	(18) D: *Yeah, but it's not this one I like.*

Table 4-7. Pair 2- Hyun and Miguel – Task structure

EXPLORATION OF TASK STRUCTURE THROUGH
INTERACTIONAL ROLES AND ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

	Interactional Role	Academic Language Function	Language
INITIATION TURN	Initiator	Asking for information	(1) M: *What religion are you from?*
CONTINUATION TURNS	Inquirer	Asking for clarification	(2) H: What?
	Inquirer/Clarifier	Asking for information, giving clarification	(3) M: *(.) What is your religion?*
	Responder	Giving information	(4) H: No religion.
	Inquirer	Asking for further information	(5) M: *How about your family? (.) Do they have a religion?*
	Topic expander	Giving further information, describing characteristics, comparing/contrasting	(6) H: *Yeah (.) my family have religions, but my father's different (.) my father's Buddhism and my mother is Catholic.*
	Topic expander	Giving confirmation, giving further information	(7) M: Yeah, I am Catholic too.
	Topic expander	Describing quantities, describing characteristics	(8) H: *OK, I am going to tell you, in Korea, the most religion that people believe is Catholic and Buddhist, [these two.*
	Inquirer	Asking for confirmation	(9) M: *Catholic and Buddhist?]*
	Confirmer	Giving confirmation	(10) H: Yeah.
FINALIZATION TURN	Finalizer	Giving information, describing, characteristics, comparing/contrasting, describing quantity	(11) M: *In my country, there are other religion, but the majority, the big religion in my country is Catholic, maybe you can find not too much people from other religion.*

Table 4-8. Pair 3- Roberto and Akram – Task structure

EXPLORATION OF TASK STRUCTURE THROUGH
INTERACTIONAL ROLES AND ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

	Interactional Role	Academic Language Function	Language
INITIATION TURN	Initiator	Proposing an idea	(1) R: *Culture. What can we talk about? What can we talk about? Maybe (.) marriage.*
CONTINUATION TURNS	Topic Expander	Proposing an idea	(2) A: Marriage (.) in our society (.) it is separate. Weddings are separate.
	Inquirer	Asking for conformation	(3) R: *Wedding separate?*
	Topic expander	Giving confirmation, Giving further information	(4) A: Yes (.) women alone, men alone.
	Inquirer	Asking for further information	(5) R: *How are they separate?*
	Topic expander	Giving further information	(6) A: There is a party for women (.) and there is a party for men.
	Inquirer, Topic switcher	Asking for confirmation Proposing an idea	(7) R: *Oh really (.) no party together? Society (.) it is about schools and marriage.*
	Reorienter	Giving further information	(8) A: Wedding, wedding separate (.) but just the groom come to the women party.
	Inquirer	Asking for confirmation	(9) R: *Are they separated?*
	Topic expander	Giving confirmation, giving further information, Describing characteristics, giving an example	(10) A: Yeah, just the groom come to take his wife (.) so he come with just his father or brother. They pick up his wife (.) and then "Go home! Go home!"
	Repharaser	Giving further information	(11) R: *Wedding separate.*
	Topic expander	Giving confirmation	(12) A: Yeah (.) separate.
FINALIZATION TURN	Finalizer	Giving confirmation, giving information	(13) R: *Separate celebrations.*

Table 4-9. Sample student dialogue with example content words

Ayumi and Dawud	Content Words
(1) D: We are going to write about your culture.	(1) D: Culture
(2) A: In Japan (.) religion is not important (.) it is not important.	(2) A: Japan, religion, important
(3) D: Yeah, but you have Christians.	(3) D: Christians
(4) A: Yeah yeah, (.) but it is only one percent we have Christians [in Japan.	(4) A: Percent, Christians, Japan
(5) D: The majority Buddhist?]	(5) D: Majority, Buddhist
(6) A: Maybe (.) but we are not. We are not religious. I think Islam is very important for your country (.) but it is not very important in Japan.	(6) A: Religious, Islam, important, country, Japan

Table 4-10. Sample student dialogue with example content words

Hyun and Miguel	Content Words
(1) M: What religion are you from?	(1) M: Religion
(2) H: What?	(3) M: Religion
(3) M: (.) What is your religion?	(4) H: Religion
(4) H: No religion.	(5) M: Family, religion
(5) M: How about your family? (.) Do they have a religion?	(6) H: family, religion, father, different, Buddhism, mother, Catholic
(6) H: Yeah my family have religions, but my father's different (.) my father's Buddhism and my mother is Catholic.	(7) M: Catholic
(7) M: Yeah, I am Catholic too.	(8) H: tell, Korea, religion, people, believe, Catholic, Buddhist
(8) H: OK, I am going to tell you, in Korea, the most religion that people believe is Catholic and Buddhist, [these two.	(9) M: Catholic, Buddhist
(9) M: Catholic and Buddhist?]	(11) M: Country, religion, majority, Catholic, find, people
(10) H: Yeah.	
(11) M: In my country, there are other religion, but the majority, the big religion in my country is Catholic, maybe you can find not too much people from other religion.	

Table 4-11. Sample student dialogue with example content words

Akram and Roberto	Content Words
(1) R: Culture. What can we talk about? What can we talk about? Maybe (.) marriage.	(1) R: Culture, marriage
(2) A: Marriage (.) in our society (.) it is separate. Weddings are separate.	(2) A: Marriage, society, separate, wedding
(3) R: Wedding separate?	(3) R: Wedding, separate
(4) A: Yes (.) women alone, men alone.	(4) A: Women, alone, men
(5) R: How are they separate?	(5) R: Separate
(6) A: There is a party for women (.) and there is a party for men.	(6) A: Party, women, men
(7) R: Oh really (.) no party together? Society (.) it is about schools [and marriage.	(7) R: Party, together, society, schools, marriage
(8) A: Wedding, wedding] separate (.) but just the groom come to the women party.	(8) A: Wedding, separate, groom, women, party
(9) R: Are they separated?	(9) R: Separated
(10) A: Yeah, just the groom come to take his wife (.) so he come with just his father or brother. They pick up his wife (.) and then "Go home! Go home!"	(10) A: Groom, come, take, wife, father, brother, pick up, go, home
(11) R: Wedding separate.	(11) R: Wedding, separate
(12) A: Yeah (.) separate.	(12) A: Separate
(13) R: Separate celebrations.	(13) R: Separate, celebrations

Table 4-12. Ayumi from Pair 1- Written language sample

Written Language Sample Pair 1 -Ayumi	Content words
CHALLENGES OF LIVING IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY FOR THE FIRST TIME Different country has different culture to own country. So it is difficult that foreign come to the U.S. and foreigners have to follow the U.S. culture, habit, and rule. Dawud also had some uncomfortable thing when he came here. He is from Saudi Arabia, so they have different language, transportation, religion, and foods. He has to follow the U.S. culture until he leaves the U.S. Now he lives in the U.S. for about three months, so his feeling is better than he came here soon. The car is the main transportation in Saudi Arabia. In Gainesville, however, the car and the bus are the main transportation. When he came here soon, he didn't have a car. So, his feeling was bad because he had to take the bus and had to wait for the bus. The car is very convenient because he doesn't need to wait for the bus. And then he sometimes rented the car. He felt bad hat he didn't have a car, so he decided to but a car. But, now the U.S. economic is bad, so when he bought a car, his dealer was mean. His dealer went up the car price, because he is foreigner and he is rich. And then he gave up his favorite car and he bought a cheap car. He couldn't discount the car price. It is difficult that find the Arabic foods. There aren't many Arabic in Gainesville, so he couldn't find Arabic foods. Now, he get Arabic foods in Indian market, because Indian foods and Arabic foods are similar, and Indian market has some Arabic foods. It is difficult that foreigner accept own country culture and habit in the other country. But now, in the world is progressing the diversity, so we who are Japanese and Saudi can enjoy our life style that are own country life style in the other country. When we came here soon, we couldn't accept our life style because we didn't know anything. We spent more than one month in Gainesville, so we can accept our life style here. It is difficult that our lifestyle accept own country life style, but we can make our country life style in the other county.	PARAGRAPH 1: Different, culture, country, difficult, foreign, come, foreigners, follow, habit, rule, uncomfortable, come, Saudi Arabia, language, transportation, religion, food, leave, month, feeling, soon PARAGRAPH 2: car, main, transportation, come, feeling, bad, take, bus, wait, convenient, need, rent PARAGRAPH 3: Feel, bad, buy, car, economy, bad, buy, dealer, mean, go up, price, foreigner, rich, give up, cheap, discount PARAGRAPH 4: Difficult, find, Arabic, food, Gainesville, get, Indian, market, similar PARAGRAPH 5: Difficult, foreigner, accept, country, culture, habit, world, progress, diversity, Japanese, Saudi, enjoy, life, style, Soon, accept, know, spend, month, accept, difficult, county

Table 4-13. Dawud from Pair 1- Written language sample

Written Language Sample Pair 1 -Dawud	Content words
MY PARTNER'S CULTURE AND MY CULTURE This world is rich of various culture. There are differences in culture between east and west. Each country has own culture. In fact, I have a friend from Japan and we talked about our culture. Are they similar or not. We talked about our culture in three major: food, clothes, and marriage. Our first debate is food in our countries. Rice is important, it is common in both country. In Saudi Arabia we have rice only on lunch. However, they have rice in Japan in every meal, even in breakfast. Food in Saudi Arabia based on rice with meat or chicken is called Kabsa. There are also Jeresh, Margog and Gorson. And Saudis do not eat pork or drink alcohol. Japan, on the other hand, has a variety of dishes. They use rice almost with every meal. And they have sushi the most popular dish, also they have domburi and wasabi. In addition, Japanese can eat pork and drink alcohol. We also have different clothes. In Saudi Aabia, men wear thoub with shomagh. But women wear black cloth it called Abayah. It's just for outdoor. However, in Japan, they have kimono. It is very formal and it is worn by men and women. Finally, marriage in both countries is different. In Saudi Arabia, there is no specific age to get married. Also, Saudis can get married from any of their relatives except their families. In addition, men can get married of more than one women. Otherwise, in Japan, there are specific age to get married. Guys suppose to be above 18 years old and girl above 16 yars old. Also, in Japan people related by blood cannot get married. In the end, there are big differences between Saudi Arabia and Japan. Our cultures are different, food, clothes and marriage. I believe that difference make our live enjoyable.	PARAGRAPH 1: World, rich, various, culture, difference, east, west, country, friend, Japan, talk, similar, major, food, cloth, marriage PARAGRAPH 2: debate, food, country, rice, important, common, Saudi Arabia, lunch, Japan, meal, breakfast, meat, chicken, Kabsa, Jeresh, Margog, Gorson, eat, pork, drink, alcohol, variety, dish, sushi, domburi, wasabi PARAGRAPH 3: Different, clothe, Saudi Arabia, men, wear, thoub, shomagh, women, black, abayah, outdoor, Japan, kimono, formal PARAGRAPH 4: marriage, different, Saudi Arabia, specific, age, get, married, relatives, familiy, above, related, blood PARAGRAPH 5: Big, difference, Saudi Arabia, Japan, culture, different, food, clothe, marriage, believe, make, enjoyable

Table 4-14. Hyun from Pair 2- Written language sample

Written Language Sample Pair 2 - Hyun	Content words
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES Even though I and my partner Miguel are studying in same place, eating same food, wearing same clothes and enjoying same thing, there are many differences in cultural background between Korea and Venezuela. First, our religions differ in main belief in each country. Majority of Korean usually believe in Christian, Catholic, and Buddhism. Of course, our origin religion is Buddhism, but as time passes on, the rate of people who believe in God has been increased. And usually Christians go to church, Catholic go to Cathedral and Buddhists go to the temple to pray. On the other hadn, almost every Venezuelan believe in Catholic and they usually go to church for praying. And also their religion is Catholic. But Catholic usually go to church to pray differently from Catholic in Korea. Therefore, Korean believe in more kinds of religion than Venzuelan. Second difference is the main food. In Korean, we usually cook rice every meal. Rice is our traditional food and various kinds of dishes are served with rice such as meat, fish, kimchi, etc. However, Venezuelan's main food is Arepa, which is made of corn. When they eat arepa, they cut it in half and put various sorts of food such as pork, beef, and vegetable in between each cut. As a result, we are same when adding many kinds of food when eating, but our main food is totally different. Third, the place of celebration is different. Korean usually hold a celebration inside like wedding in wedding hall, concert in concert hall and birthday party in karaoke. But in Venezuela, they hold concert, wedding, and every kinds of party at the beach. In conclusion, we are doing many common things as a human, however, there are a lot of differences in cultural background between Korea and Venezuela such as religion, main food and place of celebration. If we accept each cultural difference, it is going to be helpful for development of each culture. And as the culture develops, we can create various kinds of advanced culture.	PARAGRAPH 1: partner, same, study, place, eat, food, wear, clothe, enjoy, difference, cultural, background, Korea, Venezuela PARAGRAPH 2: religion, differ, main, belief, country, majority, Korean, believe, Christian, Catholic, Buddhism, origin religion, pass, rate, people, God, increase, usually, go, church, cathedral, temple, pray, almost, differently, kind PARAGRAPH 3: Difference, main, food, Korean, usually, cook, rice, meal, traditional, various, kind, dish, serve, meat, fish, kimchi, Venezuelan, arepa, make, corn, eat, cut, half, put, various, pork, beef, vegetable, add, totally PARAGRAPH 4: Place, celebration, different, Korean, usually, hold, wedding, hall, concert, birthday, party, karaoke, Venezuela, beach PARAGRAPH 5: do, common, thing, human, difference, cultural, background, Korea, Venezuela, religion, main, food, place, celebration, accept, helpful, development, develop, create, various, kind, advanced

Table 4-15. Miguel from Pair 2- Written language sample

Written Language Sample Pair 2 - Miguel	Content words
WHEN MY PARTNER CAME TO U.S. The difficult things for a Korean guy in the United States. Living outside your country is not easy. For my partner, it was difficult too, he had problems for his English, the American food, also, with the weather. Everybody know how difficult it is the first contact with others language. My partners had the same problems when he came to the United States, he could not speak and understand when somebody talked or spoke with him. The communication problems make you feel lonely in others country. Others problems for my partner was the food. The Asian food, it's very different. As a result he had food problems, he gain weight. He said the serving are very biggest than Korea. Also, the Florida weather is very hot for him. As you know, we're in summer now. The summer in Florida is very hot and humidity more than Korea. For any partner learn English was difficult, but learn and living outside your country, it's always difficult.	PARAGRAPH 1: Difficult, Korean, guy, United States, live, outside, country, easy, partner PARAGRAPH 2: Everybody, know, difficult, first, contact, language, partner, have, problem, United States, speak, understand, talk, speak, communication, problem, make, feel, lonely, country PARAGRAPH 3: Other, problem, partner, food, Asian, different, result, problem, gain, weight, serve, big, Korea PARAGRAPH 4: Florida, weather, hot, know, summer, Florida, humidity, Korea PARAGRAPH 5: Partner, learn, English, difficult, learn, live, outside, country, always, difficult

Table 4-16. Akram from Pair 3- Written language sample

Written Language Sample - Akram	Content words
LIVING OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE Studing overseas could be hard sometimes. It's a new challenge for everyone who venture this step. Some people can endure all the defaculties that occurs. While others cannot. It's usually depend how much intention and time person has to live away from everything he knows and used to do regelurly. One of those is Michael. He is now study in the United State. There had some problems that he encountred while studying in the US, the food, communication with other native speakers and being away from his family and friends. Usually food is a major problem that persons have to deal with while living in a foreign country, especially if it comes to men, because men usually don't know how to cook for example, Michael. He has to cook by himself while doesn't cook very well. It's a time-consuming, he spend a lot of time cooking and cleaning after it and that is taken from his study time. Maybe the hardest thing anyone could encounter is communication with other native speakers. Using different language to speak and listen sometime is hard especially when doing important things like asking for information, things that deal with money, housing and immigration regelations. Sometime Michael can't express his feeling well or what he wants. He gets frustrated when they (native speakers) don't understand him. It's really tough but as a result, he is learning by the time goes by. Being away from family and friends is always the biggest challenge anyone may have to deal with. Missing your beloved once and your backlade could be difficult. Therefore, a person has to learn how to depend on himself, which is a good thing. In Michael's case, he misses hanging out with family and friends. As a consequence, he has to meet with new people and friends. In conclusion, living outside of your comfort zone is something that everybody have to experience it. Dispite its defecalties, but is comes back to the person with great benefits, as a result of his hard life.	PARAGRAPH 1: Study, overseas, hard, new, challenge, venture, step, people, endure, difficulties, occur, usually, depend, intention, live, know, be used to, regularly, problems, encounter, food, communication, native, speakers, family, friends PARAGRAPH 2: Usually, food, major, problem, person, deal with, live, foreign, country, especially, men, know, cook, time-consuming, spend, clean, study, time PARAGRAPH 3: Maybe, hard, encounter, communication, native, speakers, use, different, language, speak, listen, especially, important, ask, information, deal, money, housing, immigration, regulation, express, feeling, want, frustrated, understand, tough, learn PARAGRAPH 4: Away, family, friend, big, challenge, deal, miss, beloved, background, person, learn, depend, good, hang out, consequence, meet, new, people PARAGRAPH 5: Live, comfort, zone, experience, despite, difficulty, come back, great, benefits, result, hard

Table 4-17. Roberto from Pair 3- Written language sample

Written Language Sample - Roberto	Content words
CHALLENGES OF LIVING IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY Going abroad to study, work, and to live can be hard sometimes at begin or during the first month, but as a result of be strong and keeping in the new country can be successful and get a new and better life. In the case of my partner, he has to get used to somethings like to cook, get used to transportation and get used to the weather. He doesn't know how to cook, as a consequence of that, he has to buy fast food or eat only eggs at home. The second thing is he doesn't have a car, consequently, he depend on the bus to go any where and the bus schedule is not good at all. He has to wait for long period to go out at night and weekend. The third thing is the weather, he is get used to the hot weather, but in Gainesville, very cold sometimes, and it is hard for him to go out, because in his country there is only one season all year, hot. My partner wants to study at UF, but first he is getting used to three important things and then finally he can be very happy and glad of to be in Gainesville.	PARAGRAPH 1: Go, abroad, study, work, live, hard, begin, month, result, strong, keep, new, country, successful, get, new, better, life, case, partner, have, get, use, cook, transportation, weather PARAGRAPH 2: Know, cook, consequence, have, buy, fast, food, eat, eggs, home PARAGRAPH 3: Thing, have, car, depend on, bus, schedule, good, wait, for, long, period, go, night, weekend PARAGRAPH 4: Weather, get, used to, hot, weather, Gainesville, very, cold, sometimes, hard, go, country, season, year PARAGRAPH 5: Partner, want, study, get, used to, important, happy, glad, be Gainesville

Table 4-18. Length of students' conversations

PAIR 1: AYUMI AND DAWUD	PAIR 2: HYUN AND MIGUEL	PAIR 3: ROBERTO AND AKRAM
1) A: Marriage. (2) D: What (.) marriage? (3) A: Yeah, it is one guy one girl, but in your country it is one guy and [it's many women. (4) D: Yeah one guy.] What? I didn't understand you (.) what did you want to ask me? (5) A: In your country one guy have many wives. (6) D: The law allow to have. (7) A: And the law so you can marry many? (8) D: You can marry four (.) just four. 9) A: But most people are like that? (10) D: But if he is able to give every woman the same (.) if he able to. If he is able to offer life for woman (.) the same house the same everything (.) if he is able to do that, he can get married (.) if he doesn't able, he can't get married (.) just one. (11) A: It is the law decide the age also? [Until eighty? (12) D: No until whatever.] If you are age one hundred years old (.) you can get married, no problem. (13) A: It is the same in my country also. (14) D: So what we have to talk about (.) who pay money for wedding? (15) A: Wedding? (16) D: How can they get married? This is very important. (17) A: Just go to Law office (.) and paper and write down and then marry. Of course some people have wedding party (.) but some people just marry without wedding party. Everyone have wedding party? (18) D: Most of them. (19) A: We don't have religion, so some people have wedding party (.) but they are not Christian. (20) D: But I mean if they have wedding party (.) who will pay? Who is going to pay? Both? (21) A: Yeah yeah yeah both, parents, [some people by themselves. (22) D: Because] in my country the groom (.) the man pay for everything and pay for wedding everything (.) that's why I am asking you. I think we have to change this because it is difficult. (23) A: Easy. (24) D: Yeah, easy for you but difficult for me.	(1) M: What religion are you from? (2) H: What? (3) M: (.) What is your religion? (4) H: No religion. (5) M: How about your family? (.) Do they have a religion? (6) H: Yeah (.) my family have religions (.) but my father's different (.) my father's Buddhism and my mother is Catholic. (7) M: Yeah (.) I am Catholic too. (8) H: OK, I am going to tell you (.) in Korea (.) the most religion that people believe is Catholic and Buddhist, [these two. (9) M: Catholic and Buddhist?] (10) H: Yeah. (11) M: In my country (.) there are other religion, but the majority, the big religion in my country is Catholic (.) maybe you can find not too much people from other religion.	(1) R: Culture. What can we talk about? What can we talk about? Maybe (.) marriage. (2) A: Marriage (.) in our society (.) it is separate. Weddings are separate. (3) R: Wedding separate? (4) A: Yes (.) women alone, men alone. (5) R: How are they separate? (6) A: There is a party for women (.) and there is a party for men. (7) R: Oh really (.) no party together? Society (.) it is about schools and marriage. (8) A: Wedding, wedding separate (.) but just the groom come to the women party. (9) R: Are they separated? (10) A: Yeah, just the groom come to take his wife (.) so he come with just his father or brother. They pick up his wife (.) and then "Go home! Go home!" (11) R: Wedding separate. (12) A: Yeah (.) separate. (13) R: Separate celebrations.

PAIR 1 - AYUMI AND DAWUD			PAIR 2 - HYUN AND MIGUEL			PAIR 3 - ROBERTO AND AKRAM		
MAIN TOPIC: CULTURE			MAIN TOPIC: CULTURE			MAIN TOPIC: CULTURE		
SUBTOPIC: MARRIAGE			SUBTOPIC: RELIGION			SUBTOPIC: MARRIAGE		
JAPAN	LEVELS	SAUDI ARABIA	KOREA	LEVELS	VENEZUELA	COLOMBIA	LEVELS	SAUDI ARABIA
Monogamy	*LEVEL 1* Style of marriage	Polygamy	Majority Catholic and Buddhist	*LEVEL 1* Types of religion	Majority Catholic	Together	*LEVEL 1* Wedding Ceremony	Separate
After 16	*LEVEL 2* Age	No age limit	Father Buddhist -Mother Catholic	*LEVEL 2* Parents' religion	Catholic parents			
Optional	*LEVEL 3* Wedding Ceremony	Almost always						
Parents or bride and groom together	*LEVEL 4* Who pays for wedding expenses	Always groom						

Figure 4-1. Conceptual depth of subtopics in students' conversations

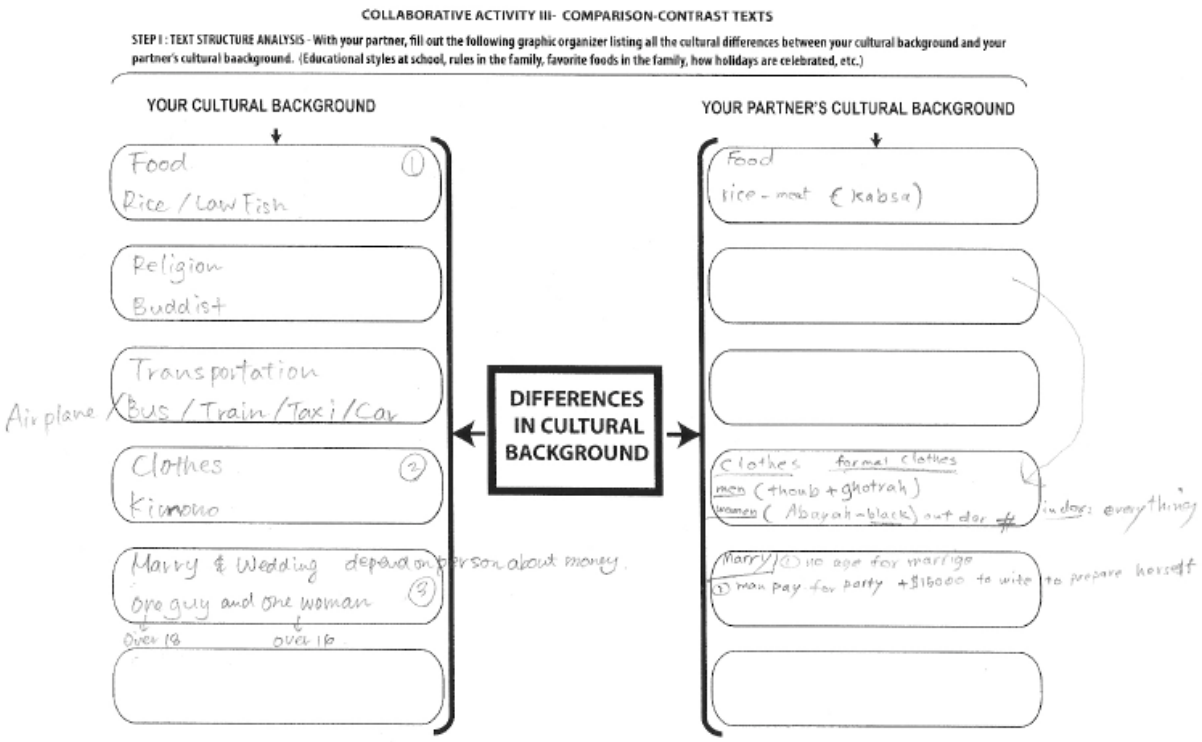


Figure 4-2. Sample graphic organizers – Comparison/Contrast

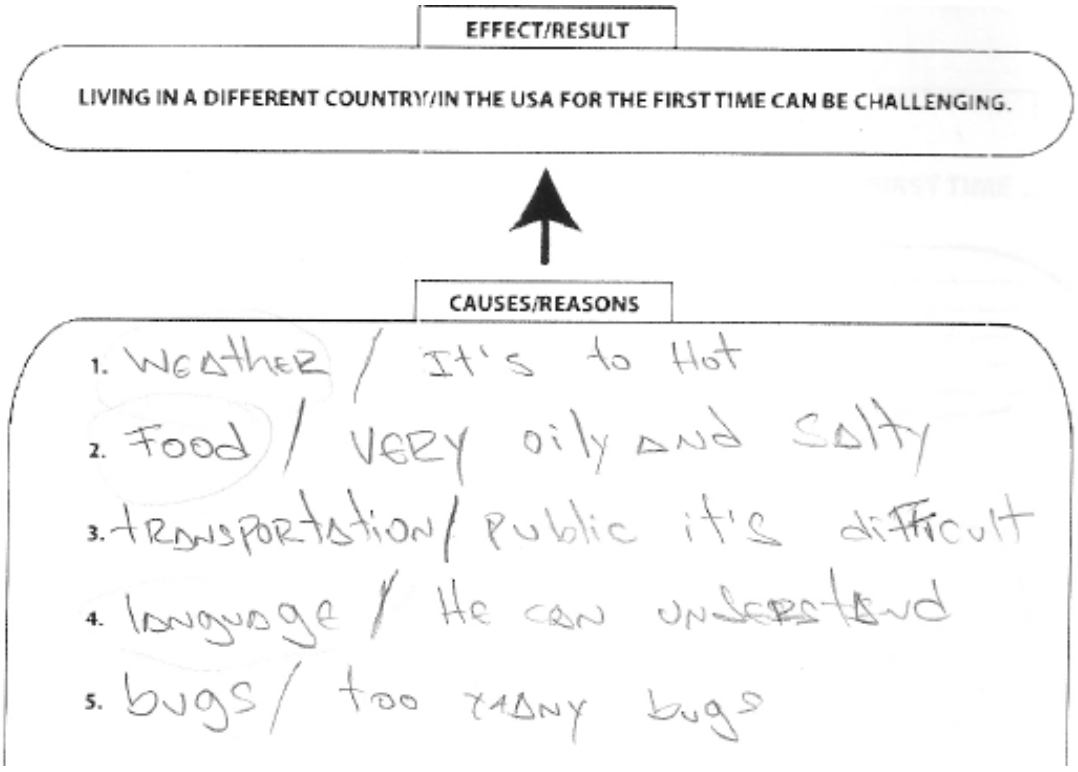


Figure 4-3. Sample graphic organizers – Cause and Effect

Table 4-19. Sample student writing – Comparison/Contrast

ESSAY TITLE:
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN SAUDI ARABIA AND JAPAN

This world is rich of various culture. There are differences in culture between east and west. Each country has own culture. In fact, I have a friend from Japan and we talked about our culture. Are they similar or not. We talked about our culture in three major: food, clothes, and marriage.

Our first debate is food in our countries. Rice is important, it is common in both country. In Saudi Arabia we have rice only on lunch. However, they have rice in Japan in every meal, even in breakfast. Food in Saudi Arabia based on rice with meat or chicken is called Kabsa. There are also Jeresh, Margog and Gorson. And Saudis do not eat pork or drink alcohol. Japan, on the other hadn, has a variety of dishes. They use rice almost with every meal. And they have sushi the most popular dish, also they have domburi and wasabi. In addition, Japanese can eat pork and drink alcohol.

We also have different clothes. In Saudi Aabia, men wear thoub with shomagh. But women wear black cloth it called Abayah. It's just for outdoor. However, in Japan, they have kimono. It is very formal and it is worn by men and women.

Finally, marriage in both countries is different. In Saudi Arabia, there is no specific age to get married. Also, Saudis can get married from any of their relatives except their families. In addition, men can get married of more than one women. Otherwise, in Japan, there are specific age to get married. Guys suppose to be above 18 years old and girl above 16 years old. Also, in Japan people related by blood cannot get married.

In the end, there are big differences between Saudi Arabia and Japan. Our cultures are different, food, clothes and marriage. I believe that difference make our live enjoyable.

Table 4-20. Sample student writing – Cause and Effect

ESSAY TITLE:
WHEN MY PARTNER CAME TO U.S.

The difficult things for a Korean guy in the United States. Living outside your country is not easy. For my partner, it was difficult too, he had problems for his English, the American food, also, with the weather.

Everybody know how difficult it is the first contact with others language. My partners had the same problems when he came to the United States, he could not speak and understand when somebody talked or spoke with him. The communication problems make you feel lonely in others country.

Others problems for my partner was the food. The Asian food, it's very different. As a result he had food problems, he gain weight. He said the serving are very biggest than Korea.

Also, the Florida weather is very hot for him. As you know, we're in summer now. The summer in Florida is very hot and humidity more than Korea.

For any partner learn English was difficult, but learn and living outside your country, it's always difficult.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The development of academic language is critical for ELLs' success at school, and instructional activities such as the collaborative graphic organizer task that promote opportunities for academic language use should be analyzed. This study examines ELLs' academic language use from the perspective of sociocultural theory as they participate in a collaborative graphic organizer task. It also examines students' perspectives on the task. Three pairs of adult ELLs from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds participated in conversational exchanges in a collaborative graphic organizer task. The study focuses on the types of linguistic, conceptual, and strategic support these students provided for one another and on the sociocultural nature of the academic language used during their interactions.

In this study, the researcher analyzed the structure of the graphic organizer task as a social event and identified the linguistic functions and student roles during the task. The researcher aimed to understand the collaborative nature of the graphic organizer task as a potential instructional tool that may facilitate language scaffolding. The researcher examined the discourse data gathered from students' interactions during the collaborative graphic organizer task to understand how the ELLs used academic language to complete the task. The researcher analyzed the data based on semiotic, sociocultural, and task structure aspects of academic discourse with a focus on the macro and micro level tools, such as students' social roles and interactional motives during the task as well as the grammatical structure, indicators of content density, and transitional discourse markers (Gee, 2005).

Sociocultural Aspects of Students' Interactions

The researcher explored the sociocultural nature of dialogic interactions as the task was constructed by each pair. Gee's (2005) sociocultural and activity aspects of discourse (p. 85) helped illuminate the opportunities generated by the task that are conducive to language use and that potentially support language development. According to the findings of this study, each pair constructed a different sociocultural context in which they engaged in the collaborative graphic organizer task in different ways. Instead of following the task instructions verbatim, learners established their own strategies for conducting the task and engaged in the task activity in varying ways (Platt & Brooks, 2002). Partners transformed the task as well as the social organization of their interactions as they continuously renegotiated their relationship after each turn (Wells, 1999). For instance, one pair discussed fewer topics at greater length while the other two pairs discussed multiple topics without delving deeply into any of them. In Pair 1, Ayumi, who often assumed the role of *Inquirer*, was able to explore topics in depth with Dawud who was willing to carry out the roles of *Responder* and *Topic Expander*. In Pair 3, Akram often assumed the role of *Inquirer*, but Roberto was a quiet student who did not readily assume the *Topic Expander* role, so that pair's discussion of topics typically remained at a surface level. In Pair 2, neither Miguel nor Hyun took on the role of *Inquirer*, so that pair frequently switched topics and failed to explore topics sufficiently to complete the final writing task with specific information on the designated topics.

Successful Communication Patterns and Collaboration

Student discourse and observational data from this study revealed that student participation in the collaborative graphic organizer task was influenced by individual roles and interactional styles. According to the results of a study by Watanabe and

Swain (2007), collaborative patterns of interaction increased students' test scores. Similarly, the researcher found that the pairs with collaborative interactional styles were able to achieve extended language use for both themselves and their partners in comparison to those pairs with less collaborative interactional styles. Sociocultural theorists in second language studies have argued that not all group work is conducive for language use (Platt & Brooks, 2002). The collaborative graphic organizer task in this study provided opportunities for extended language use. In an effort to identify how such increased language use may be achieved in other collaborative tasks with graphic organizers, the researcher suggests that teachers pay attention to students' interactional styles when pairing their students.

Although students' roles and communication styles are constructed in the context of their social interactions, students' personality differences and background experiences also contribute. However, generalizations based on a student's ethnicity or cultural membership can be misleading when applied to an individual student. For example, because Saudi Arabia is a male-dominated society, Saudi men might be expected to assume a dominant conversational role. However, Dawud did not lead the conversations with his partner Ayumi, a young Japanese woman. In fact, Ayumi was the *Topic Shifter,* leading throughout the task with questions in spite of the fact that her spoken English proficiency was much lower than Dawud's. If she had allowed her English language skills to diminish her communicative confidence, or if she'd had a less collaborative attitude or a different interactional style, Dawud may have dominated the task. Instead, Ayumi directed the discussion and used a questioning strategy to limit Dawud's tendency to extend his turns with additional information. In this study as in Watanabe (2008) and

in Storch (2002), the interaction patterns formed among partners had an important effect on successful peer assistance in the collaborative task.

Collaborative dialogue provides opportunities for English language learners to use language, and collaborative tasks at school can help ELLs improve their academic language skills (Gibbons, 2002; Gibbons 2009). The sociocultural nature of communication allows students to better understand each other through questions, clarifications, and counter questions as they construct and share meanings together (Markee, 2004). However, collaborative tasks vary in terms of their success in achieving increased language use (Platt & Brooks, 2002). According to the findings from this study, the structure of the task and the open-endedness of the conversational topics allowed continuous interaction and mutual construction of new meanings as each partner explored aspects of a new culture. When both partners assumed the roles of *Inquirer*, *Responder*, *Topic Expander*, the conversations consisted of multiple exchanges and smooth transitions. In the follow-up interview, Dawud indicated that thanks to this task, he had learned much about his partner and his partner's cultural background. There may be a possible connection between partners' bonding and task engagement and recommends further research on pair bonding as a construct in task engagement. According to Platt & Brooks (2002), task engagement is an important factor in achieving successful learning outcomes when designing collaborative tasks for second language learners.

Analysis of the student discourse during participation in the collaborative graphic organizer task, supported by the researchers' field notes from observations of students' conversations, revealed that although the three student pairs collaborated at varying

degrees and in different ways, the graphic organizer successfully served as a tool to encourage communication. For instance, when the topic focused on differences between their cultural experiences, each partner was required to interview the other to find out about these differences. Similarly, when the topic centered on difficulties students experienced when living in a new culture for the first time, pairs had to interview each other in order to fill out the (cause-effect) graphic organizer on this topic, Research by Veronis and Gass (2002) found that students from similar cultural backgrounds interacted more in the second language than students from different backgrounds, presumably because of their shared background. Contrary to that finding, evidence from the current study indicates that the information gap between partners likely contributed to the successful continuous interaction between partners., In addition, the discussion topics may have been a factor in the high level of task engagement. Because the students were conceptually familiar with the main topics, they were able to ask relevant questions and provide specific examples and explanations in response to their partners' questions. ELLs may be particularly sensitive to the effects of topic familiarity on their ability to label new concepts and elaborate on experiences in a second language.

According to other research on interaction and collaboration in language learning (Brooks, 2009; Clark & Clark, 2008; Platt & Brooks, 2002), not all collaborative tasks produce opportunities for interaction. The collaborative graphic organizer tasks used in this study were designed to require that pairs interview each other in order to complete the final (writing) stage of the tasks. As a result, these tasks meet Kagan's (1992) two essential criteria for true cooperative learning activities: positive interdependence and

individual accountability. Cooperative activities intended to increase student interaction may not succeed unless each participant is required to contribute to a shared outcome. Structuring students' active participation in collaborative activities is especially important for ELLs because many ELLs prefer to remain passive and silent in groups due in part to their limited communication skills in the second language.

Although this collaborative task was uniformly structured for all three pairs, the partners shaped each task in their own ways and took on their own roles in the unique sociocultural settings that each pair co-constructed. As a result, each task assumed a new form depending on how the student partners interacted and made the task their own. From a semiotic and sociocultural perspective, students appeared to create a new culture within the macroculture of the classroom, and the sociocultural features of the new environment were reflected in their interactions. Each pair differed in the ways they initiated and continued the task, and each partner used different language and assumed different roles during their interactions.

Although collaborative task design is important, the structure of a task may not guarantee its success because of the diversity in learners' reconstructions of the activity and based on their own unique ways of relating to each other.. Teachers need to consider the sociocultural contexts that group members create during classroom tasks and incorporate this awareness into their planning (Brooks, 2009; Clark & Clark, 2008; Platt & Brooks, 2006; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). For example, two non-collaborative partners may be unable to engage successfully in a task. Similarly, a hesitant partner may not work well with an argumentative partner who disagrees with or rejects their suggestions. Therefore, pairing students who have a non-collaborative or hesitant

interactional style with students who are more collaborative may support their task participation and interaction. In addition, hesitant students may be scaffolded into collaborative work by a partner who has a more collaborative interactional style.

Scaffolding Opportunities and Types of Scaffolding

A number of researchers have argued that both first and second language acquisition occurs through dialogue where the learners acquire the necessary knowledge through interaction and collaborative meaning making (Donato, 1994, Foster & Ohta, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978). In this study, ELL student dialogue produced in the context of a collaborative graphic organizer task was explored from a sociocultural perspective. Scaffolding opportunities in the task were explored through the activity aspect with a focus on how partners may be helping each other in terms of continuing the task and a discourse analysis applied macro level tools such as interactional roles and instances of linguistic, conceptual, and strategic scaffolding.

The collaborative graphic organizer task was designed to help ELLs transition from collaborative verbal language production through spoken English to independent language production through academic writing. In the dialogues between partners, instances of scaffolding with potential for language development were observed, although the benefits of such language scaffolding were not formally assessed within the short duration of the study. In a study by Brooks (2009), qualitative analysis of students' conversations indicate that when students were conversing with each other in a collaborative dialogue format of testing, they produced more interaction and more complex language than in testing in which students could only interact with the examiners. Similarly, interactions between paired partners are full of examples of

academic vocabulary and concepts with intricate language structures as ELLs interact in academic English.

According to Gibbons (2002, 2009), interacting in English through academic tasks gives students an opportunity to use the English language for academic purposes. Similarly, during the collaborative graphic organizer task, students were able to use the English language and scaffold each other collectively in different aspects for linguistic support, conceptual support, and strategic support. For example, they asked each other questions and provided further information about the topics. As they were interacting, they responded to each other's language use with implicit forms of feedback related with language, possibly indicating their awareness of their partner's language use. They also shared their experiences using explanations and examples, which helped extend their knowledge about one another's cultural background, which extended the amount of their interactions and helped them carry out the task through different strategies by initiating, maintaining, and completing the task with necessary amount of information to be able to write an essay.

According to the results of a study by Watanabe (2008), the interaction patterns that language learners constructed collaboratively during problem solving tasks were more influential in their second language development than their pairing with higher or lower English proficiency peers. In the current study, ELLs with roughly the same levels of English proficiency provided scaffolding opportunities for each other. As with Watanabe's (2008) findings, students' interactional styles enabled their linguistic, conceptual, and activity support for other students and were key to their extended interactions in the collaborative graphic organizer task.

Linguistic Scaffolding

In her earlier work, Ohta (2001) noted that ELLs have different strengths and weaknesses, and such differences exist even among learners at the same general level of English proficiency. Therefore, pairing students with different levels of English ability (e.g., “high” and “low” proficiency) will not guarantee that language support will be provided by more proficient students to their less proficient peers. Unlike native speakers of English who draw upon a common base of lexical and syntactic resources in English, ELLs vary in terms of their vocabulary knowledge and grammatical competence in English. For instance, due to different experiences and levels of exposure to specific vocabulary, a highly proficient ELL may not know certain words that another student with a lower level of English proficiency does know. A student who excels in writing in English may not be able to perform as well in speaking, while another student who speaks English fluently in social contexts may fail to apply this ability in more formal writing tasks. The findings of this study indicate that in collaborative activities ELLs draw on their unique repertoires of linguistic resources to provide scaffolding for each other.

According to Foster and Ohta (2005), if ELLs are able to communicate successfully with each other and if their interactions take place in a supportive environment, learners will not focus on linguistic form. The researcher’s field notes based on observations of task interactions as well as samples of student discourse reveal that although participants did not focus explicitly on language forms, they did seem to be aware of the language forms used by their partners, and they did provide them with scaffolding in the form of indirect feedback.

Scaffolding opportunities provide partners with feedback on their English language use and can help ELLs develop academic English skills (Donato, 1994; Foster & Ohta, 2005; Gibbons, 2009; Watanabe & Swain, 2008). For example, after Ayumi used the word *automatical*, Dawud used the correct form of the word in recasting his partner's sentence as a confirmation check. Also, when Ayumi used the verb phrase *to across the street*, Dawud indirectly corrected Ayumi's error by using the correct form of the verb *to cross the street*. In these and other instances in which Dawud assumed the roles of *Clarifier* and *Inquirer*, he provided lexical and structural scaffolding for his partner , During their participation in the collaborative graphic organizer task, all three pairs provided scaffolding in the form of indirect feedback on the formal and functional features of their partners' language production and task performance.

Conceptual Scaffolding

Pair members in the study gave each other help in extending their understanding of concepts that they discussed during the task. Such attempts of furthering partners' understanding of concepts may indicate that collaborative work among English language learners may provide opportunities not only for interaction but also for comprehension (Echevarria et al., 2004; Foster & Ohta, 2005; Gibbons, 2009; Platt & Brooks, 2002; Watanabe & Swain, 2007).

When Ayumi attempted to change the topic abruptly, Dawud insisted on continuing their discussion of the same topic, possibly to clear up his partner's confusion and reinforce her understanding of the concepts he had been explaining. Dawud pursued this goal through the *Clarifier* role, rephrasing Ayumi's statements and prompting her to ask further questions about the subtopic. In a number of similar instances, students were able to provide conceptual scaffolding for one another with the

apparent goal of improving their partner's understanding of a specific point or an example.

Strategic Scaffolding

Pairs also supported one another in completing the task through the different interactional roles assumed by students. Task engagement is an important factor in successful collaborative work with increased language use opportunities (Platt & Brooks, 2002; Watanabe & Swain, 2007), and participants in this study kept each other engaged and focused on the task through different strategies of their own. For instance, when one partner veered off topic, the other pointed out that they needed to remain focused on the topic to complete the task. Partners asked each other for further information about the subtopics, which extended the opportunities for collaborative dialogue. Partners in each pair covered a variety of different subtopics by asking each other different questions to be able to have enough information to write about their partner.

According to Kowal and Swain (1994), ELL student pairs with large differences in their English language proficiency levels resulted in decreased levels of collaboration. Kowal and Swain observed that in such pairs, stronger students dominated the task while weaker students remained passive, reportedly due to their concern about making errors in English. In this study, participants' use of their own strategies kept the partners focused on the task, and they were able to help each other use the English language extensively. Students with less collaborative style were mostly initiated into conversing more with the help of a more collaborative partner. For example, Hyun, although he had a less collaborative interactional style, did not remain quiet because Miguel kept asking him questions in order to be able to retrieve all the information that he needs from Hyun to be able to write his essay. Therefore, Miguel's role as Inquirer was also a strategic

asset for successful completion of the task, and the partners were able to meet the fundamental goal of the task: increasing interaction and language use among English language learners.

Linguistic Complexity of Interactions

Students' choice of vocabulary and sentence structures during the task shed light on the nature of language that ELLs use in order to communicate about the topic, the graphic organizer, and the task. According to the interaction data from the study, the students fully explored the topics within the limited amount of time allocated to complete the task. They used familiar discourse connectors such as *because, so, but*, and they performed a variety of academic language functions expressed in multiple linguistic forms for each.

Academic language functions play an important role in students' academic language development (Chamot & O'Malley, 2002), and students must acquire and control the structural complexity and lexical specificity of academic language (Cummins, 2007; Meyer, 2000). As Echevarria et al. (2004) mention, ELLs may only able to achieve this level of linguistic development by participating in the language of school. This study showed that the collaborative graphic organizer activity has a strong potential to provide opportunities for ELLs to use academic language with their peers as part of the conversations that take place when they are completing the activity.

Furthermore, similar to the findings in the study by Ohta and Foster (2005), the nature of the task allowed students to engage in dialogues and provide one another with implicit linguistic support when necessary. The content emphasis of the task may have given them more opportunities to focus on meaning rather than on task structure in which students get immediate feedback on errors that interfere with communication

(Lee, 2008). In the interaction data the students used a large array of academic vocabulary at varying levels of lexical complexity as well as both simple and complex sentence structures with different types of logical discourse connectors. Their conversations typically lacked the types of filler expressions that native speakers of English use, such as *kind of, sort of, I mean, you know*. Rather, the nature of the conversations were academic and task-oriented, centering around the goal of completing the graphic organizer collaboratively in order to complete the independent written essay, which was the final step of the task, and in this step, the teacher asked students to write an essay about a topic that was thematically related to the text they had read in the textbook prior to the collaborative graphic organizer task.

Students' Perspectives on Graphic Organizers and Collaborative Graphic Organizer Task

According to the student interview data, the collaborative graphic organizer task may have the potential to assist language learners in improving their English language skills. Thematic categories were generated by coding the transcripts of students' responses to interview questions, and these categories helped the researcher explore students' perspectives on the collaborative graphic organizer task. Through the interview questions, students were prompted to think metacognitively about the collaborative graphic organizer task as a language learning strategy. The students agreed that both working with the graphic organizers and working collaboratively helped them with their second language learning. They found the topics interesting because they were exploring each other's cultural background when improving their academic language skills. However, because the course was a reading/writing class, the students focused on the benefits of the graphic organizers and of collaboration for their writing and reading

skills. In line with other studies on the use of graphic organizers for language teaching (Tang, 1992) and content learning (Novak & Govin, 1984; Olinghouse & Graham, 2009; Ostwald, 1996; Roth & Roychoudhury, 1994; Ryve, 2004; van Boxtel, van der Linden, Roelofs, & Erkens, 2002) the interviews results indicated that students held positive views of the value of the collaborative graphic organizer task.

The teacher's perspectives were not explored formally, but the teacher commented in informal conversations during the study that the students who participated in this study were able to move more quickly from paragraph writing to essay writing than the students in previous semesters. She explained that students were typically able to understand the structure of a paragraph, but they found it much more difficult to apply the same knowledge in writing an essay. She commented that the graphic organizers provided a visual tool for students to see the conceptual layout of an essay and helped them understand how ideas could be developed into paragraphs, and paragraphs into a full-bodied essay.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

This study explored the interactions among English language learners who were participating in a collaborative graphic organizer task. The collaborative graphic organizer task created opportunities for language use and different types of scaffolding. The interactions between partners during the task involved multiple language functions, which helped the researcher identify the types of scaffolding opportunities, interactional roles, and interactional styles. During the collaborative graphic organizer task, partners did comprehension checks to see if their partner was able to understand the topic. Partner were able to seek clarification or further explore topics by asking specific questions that they may not have been able to ask during other forms of collaborative classroom tasks or whole-class discussion. This study may help teachers of ELLs as well as second language researchers design collaborative tasks with graphic organizers as instructional tools that can be used for facilitating language use.

Information Gap in Collaborative Activities

A key feature of the collaborative graphic organizer task was paired interaction in order to exchange personal information. The task was designed to create opportunities for conversation in English as partners interviewed each other. Both students needed to ask each other questions in order to be able to gather sufficient information to complete the independent assignment to write an essay. For educators to use collaborative graphic organizer tasks successfully in other contexts, it may be necessary to design collaborative activities involving graphic organizers in such a way that students find the topics interesting and learn about them as they complete the task. In the current study, such collaborative conversations may not have occurred if there had not been an

information gap between partners because information gap activities tend to allow more opportunities for increased language use and participation (Platt & Brooks, 2002; Walz, 2008). Collaborative tasks, as with cooperative learning activities, may not be truly collaborative if they fail to require participation from all members of the group (Kagan, 1992). Therefore, integrating information gap features with collaborative tasks can generate both the opportunity and the motivation for learners to communicate to learn and to use their developing language skills simultaneously (Platt & Brooks, 2002; Walz, 2008).

Focus on Meaning

Analysis of the task interaction data revealed that students frequently paraphrased their partners' and their own statements and questions in their attempts to communicate. They clarified meaning by providing further examples, alternative explanations, and more detailed descriptions. There was, however, very little evidence that they focused on the form and accuracy of their language, and there were no instances of talk *about* their language use (Leese, 2004), as in the following example by Swain and Lapkin (2002, p. 292):

> Gou: [. . .] diminish, deplete like decreased? But not decreased.
>
> Jun: Reduced?
>
> Gou: Reduced, yes. [. . .]

The data did reflect occasional attempts to correct errors implicitly by paraphrasing and modeling the correct form of a word or grammatical structure, but these attempts did not interfere with the flow of the conversations. According to Foster and Ohta (2005), a possible reason for the absence of explicit correction may be the partners' ability to understand each other in spite of their errors, or because they

preferred to avoid “discouraging detours from the subject of the interaction” (p. 425). The collaborative graphic organizer task did not require students to pay attention to the accuracy of language forms. Similar to the results in Ohta’s study, the paired partners in this study communicated with each other in the target language by sharing meanings and continuing their conversations with minimum communication breakdowns and maximum language production.

Focus on Language Use

According to the interaction data collected during the collaborative graphic organizer task, students used a broad range of academic language functions. They did not, however, use the types of common colloquial expressions such as “Exactly!, Absolutely!, Not necessarily.” or fillers that native English speakers typically use when performing these language functions such as “Kind of, you know what I mean, well.” Furthermore, the data revealed that students did not use a wide range of discourse markers reflecting the knowledge structures targeted by the graphic organizer task (i.e. cause/effect, comparison/contrast). For instance, they used “because” as opposed to “therefore” or they used “but” instead of “on the other hand.”

Teachers can use collaborative graphic organizer tasks as alternative assessment tools in order to determine what aspects of English students need to improve in order to participate in academic discussions and debates and complete the written work required in school. Teachers can also use collaborative graphic organizer activities to individualize instruction for ELLs and provide the structured opportunities that students need to develop the complex academic language of school (Cazden, 2001; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Meyer, 2000).

Stress Free Classroom Environment

The classroom in which this task took place was a low-stress environment where the students were motivated by the instruction and were not expected to speak English perfectly or to monitor each other's errors. In order to provide a stress-free language learning environment in which students can interact and use English, teachers should design instructional activities that focus on meaningful language use and that deemphasize error correction. The lack of explicit focus on accuracy should not be interpreted as a lack of opportunity for language development. Foster and Ohta (2005) list the following task components that promote second language development: a desire to express oneself, a supportive listener, and a friendly, low-risk environment in which to monitor one's own output. Students can also provide their peers with implicit language support, and teachers can paraphrase student language forms and model correct language use in the context of conversations.

Students may not initially attend to language modeling; however, a positive learning environment that provides rich exposure to comprehensible but authentic language, instructional tasks that structure authentic language use, and scaffolded language support over time can help ELLs develop academic language skills in English.

Open-Ended Tasks and Topics

In the collaborative graphic organizer task in this study, students were held accountable for completing a specific, prescribed task, but they had the opportunity to shape the task and the topics according to their interests and needs. Allowing students to select topics that are relevant to them and to co-construct tasks in their own ways can create extended opportunities for learner engagement, interaction, and learning (Brooks, 2009; Coughlin & Doug, 1996; Gibbons, 2002).

Analyzing the structure of the collaborative graphic organizer task can help us understand how each pair participated in the task in their own style that they co-constructed during the task. According to the results from a task-based second language acquisition study by Platt and Brooks (2002), in spite of the given explicit instructions, the way language learners restructured the communicative task differed among groups. The instructions do provide a certain plan to follow to be able to accomplish the end-goals of the task, but similar to the results of the study by Platt and Brooks, the structure of each task was different in each pair. The partners were not given a list of roles they needed to play out, and the structure of the task is in close connection with the structure of the task. For instance, the person who is the initiator of the task is usually the person who also takes over the role of asking questions or topic expanders. Topic expanders usually suggest a topic in the form of a statement, and inquirers usually pose a question to get the task started. Also, pairs have different ways of continuing the task, such as raising questions, presenting ideas, giving examples, and at time presenting contrary examples or disagreeing with the partner, etc. As sociocultural theory explains (Donato, 1994; Zuengler & Miller, 2006), language learning is an interactive process where individuals interact to share meanings together, and each language event is shaped by the members who gather together to participate in that event to be able to communicate messages. Looking at how each pair applies the task can help us understand how the pairs interpret the task in their own way and make it their own.

Interactional Roles and Styles

Interaction among students is facilitated if collaborative tasks are designed so that all members of the group assume active roles (Kagan, 1992). Roles for student

participation may be predetermined and assigned to individual learners in systematic ways for specific purposes, as with the reading strategy roles used in Reciprocal Teaching groups (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Interactional roles for discussion tasks are more variable and can be more flexible, as with the roles assumed by students participating in paired or group discussions. Interactional roles can be used for instructional purposes or for research purposes (Bloome, et al., 2005; Kagan, 1992; Platt & Brooks, 2002; Storch, 2002). In this study the construct of interactional roles has been used as an analytic tool to help understand ELL discourse in successful collaborative activities such as the graphic organizer task.

Results of this research reveal an important function of the *Inquirer* role in extending a discussion topic. By asking multiple questions, the *Inquirer* permits the discussion to cover a variety of topics in some depth. The *Topic expander* is another important role because the *Topic expander* provides detailed information about a topic, typically when prompted by questions. *Topic switcher* is also an important role that can help a task reach its instructional purpose, and a *Clarifier* is especially important for language learning tasks. The *Clarifier* may paraphrase or provide additional examples to scaffold a partner's understanding. Understanding the interactional roles that ELLs assume in a collaborative task can help us understand their interactional styles, which then can help us form groups accordingly for providing better opportunities for language use. Also, teachers can structure the task and try to diversify the types of interactional roles frequently assumed by students. Through such opportunities, students who always take over the role of *Inquirer* may also develop their language use in how to give extensive information and better elaborate on their answers.

Interactional roles helped the researcher identify students' interactional styles. For example, if a student assumes the role of *Topic expander* and gives additional information to support or elaborate on his answers, he has a collaborative style of communication, and he can be paired with a person who has an argumentative style of communication who asks questions and even brings up controversial issues for discussion. However, if the person has a hesitant style of communication, s/he may not feel comfortable when interacting with a person who has argumentative style, and s/he may prefer to remain mostly quiet in a collaborative task. Additionally, two students with hesitant styles may not result in increased language use, whereas pairing a student who has a hesitant style with another student who has a collaborative style may be more productive in terms of facilitating interaction in English. Interactional styles are not strict categories, and they were not formed to label and define each student within a rigid category. Students may adopt different interactional styles at different stages of their participation in the second language culture and community. Being informed of our students' most common instructional styles can give us a chance to understand students' patterns of communication. Understanding students' preferred interactional styles and pairing students accordingly can support language use during collaborative graphic organizer tasks and in other types of instructional tasks (Donato, 1994; Platt & Brooks, 2002; Storch, 2002, Watanabe & Swain, 2007). This study merely suggests that teachers need to be aware of their students' interactional styles in order to provide better opportunities for productive language use with English language learners.

Suggestions For Further Study

This study was conducted in a post secondary language school where teachers focused on language teaching (as opposed to a content curriculum). For a more thorough understanding of how the collaborative use of graphic organizers can help with students' academic language development, the same study could be replicated in different content area classrooms. For instance, a study in a secondary school setting where ELLs regularly engage in collaborative graphic organizer activities could help us to better understand how context students engage in the task and what type of contexts affects opportunities for academic language use. Additionally, a study focusing on teachers' perspectives on the collaborative use of graphic organizers could inform our understanding of the task in terms of its potential benefit for academic language development for ELLs.

Academic language is an important skill that can be difficult for both native and non-native speakers of English to achieve. Academic language use can be more difficult for English language learners due to the differences between formal and informal language patterns (Butler & Bailey, 2002; Cummins, 2007; Gibbons, 2009). For instance, English language learners from different language backgrounds often experience difficulty in understanding and replicating the structure of an essay in English. Graphic organizers may make this process much easier for English language learners by visually depicting the structures of different genres for students before they begin writing essays.

During the collaborative graphic organizer task, students participated in learning activities in which they cooperatively constructed meanings, instructional roles, and social relationships. Students scaffolded each other's language skills with a possibility of

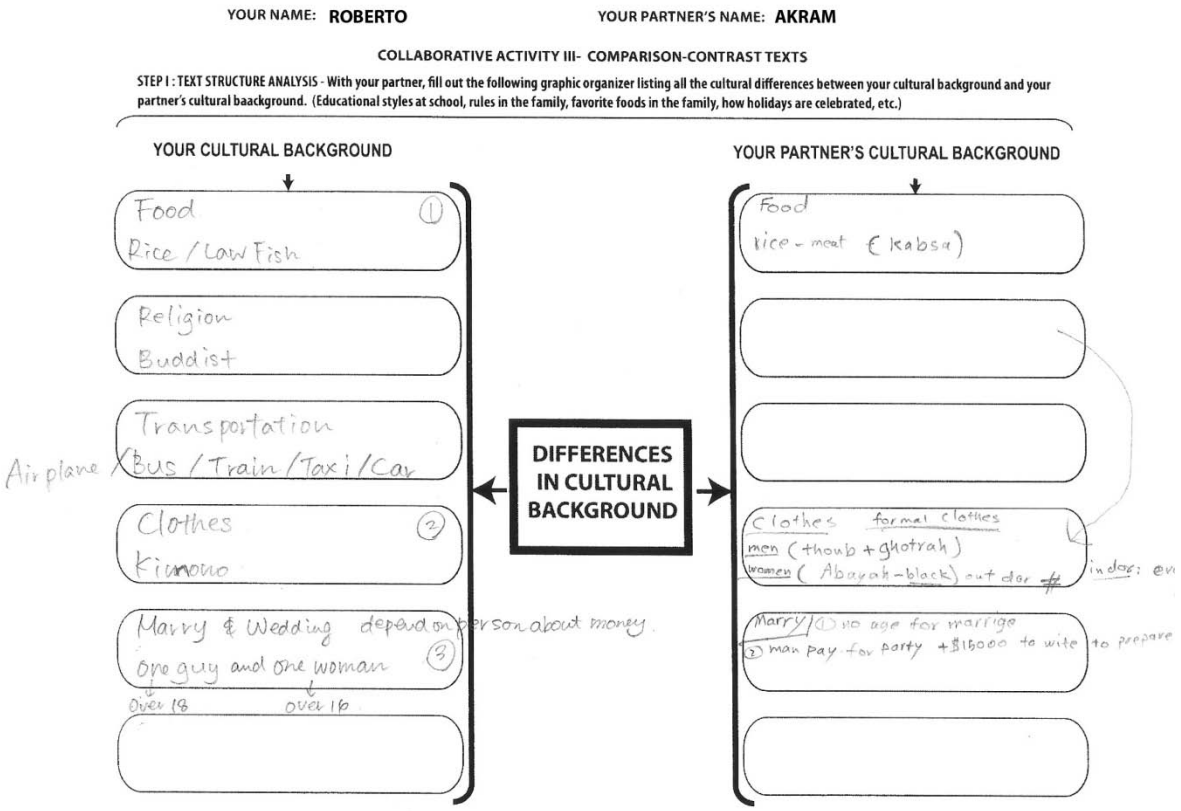
adopting correct language forms and improving their language skills (Donato, 1994; Gibbons, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). They supported each other's participation by providing further explanations, asking questions, and presenting opinions. Such communication strategies are considered "attempts of scaffolding" although the potential benefits were not easily observable in a short time frame. The consequences of such scaffolding attempts are beyond the scope of this study. However, future research that explores the quantitative achievement results of a collaborative graphic organizer task implemented over a longer period of time and with a larger student population would help provide a different perspective on the effects of such instruction.

Collaborative graphic organizer task may allow new learning opportunities for pre-service teachers. Another study can be conducted with pre-service teachers in which they can either apply or participate in the collaborative graphic organizer tasks with ELLs. Such a study can explore the collaborative graphic organizer task with a focus on understanding pre-service teachers' knowledge on ELLs' second language use and alternative assessment tools, such as the collaborative graphic organizer task, for measuring ELLs' second language skills.

This study focused on students' collaborative construction of the task and their negotiation of meaning. In another study, students could be asked to design their own graphic organizers collaboratively (in pairs) using a variety of knowledge structures. In this way, students can create their own graphic organizers in meaningful forms. This type of creative co-construction may increase students' engagement with the task and provide further opportunities for engaging in academic conversations. The language

used during the collaborative tasks and the graphic organizers themselves can shed light into students' understandings of knowledge structures and into the language learning opportunities inherent in this task.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE STUDENT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER I



APPENDIX B
SAMPLE STUDENT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER II

YOUR NAME: **HYUN** YOUR PARTNER'S NAME: **MIGUEL**

COLLABORATIVE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER ACTIVITY –III–
STEP I : TEXT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

INSTRUCTIONS: Interview your partner and find out about the challenges s/he experienced when s/he came to the USA for the first time. Fill out the following graphic organizer with his/her answers.

SAMPLE CAUSE-AND-EFFECT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

EFFECT/RESULT

LIVING IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY/IN THE USA FOR THE FIRST TIME CAN BE CHALLENGING.

CAUSES/REASONS

✓ 1. language / difficult to have a conversation

2. weather / too hot

✓ 3. lonely / first time to live alone

4. boring weekend / There is nothing to enjoy.

✓ 5. transportation / It has no good public transportation system.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

APPENDIX C
COLLABORATIVE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER TASK WORKSHEETS–
COMPARISON/CONTRAST

Partner A	**Partner B**
Name:	**Name:**

COLLABORATIVE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER TASK –I-

COMPARISON-CONTRAST

STEP I: READING COMPREHENSION

Instructions:

1. Read the essay below and underline vocabulary items you are not familiar with.
2. Check your dictionary or/and ask your teacher to clarify the meaning of the new vocabulary.

THE WEATHER IN CHICAGO AND MIAMI*

People usually have very strong opinions about what **constitutes** good weather, and one person's idea of good weather may easily be another person's weather **nightmare**. **In fact**, my cousin and I recently had a discussion about whether his hometown, Chicago, or my hometown, Miami, has better weather. Our discussion **centered on** three differences between the weather in our two hometowns.

Our first point of discussion was the number of seasons. Chicago is located in the Midwestern part of the United States. It is also much **farther** north than Miami is. Chicago has four seasons: summer, fall, winter, and spring. These four seasons are clearly marked by **distinct** weather changes. Miami, on the other hand, is in the southeastern corner of the United States. Because it is much farther south, near the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. Miami is much warmer. Miami has two seasons: A very **mild** winter and a long summer.

We also considered the worst temperatures in both cities. The worst weather in Chicago occurs in winter. On average, the high temperature only reaches around 32 degrees and the low in each night goes down to about 20 degrees. In addition, frequent high winds drive the **perceived** temperature down even more. This combination of cold and wind, called the wind chill factor, can make life almost **unbearable** in Chicago during the Winter months. The problem in Miami is not the cold but rather the heat. In the summer, the temperature reaches 95 degrees in the daytime and **drops** only to 75 or so at night. Combined with a constant **humidity** of 90 percent or more, the temperature actually feels **significantly** warmer.

Finally, our two hometowns have different kinds of bad weather. Chicagoans' biggest weather fear is a **blizzard**. Blizzard can occur frequently during the frigid winter months. When a blizzard hits the city, it can **dump up to** five or six feet of snow in

certain areas. The cold and snow **paralyze** the city, making it impossible for people to go to school or work. While blizzards affect Chicago, the biggest weather problem for people in Miami is a **hurricane**. Hurricanes are possible from May through November. **While** hurricanes occur less frequently than blizzards, they can cause much more damage. For instance, Hurricane Andrew **destroyed** large parts of the city of Miami in 1992.

In the end, my cousin and I learned that each of our climates has its unique characteristics. Chicagoans have to live with extreme cold and frequent blizzards that can **upset** their **daily routines**. Conversely, Miami enjoys warm temperatures while having to **deal with** the **threat** of hurricanes. Deciding which is city has better weather proved to be more difficult than we **anticipated**. My cousin does not like hot weather, and I can't **stand** cold. Thus, we believe that the definition of perfect weather depends **largely** in each person's preference.

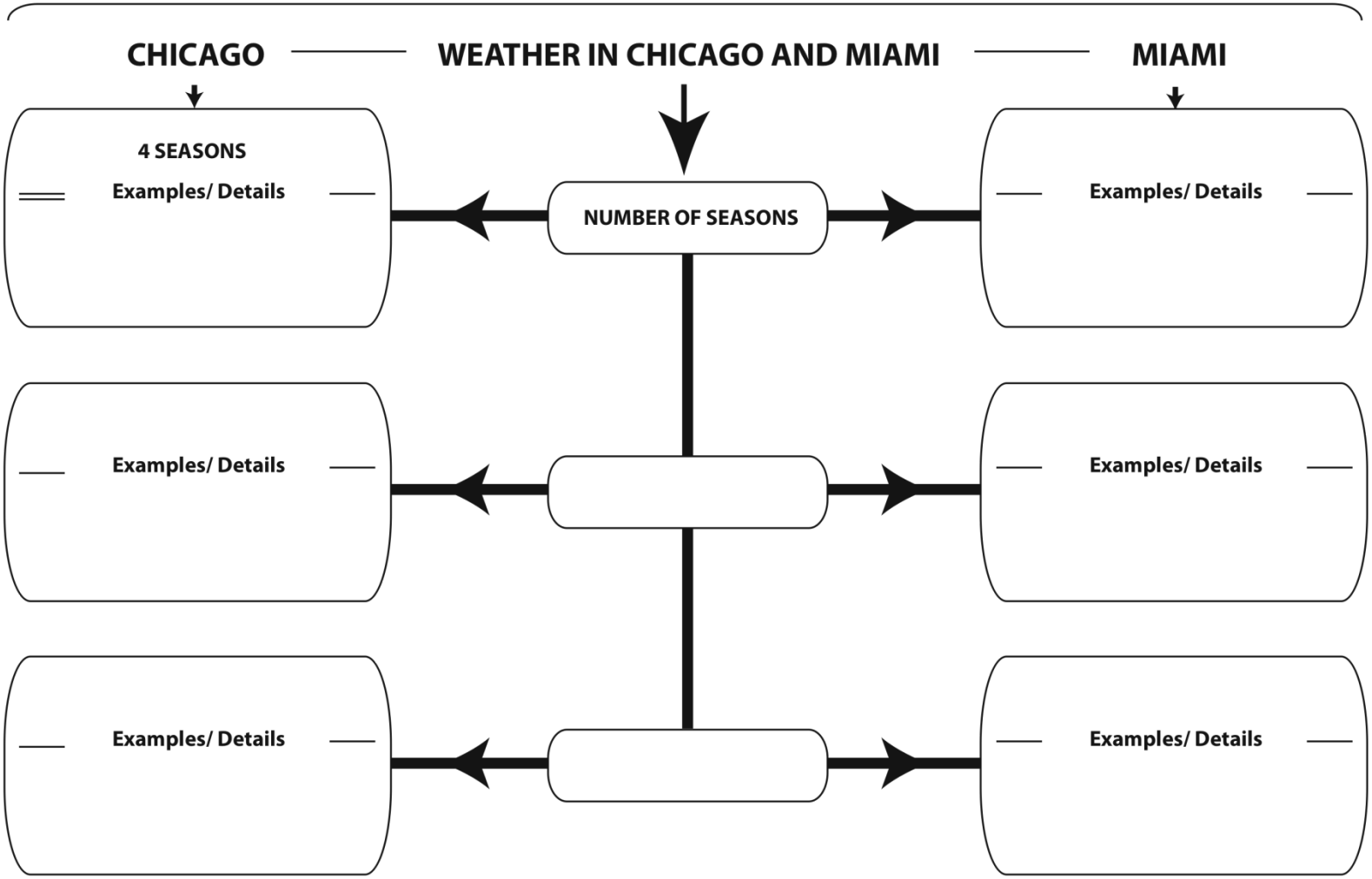
Constitutes: Equals, makes up	**Up to:** as much, as high as
Nightmare: a bad dream	**Paralyze:** Cause to be unable to move
In fact: really, truly, for example	**Hurricane:** A severe tropical storm marked by very strong winds and heavy rainfall
Centered on: focused on	**While:** although, though (shows contrast)
Farther: more distant (far – farther – the farthest)	**For instance:** for example
Distinct: clearly different	**Destroyed:** Completely ruined
Mild: not very hot and not very cold	**In the end:** the final result
Perceived: Felt by the senses	**Upset:** bother, force out of the usual position
Unbearable: cannot bear, cannot stand	**Daily routine:** what we do every day
Drops: goes down	**Deal with:** handle, cope with
Humidity: water in the air	**Threat:** a danger, a potential problem
Significantly: much, considerably	**Anticipated:** believed possible, expected
Blizzard: A severe winter storm marked by very strong winds and heavy snowfall	**Stand:** Tolerate, put up with
Dump: drop, usually in a pile	**Largely:** Mostly

* Adapted from *From great paragraphs to great essays* by Folse, Solomon, and Clabeaux.

YOUR NAME: YOUR PARTNER'S NAME:

STEP II: TEXT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS - SAMPLE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR COMPARISON-CONTRAST TEXTS

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the text on the first page. With your partner, fill out the following graphic organizer with information from the text. Present orally each of the three differences in sentences by using a connector.



Partner A Name:	Partner B Name:

COLLABORATIVE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER TASK –II-

COMPARISON-CONTRAST

STEP I: READING COMPREHENSION

Instructions:

3. Read the essay below and underline vocabulary items you are not familiar with.
4. Check your dictionary or/and ask your teacher to clarify the meaning of the new vocabulary.

THEORIES OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION*

The **preceding** *(following)* description has identified some of the clear properties of child language and caregiver speech during the **acquisition** *(learning)* process. The discussion **enables** *(helps)* us to list some of the phenomena that an adequate theory of language acquisition must **account for** *(explain).*

- Children are not good **conscious** *(aware)* imitators of grammar or phonology.
- Children create original **linguistic** *(language)* forms that are not present in their **linguistic environment** *(the place where they learn a language).*
- Children's **utterances** *(sayings)* are **rule-governed** *(based on rules).*
- Children's speech grows in **phonological** *(related with sound)* and grammatical complexity until it matches the speech of their community.
- Caregivers generally do not correct phonological and grammatical errors in children's developing English.
- Caregivers respond positively to children's attempts to communicate even though the utterances are often linguistically incorrect.

For the purpose of this introduction to early child language acquisition, we will distinguish two theories that seek to account for language acquisition. The first of these is the behaviorist theory, often referred to as the imitation-reinforcement theory, or I-R theory. It claims that children imitate what they hear; when they say something that is correct, they receive a reward from the caregiver (e.g., they are understood and perhaps **praised** *(rewarded)*, and the caregiver may do what they want). By **reinforcing** *(encouraging)* the connection in the child's mind between the utterance and the situation for which it was appropriate, the reward increases the **likelihood** *(possibility)* that the child will use this correct example of language again. Similarly, when children make a linguistic error, according to the theory, they receive a correction from their caregivers. This makes it more likely that the child will use the correct form in future utterances.

It seems clear that imitation and reinforcement are factors in language acquisition. Imitation explains why children brought up in an English speaking environment learn English as their native language, why Japanese children acquire Japanese, and so on. Reinforcement also plays a role, but probably a different one than behaviorist researchers once thought. If caregivers signal that they do not understand an utterance, for example, studies have established that children will attempt to change that utterance.

There are, however, a number of major **flaws** *(weaknesses, errors)* in the I-R theory, shortcomings that are serious enough to **invalidate** *(cancel)* its claim to be an adequate account of how a native language is acquired. First, many examples of early child language, including data presented in the preceding sections, show that children are not good imitators. They are, on the other hand, wonderful creators of original language forms, forms they could have never heard in their linguistic environment. An insistence on imitation as the major acquisition strategy makes the theory incapable of accounting for this obvious property of child language.

A second problem for the theory is the fact that the creativity, or originality, evident in child language is not **random** *(by chance)*. In fact, as we established earlier, it is systematic and rule-governed. However, there is nothing in the imitation-reinforcement theory that can account for this rule-governed creativity.

Third, **empirical research** *(scientific research with experiments, etc.)* has not confirmed the assumption that reinforcement plays the central role in language acquisition that behaviorist theories claim. From observing child-caregiver interaction, it is clear that caregivers rarely attempt to correct children's pronunciation and grammar. When such corrections do occur, as in the spoon conversation **cited** *(mentioned)* earlier, children appear unable or reluctant to repeat the model they are given.

The I-R theory, because it relies heavily on reinforcement, also has a problem accounting for the fact that children's grammar and phonology continue to develop. The example of the caregiver replying to the thirsty child shows that caregivers understand children's English and react positively to it even though it is far from perfect. According to the theory, successful outcomes like these provide positive reinforcement, which should cause children to stop trying to perfect their pronunciation and grammar. In actual practice, however, the **halt** *(stop)* in linguistic development predicted by the I-R theory does not occur. Instead, children continue developing their language and, as they do, their English increasingly **resembles** *(be similar)* the English of their environment.

A more recent theory offers a very different approach to language acquisition. The creative construction theory, or CC theory, focuses on the central and **crucial** *(important)* role of the child in the language acquisition process. It argues that humans are born with an **innate capacity** *(born with a talent)* for language in their environment. The innateness hypothesis, as it is called, explains why language, under normal circumstances, emerges at more or less the same time in all children. It also explains why all children, apparently with no special effort, **attain** *(gain)* a uniformly high level of ability in the spoken language of their environment during the first five years, in spite of a wide range of living conditions and intellectual abilities. Neither of these aspects of child language acquisition is addressed by the I-R theory.

Because of the innateness hypothesis, the CC theory can argue that children themselves make a massive contribution to the language acquisition process. Their innate capacity for language acquisition first enables them unconsciously to look for patterns in the language they hear. Then it enables them, again unconsciously, to **formulate rules** *(put together rules),* which they apply to the production of utterances. Finally it permits them gradually to add complexity

to these rules so that they increasingly resemble the rules of the adult speech in their environment.

By arguing that children use this innate ability to acquire language, CC theory can account for much of the data left unexplained by the I-R theory. It explains children's creativity – i.e., their use of forms they have never heard in mature English. It explains the rule-governed nature of children's language, which is revealed, for example, in the errors of **overgeneralization** *(making general conclusions for every case)* we have already seen – namely, the use of the –s and –d endings for irregular plurals and for the past tense of irregular verbs. It is also consistent with the fact that children continue to develop their language in spite of frequent **feedback** *(correction, response)* from caregivers that their imperfect English has been understood.

The CC theory, therefore, is generally a much more complete account of language acquisition than the I-R theory. However, there are many **crucial** *(important)* questions still to be answered before a fully adequate theory of language acquisition can be developed. Some of the questions focus on the child's contribution to the acquisition process. For example, what does the innate capacity of the human mind to learn language consist of? **To what extent** *(to what degree, level)* is it an ability that is designed **exclusively** *(totally)* to process language data? Other questions focus on the contribution of the environment. For example, are there any normal caregiver behaviors that can help or **hinder** *(prevent, make it difficult)* language acquisition?

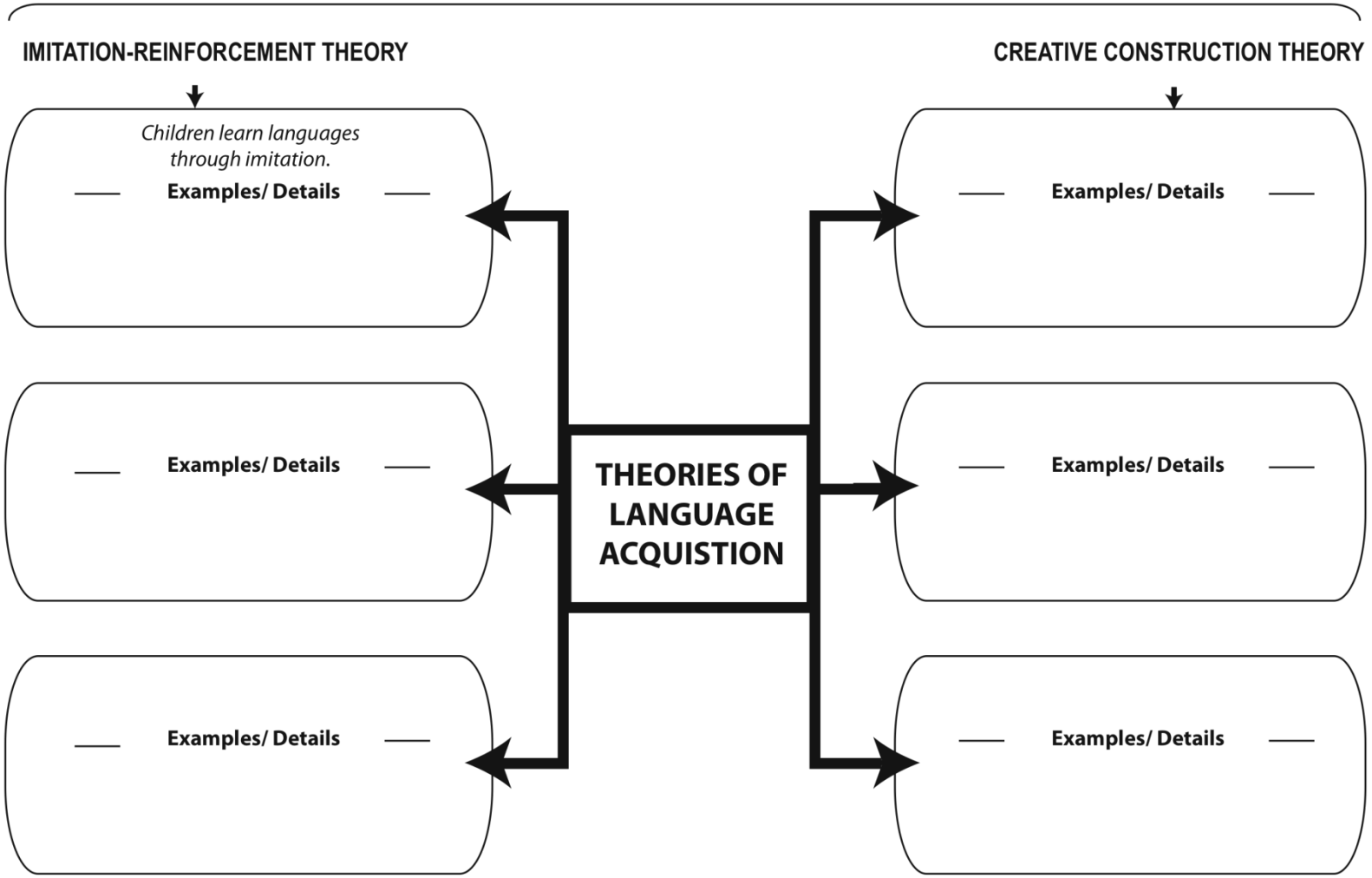
At present, language acquisition researchers are offering sometimes **conflicting** *(not matching or not agreeing)*, answers to such questions. At the same time, as more research is conducted all over the world, evidence is **accumulating** *(collecting)* that the language produced by children during the acquisition process contains a great deal of individual variation. To what extent does such variation reflect differences in children's acquisition processes? These and other unanswered questions make it clear that much of the process of first language acquisition remains to be unexplained.

* Adapted from *Making connections: A strategic approach to academic writing* by Pakenham.

YOUR NAME: **YOUR PARTNER'S NAME:**

STEP II: TEXT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS - SAMPLE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR COMPARISON-CONTRAST TEXTS

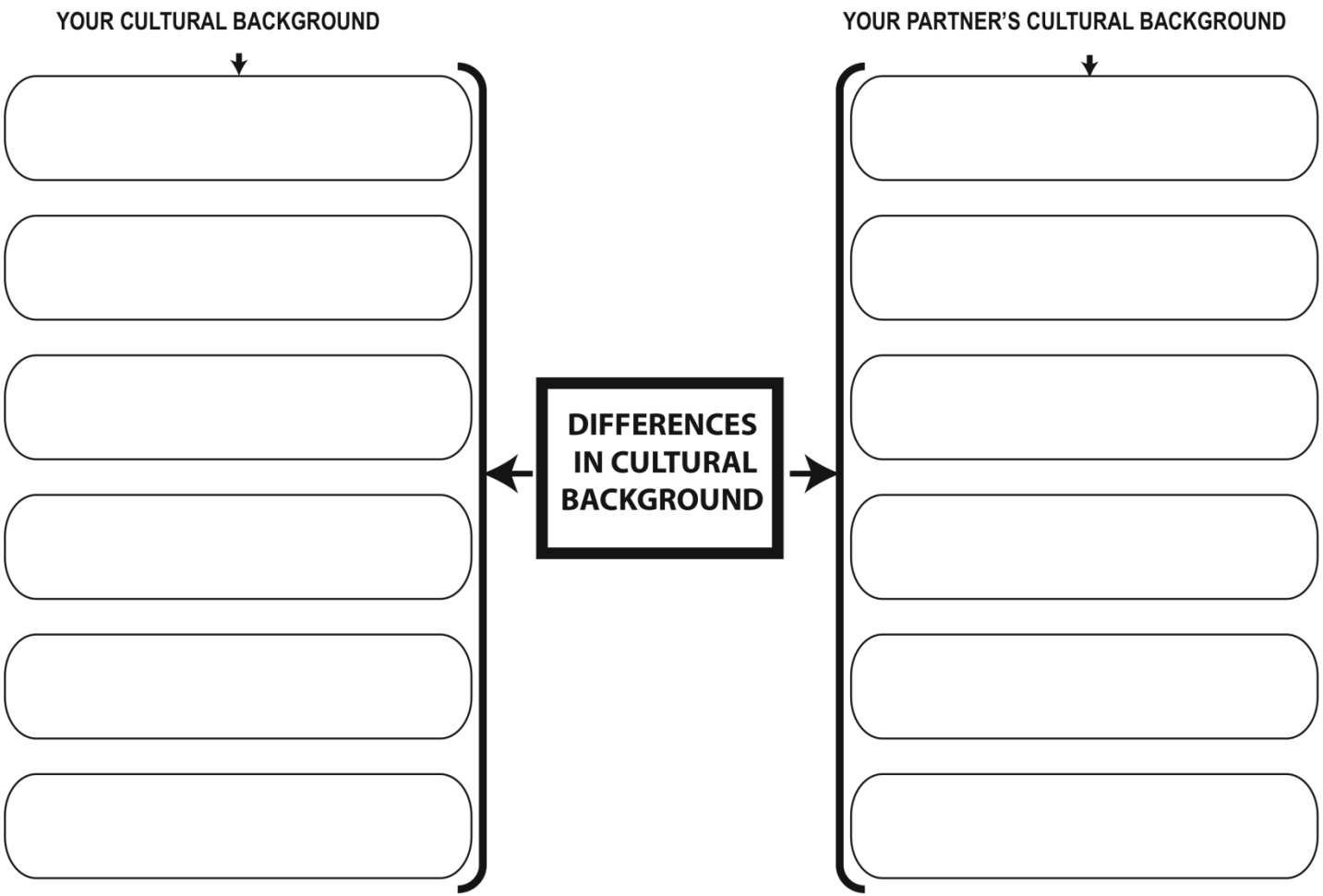
INSTRUCTIONS: Read the text on the first page. With your partner, fill out the following graphic organizer with information from the text. Present orally each of the three differences in sentences by using a connector.



YOUR NAME: **YOUR PARTNER'S NAME:**

COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY III- COMPARISON-CONTRAST TEXTS

STEP I : TEXT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS - With your partner, fill out the following graphic organizer listing all the cultural differences between your cultural background and your partner's cultural baackground. (Educational styles at school, rules in the family, favorite foods in the family, how holidays are celebrated, etc.)



STEP II: TEXT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS AND OUTLINING

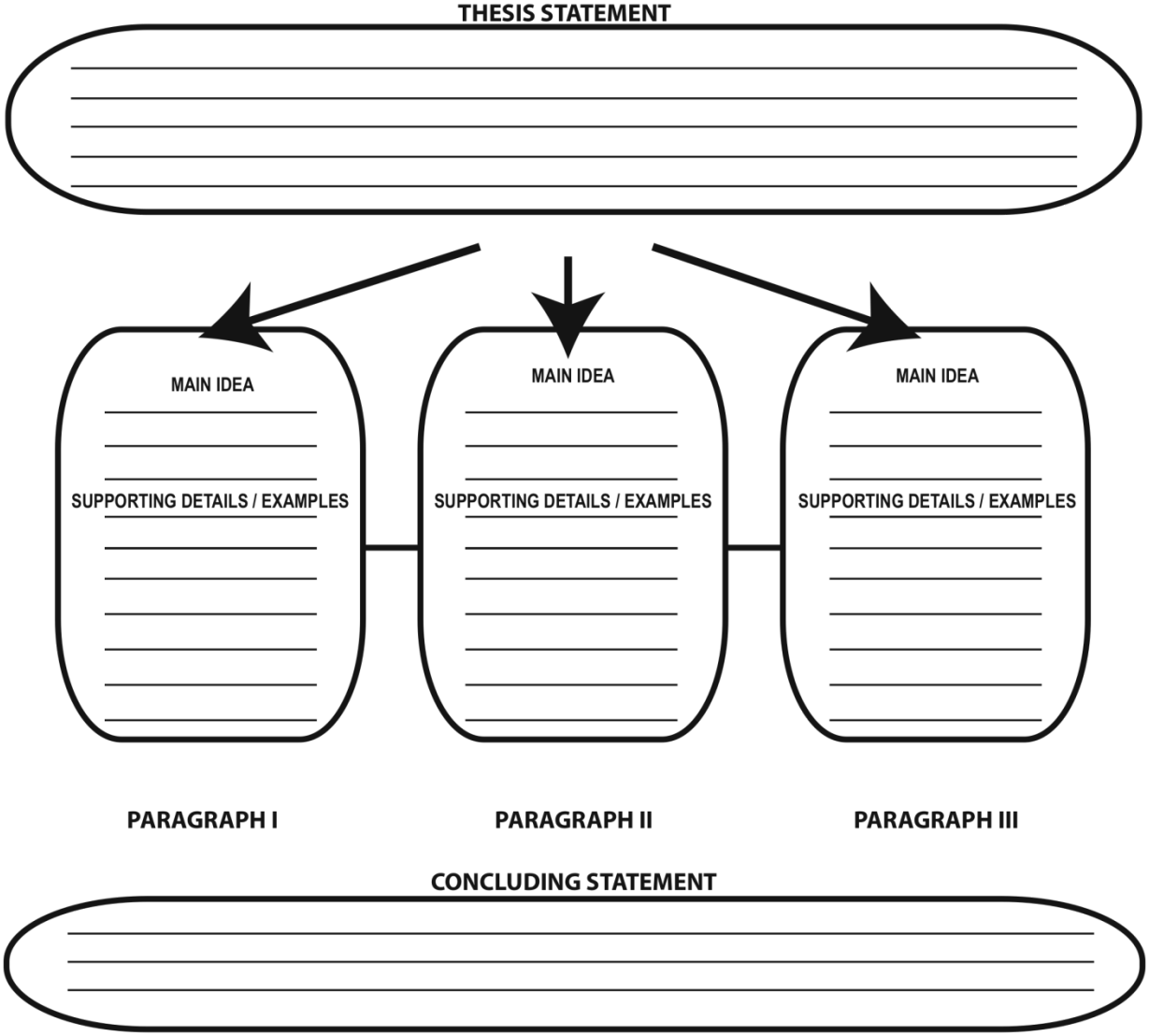
PARTNER A NAME: **PARTNER B NAME:**

INSTRUCTIONS: Select three of the aspects from the graphic organizer and ask your partner more questions about those three aspects. When talking with your partner, try to use at least 3 of the connectors/markers on your handout. Since you will write an essay on your own, try to get as much information from your partner as possible.

STRUCTURE OF A COMPARISON-CONTRAST ESSAY

TITLE:

THESIS STATEMENT



PARAGRAPH I **PARAGRAPH II** **PARAGRAPH III**

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

STEP III. WRITING YOUR ESSAY

Instructions: Finish your essay and bring it to class on the due date.

COLLABORATIVE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER TASK WORKSHEETS–
CAUSE AND EFFECT

STEP I: READING COMPREHENSION

Instructions:

5. Read the essay below and underline vocabulary items you are not familiar with.
6. Check your dictionary or/and ask your teacher to clarify the meaning of the new vocabulary.

CLINICAL DEPRESSION*

How many times have you heard the phrase "I am feeling depressed today"? People tend to use the term depression to refer to the normal ups and downs of daily life. In reality, depression is a serious illness. A clinically depressed person is in a constant state of sadness because of three main factors: genetics, substance abuse *(drug/alcohol misuse)*, or environment.

Perhaps the most common cause of depression is genetics. People who are born with low levels of serotonin and dopamine *(a chemical in the brain that controls happiness)* in their brains cannot experience pleasure in the same way that balanced people can. As a result, these people do not experience from normal happy events. They require extreme circumstances *(situations)* to experience the same level of happiness that a balanced person would experience from a lesser event. For example, a clinically depressed person might derive *(get)* less satisfaction from earning an "A" for a course than a balanced person would experience from earning an "A" for an individual assignment.

Another cause of depression is alcohol or drug abuse. When drugs enter the bloodstream *(the blood in your body),* they alter the brain's normal chemical balance. Afterward, people who use these chemical substances *(drugs, alcohol, etc.)* may experience short-term or long-term depression due to inadequate *(not enough)* levels of these chemicals. As a case in point *(for example)*, an alcoholic can develop depression because of the constant altering of the levels of

dopamine in his/her brain. Similarly, when a person uses cocaine, he or she experiences an intense, short-term “high” followed by an equally intense, short-term “low.”

Finally, environmental factors can trigger *(start, cause)* clinical depression. Failed relationships, such as a divorce or a falling out *(serious argument)* between family members, can leave a person in a state of depression in which the person is unable to handle himself or herself. Traumatic events, such as death of a family member or the witnessing of a murder, are environmental factors that can send a person into depression. Likewise, an abusive childhood often leads to bouts *(serious bouts)* of clinical depression as an adult.

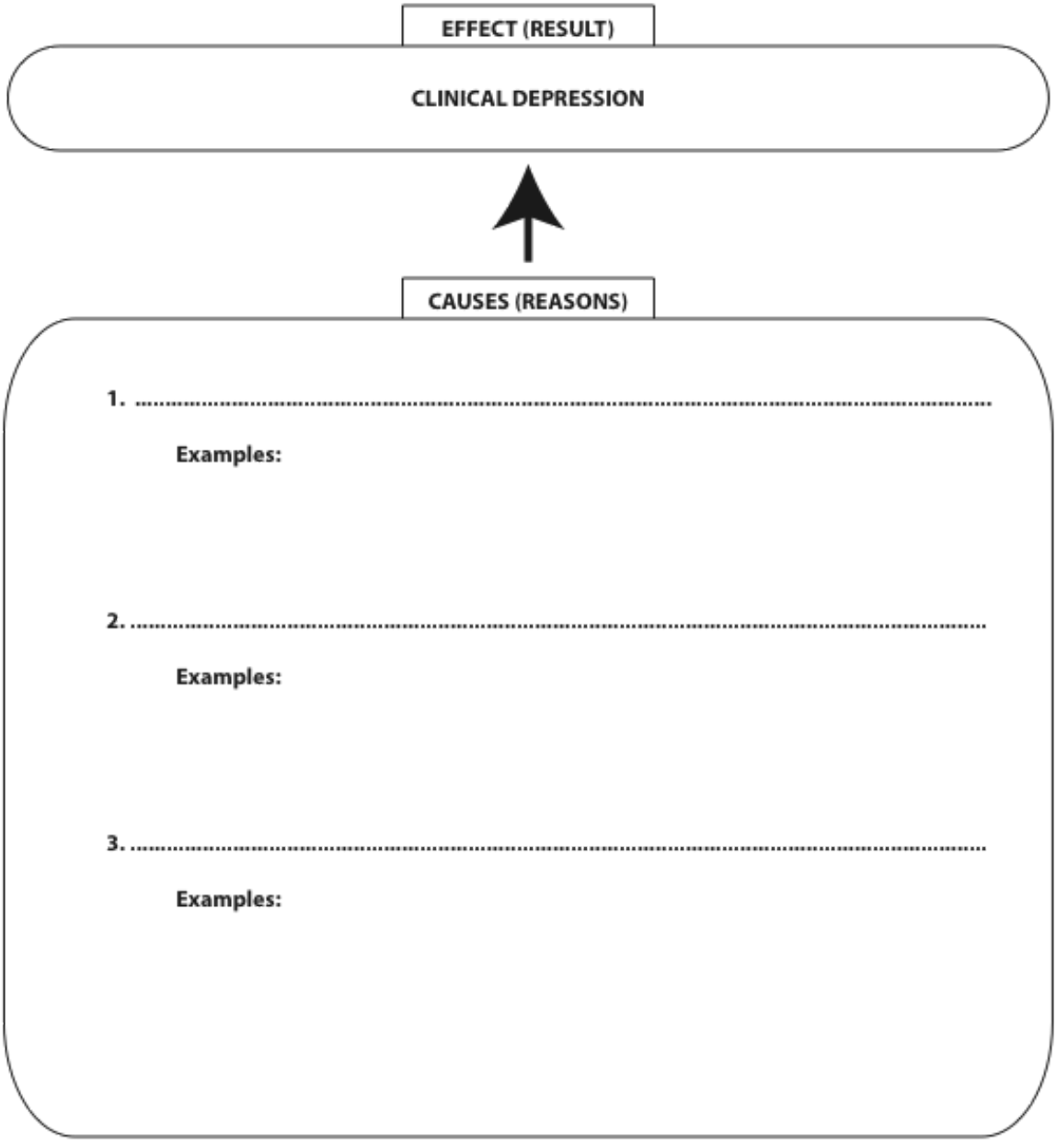
Depression can be caused by factors such as genetics, substance abuse, or environment *(surroundings)*. Regardless of its cause, depression is a serious illness that afflicts *(bother)* millions of people throughout the world. Fortunately, it can be treated through various forms of counseling *(therapy)* and/or modification, but for this to happen, it is essential that one be able to recognize the symptoms.

* Adapted from *From great paragraphs to great essays* by Folse, Solomon, and Clabeaux.

YOUR NAME: **YOUR PARTNER'S NAME:**

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the text on the first page. With your partner, fill out the following graphic organizer with information on the effects of watching televisionfrom the text.

SAMPLE CAUSE-AND-EFFECT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



Partner A Name:	Partner B Name:

CAUSE-AND-EFFECT

STEP I: READING COMPREHENSION

Instructions:

1. Read the essay below and underline vocabulary items you are not familiar with.
2. Check your dictionary or/and ask your teacher to clarify the meaning of the new vocabulary.

CHALLENGES OF DIVERSITY*

It would be a mistake to assume that cultural diversity is problem free. The truth is that immigration, as well as being of long-term benefit to U.S. society, has the potential to create its own immediate problems or to worsen existing ones. Immigration raises complex issues that must be considered and brings real challenges that must be addressed.

One of these issues is how to avoid the **unintended** *(unplanned)* consequences of admitting skilled and unskilled workers from overseas in order to satisfy the immediate demands of the country's economy. The United States has large numbers of people living in poverty because they are poorly educated, sometimes **illiterate** *(unable to read and write)*, and without marketable skills. **Resentment** *(anger)* among members of this group, sometimes called underclass, will increase as they watch immigrants achieve what they cannot – success and acceptance into mainstream society. This despair *(hopelessness)* and resentment can only hurt the nation.

A second problem results from the tendency of immigrants to settle **disproportionately** *(every where without any particular plan or order)* in a few areas of the United States. As a consequence of this tendency, the cost of providing services to immigrants falls

disproportionately on a limited number of communities. To cover the costs of providing the additional services, the local or state government in one or both of two ways: raise taxes and/or reduce the level of the services enjoyed by the community. Either response has the potential to create a negative reaction against immigrants. By 202, for example, citizens in three states had voted to end state and local funding for bilingual education, which serves mostly the children of first-generation immigrants.

A third problem is that the number of illegal immigrants into the United States has been growing since the late 1970s. By 2000, according to government **estimates** *(guesses)***,** there were 6 million illegal immigrants in the country and the number was increasing by 275,000 per year. The publicity given to **illegal** *(against the law)* immigration affects American p**erceptions** *(opinion)* of immigration. In a poll conducted in 2001, 53 percent of those responding mistakenly believed that most people entering the United States did so illegally. Such a belief must **inevitably** *(certainly)* affect public attitudes toward legal immigrants.

What these three problems have in common is their obvious potential to produce, in the native-born population, **hostility** *(anger)*, and resentment toward immigrants. In the past, such feelings have led to violence between native-born and foreign-born groups, especially in places where immigrant numbers were high and during times of economic **hardship** ***(difficulty).*** Violence between native-born Americans and immigrants, for example, broke out in New York City in the 1850s after a rapid increase in the Irish population of the city. Such reactions could occur again if we do nothing to address the circumstances that produce them.

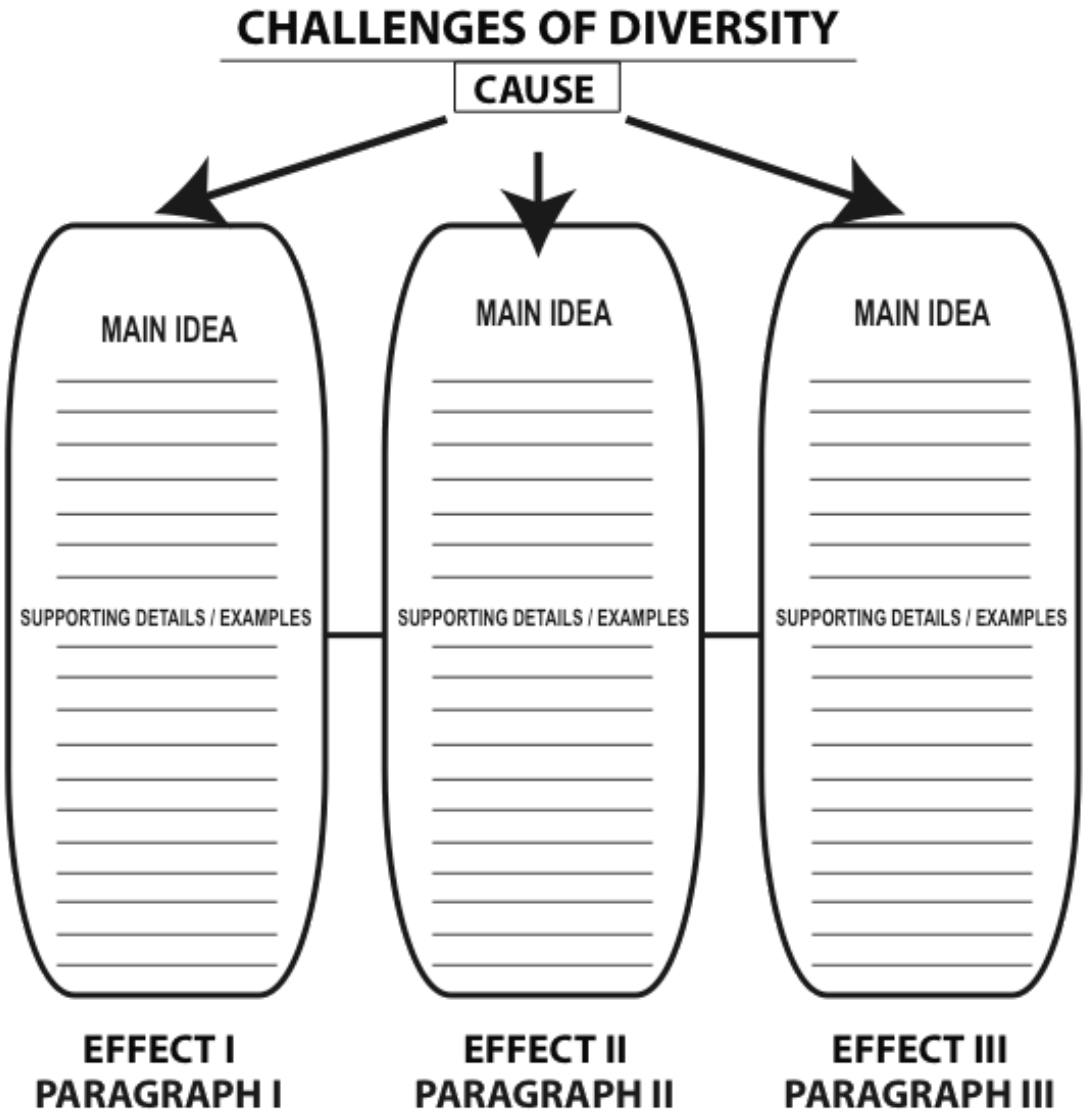
* Adapted from *Making connections: A strategic approach to academic writing* by Pakenham.

PARTNER A NAME: **PARTNER B NAME:**

STEP II : TEXT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

INSTRUCTIONS: The following figure presents thestructure of a basic cause-and-effect essay. Academic texts may not always follow this structure. For example, some texts may not have a regular thesis statement that introduces the main idea of each paragraph, they may involve more than 3 cause or effect ideas/paragraphs, and they may involve multiple discourse structures witin the same text, such as comparison-contrast and cause-and-effect.

Read section IV in your textbook. With your partner, fill out the following graphic organizer with information from the text. When talking with your partner, use 3 of the connectors/markers on your handout to express the casuses. Share the information on your graphic orgnaizer with the pair closest to you. Use connectors/markers in your talk.

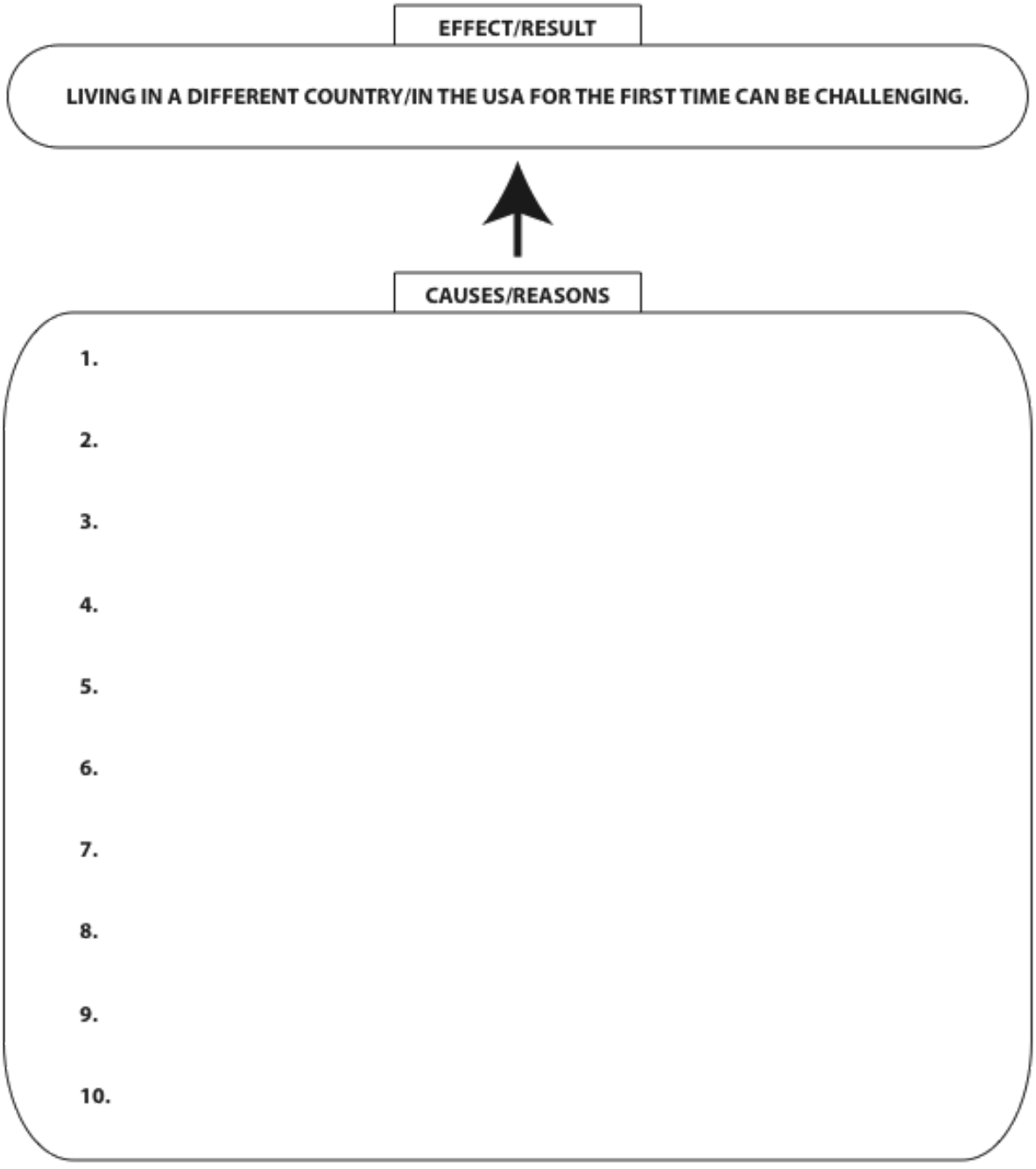


YOUR NAME: **YOUR PARTNER'S NAME:**

COLLABORATIVE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER ACTIVITY –III-
STEP I : TEXT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

INSTRUCTIONS: Interview your partner and find out about the challenges s/he experienced when s/he came to the USA for the first time. Fill out the following graphic organizer with his/her answers.

SAMPLE CAUSE-AND-EFFECT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



STEP II. TEXT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS AND OUTLINING

PARTNER A NAME: **PARTNER B NAME:**

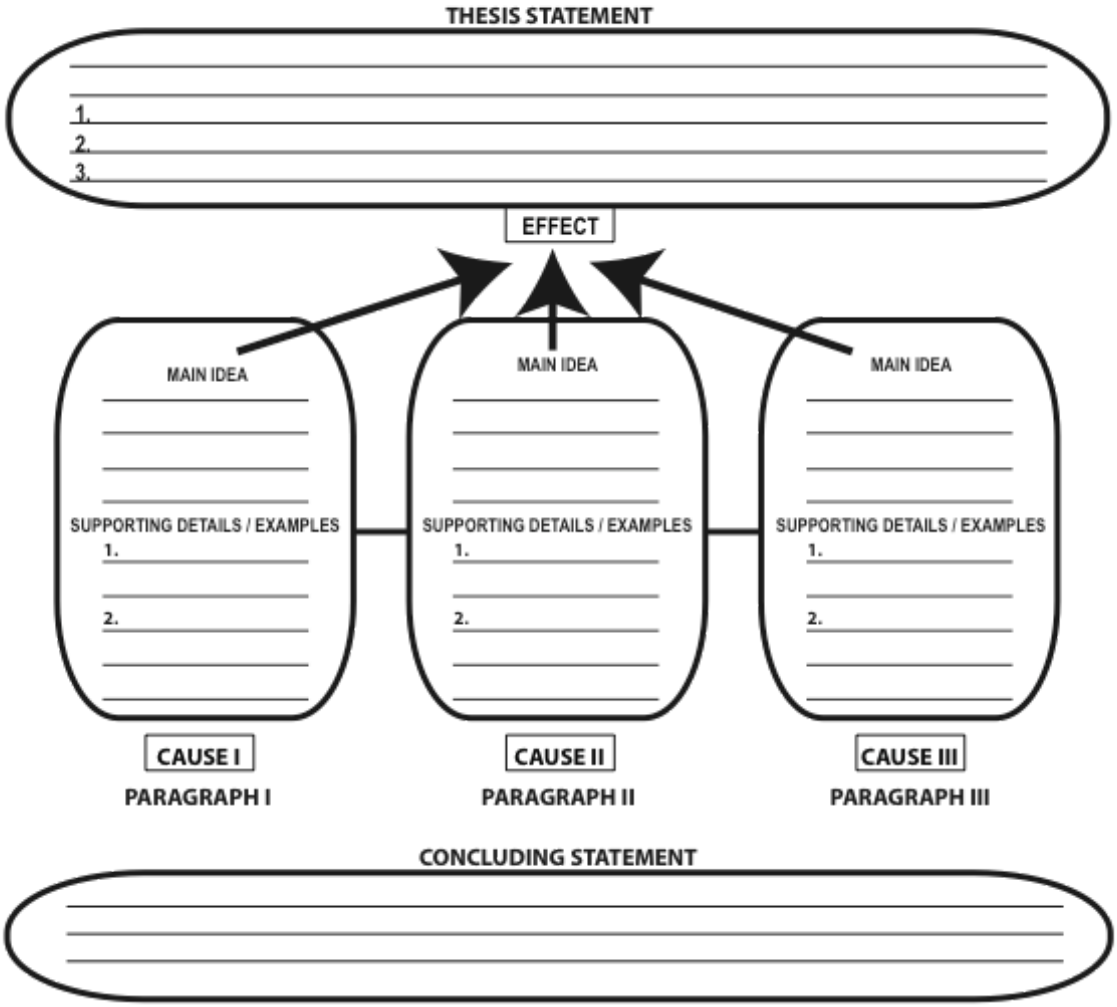
INSTRUCTIONS: The following figure presents the structure of a basic cause-and-effect essay. Academic texts may not always follow this structure. For example, some texts may not have a regular thesis statement that introduces the main idea of each paragraph, they may involve fewer or more than 3 cause or effect ideas/paragraphs, and they may involve multiple discourse structures witin the same text, such as comparison-contrast and cause-and-effect.

In this task, you will fill out the following graphic organizer by interviewing your partner about his/her challenges of living in a different country for the first time such as their experiences in the USA. Each person will fill out the graphic organizer with information about his/her partner. When talking with your partner, use 3 of the connectors/markers on your handout to express the casuses. Share the information on your graphic orgnaizer with the pair closest to you. Use connectors/markers in your talk.

STRUCTURE OF A CAUSE-AND-EFFECT ESSAY

TITLE:

..... CHALLENGES OF LIVING IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY FOR THE FIRST TIME .....



STEP III. WRITING YOUR ESSAY

Instructions: Finish your essay and bring it to class on the due date.

APPENDIX D
TRANSCRIPT SYMBOLS

Symbol	Meaning	Example
(.)	Pause	A: I think that (.) it's possible
…	End of an incomplete statement	B: No, I haven't um…
[ ]	Words/phrases spoken at the same time	A: Finding a place to stay was very difficult because [I didn't have a car. B: I thought] somebody helped you.
[---]	Illegible	A: I was counting [---]
[?]	Transcriber's uncertainty of the transcribed word	B: Where's Joshua [Joshua?]
{}	Transcriber's descriptions of events, including non-vocal conduct	A: I see. {A is taking notes on the paper.} B: I know what you mean {Laughter}
?	A question	A: Is it cold in your country?
.	A complete statement	A: I have always wanted to visit Taiwan.

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about discourse structures such as comparison-contrast and cause-and-effect?
2. Did you study discourse structures before this class? If so, please describe how the teacher presented discourse structures.
3. Have you used graphic organizers before this task? If so, how?
4. Have you participated in group/pair work before this task? If so, how?
5. Describe how you used the graphic organizers during the task?
6. Has the paired graphic organizer task helped your written English proficiency? If so, how?
7. Has the paired graphic organizer task helped your spoken English proficiency? If so, how?
8. What aspect of the paired graphic organizer task did you like the most? Why?
9. What are some aspects of the paired graphic organizer task that you like the least? Why?
10. How would you improve this paired graphic organizer task so that it improves your English learning more?
11. What are the benefits of graphic organizers for language learning?
12. Do you have anything else that you would like to share about graphic organizers and pair/group work?

APPENDIX F
SAMPLE DATA ANALYSIS CHARTS

	Sociocultural-Identity Building	
Ayumi and Dawud 6/12/2009	**Interactional Roles**	**Academic Language Functions**
(1) A: How do you get Arabic food? Arabic store is in Gainesville?	Initiator	Asking for information, asking for confirmation
(2) D: *In Tampa. There is one in Tampa. In Tampa, there is an Arab store, but I haven't been there.*	Topic expander	Giving information, describing characteristic
(3) A: But what do you get at the Arabic store?	Inquirer/	Asking for further information
(4) D: *We buy rice.*	Responder	Giving information
(5) A: Rice?	Inquirer	Asking for confirmation
(6) D: *Yeah. From Publix or from….*	Confirmer	Giving confirmation
(7) A: But different yeah?	Inquirer	Asking for confirmation
(8) D*: But if you go to Indian Bazaar.*	Topic expander	Giving further information, describing a process
(9) A: Indian Bazaar, yeah yeah, I know Indian Bazaar.	Topic expander	Giving further information
(10) D: *Similar, in Indian Bazaar, there is rice, the kind of rice, not the best but the rice.*	Confirmer	Giving confirmation, providing an example
(11) A: A little bit different?	Inquirer	Asking for further information, asking for confirmation
(12) D: *This kind of rice, we use it in Saudi Arabia.*	Topic expander	Giving information, describing characteristics
(13) A: Huh?	Inquirer	Asking for further information
(14) D: *This kind of rice in the bazaar, we use it in Saudi Arabia, and it's OK. There is rice, and it is called Indian Gait. Indian Gait (.) the brown this rice.*	Topic expander	Giving information, describing characteristic, comparing/contrasting
(15) A: Similar?	Inquirer	Asking for further information
(16) D: *This one we have the same in Saudi Arabia.*	Topic expander	Giving information
(17) A: Same? (Laughing)	Inquirer	Asking for confirmation
(18) D: *Yeah, but it's not this one I like.*	Finalizer	Giving information, showing preference

Hyun and Miguel 6/5/2009	**Sociocultural-Identity Building**	
Language	**Interactional Role**	**Academic Language Function**
(1) M: *What religion are you from?*	Initiator	Asking for information
(2) H: What?	Inquirer	Asking for clarification
(3) M: *(.) What is your religion?*	Inquirer/Clarifier	Asking for information, giving clarification
(4) H: No religion.	Responder	Giving information
(5) M: *How about your family? (.) Do they have a religion?*	Inquirer	Asking for further information
(6) H: *Yeah (.) my family have religions, but my father's different (.) my father's Buddhism and my mother is Catholic.*	Topic expander	Giving further information, describing characteristics, comparing/contrasting
(7) M: Yeah, I am Catholic too.	Topic expander	Giving confirmation, giving further information
(**8) H:** *OK, I am going to tell you, in Korea, the most religion that people believe is Catholic and Buddhist, [these two.*	Topic expander	Describing quantities, describing characteristics
(9) M: *Catholic and Buddhist?]*	Inquirer	Asking for confirmation
(10) H: Yeah.	Confirmer	Giving confirmation
(11) M: *In my country, there are other religion, but the majority, the big religion in my country is Catholic, maybe you can find not too much people from other religion.*	Finalizer	Giving information, describing, characteristics, comparing/contrasting, describing quantity

Roberto and Akram 6/5/2009	Sociocultural Identity Building	
Language	**Interactional Role**	**Academic Language Function**
(1) R: *Culture. What can we talk about? What can we talk about? Maybe (.) marriage.*	Initiator	Proposing an idea
(2) A: Marriage (.) in our society (.) it is separate. Weddings are separate.	Topic Expander	Proposing an idea
(3) R: *Wedding separate?*	Inquirer	Asking for conformation
(4) A: Yes (.) women alone, men alone.	Topic expander	Giving confirmation, Giving further information
(5) R: *How are they separate?*	Inquirer	Asking for further information
(6) A: There is a party for women (.) and there is a party for men.	Topic expander	Giving further information
(7) R: *Oh really (.) no party together? Society (.) it is about schools and marriage.*	Inquirer, Topic switcher	Asking for confirmation
(8) A: Wedding, wedding separate (.) but just the groom come to the women party.	Reorienter	Giving further information
(9) R: *Are they separated?*	Inquirer	Asking for confirmation
(10) A: Yeah, just the groom come to take his wife (.) so he come with just his father or brother. They pick up his wife (.) and then "Go home! Go home!"	Topic expander	Giving confirmation, giving further information, Describing characteristics, giving an example
(11) R: *Wedding separate.*	Repharaser	Giving further information
(12) A: Yeah (.) separate.	Topic expander	Giving confirmation
(13) R: *Separate celebrations.*	Finalizer	Giving confirmation, giving information

Data Analysis of students' conversations –
Sample data spreadsheets for semiotic building

	Hyun and Miguel - Comparison/Contrast 6/5/2009	Semiotic Building	
	Interactions	Content words	Function words
1	**(1) M:** *What religion are you*		
2	*from?*	(1) M: Religion	(6) H: Connector: but
3	**(2) H:** What?	(5) M: Family's religion	(8) M: Relative clauses
4	**(3) M:** *(.) What is your*	(6) H: Father, mother,	(11) M: Connector: but
5	*religion?*	Buddhist, Catholic	
6	**(4) H:** No religion.	(8) H: Most popular	
7	**(5) M:** *How about your*	religions in Korea,	
8	*family? (.) Do they have a*	Catholic, Buddhist	
9	*religion?*	(11) M: Multiple religions	
10	**(6) H:** *Yeah (.) my family have*	in Venezuela, majority	
11	*religions, but my father's*	Catholic	
12	*different (.) my father's*		
13	*Buddhism and my mother is*		
14	*Catholic.*		
15	**(7) M:** Yeah, I am Catholic		
16	too.		
17	(**8) H:** *OK, I am going to tell*		
18	*you, in Korea, the most*		
19	*religion that people believe is*		
20	*Catholic and Buddhist, [these*		
21	*two.*		
22	**(9) M:** *Catholic and*		
23	*Buddhist?]*		
24	**(10) H:** Yeah.		
25	**(11) M:** *In my country, there*		
26	*are other religion, but the*		
27	*majority, the big religion in my*		
28	*country is Catholic, maybe*		
29	*you can find not too much*		
30	*people from other religion.*		
31			
32			
33			
34			
35			
36			
37			
38			
39			

	Ayumi – Dawud (Cause and Effect) 6/12/2009	Semiotic Analysis	
	Interactions	Content words	Function words
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45	**(1) A:** If you are going for? How do you across the road (.) how to across the road (.) I don't know (.) we have signal over there on the 13th Street (.) I don't know (.) architecture (.) we have to across the road (.) thirteen street (.) thirteen street (.) I don't know (.) architecture (.) we have to across the road (.) Norman Hall to architecture (.) and then we have to across the road (.) across the road. (**2) D:** *Cross the road?* **(3) A:** Yeah (.) yeah (.) across the road (.) but I didn't know how to across the road. **(4) D:** *Ohh (.) OK.* **(5) A:** Because the signal is not automatical (.) you have to push the button (.) and then yeah (.) because in Japan everywhere is automatical (.) here you have to push the button. **(6) D:** *Everything automatic in Japan (.) yeah yeah. (.) I know it.* **(7) A:** So I didn't know that. **(8) D:** *How it's automatic when you want to cross the road?* **(9) A:** I didn't know it. **(10) D:** *Here?* **(11) A:** Here. Yeah (.) yeah (.) yeah. Only automatical and if the signal is blue (.) you can go. **(12) D:** *Green (.) green.* **(13) A:** Yeah (.) green green. And here. Here you press the button (.) and it is flashing and you say oooh I can't go there.	*(1) A: go, across the road, signal, 13th street, architecture, Norman Hall* (2) D: Cross, road (3) A: Across , road (4) D: OK (5) A: Signal, automatical, push, button, Japan, automatic (6) D: everything, automatic, Japan (7) A: Not know (8) D: Automatic, want, cross, road (9) A: Not know (10) D: Here (11) A: Here, only, automatical, signal, blue (12) D: Green (13) A: Green, here, press, button, flash, not go	(1) A: If, how, have to, then (2) D: the (3) A: but, how (4) (5) A: Because, have to, then (6) D: In (7) didn't, that (8) how, when (9) didn't (10) Here (11) only, if, and (12) (13)and, here, can't

	Roberto – Akram (Comparison/Contrast) 6/5/2009	Semiotic Analysis	
	Interactions	Content words	Function words
1 2 3 4	**(1) R:** *Culture. What can we talk about? What can we talk about? Maybe (.) marriage.*	Culture, marriage	What, can, we, about, maybe
5 6 7 8	**(2) A:** Marriage (.) in our society (.) it is separate. Weddings are separate.	Marriage, society, wedding, separate	In, our, it, is, are
9 10	**(3) R:** *Wedding separate?*	Wedding, separate	
11 12 13	**(4) A:** Yes (.) women alone, men alone.	Women, men, alone	Yes
14 15 16	**(5) R:** *How are they separate?*	Separate	How, are, they
17 18 19 20	**(6) A:** There is a party for women (.) and there is a party for men.	Party, women, men	There, is, a, for, and
21 22 23 24	**(7) R:** *Oh really (.) no party together? Society (.) it is about schools and marriage.*	Really, party, society, school ma rriage	No, together, it, is, about
25 26 27 28	**(8) A:** Wedding, wedding separate (.) but just the groom come to the women party.	Wedding, separate, groom, come, party	But, just, the, to
29 30 31	**(9) R:** *Are they separated?*	Separated	Are, they
32 33 34 35 36 37 38	**(10) A:** Yeah, just the groom come to take his wife (.) so he come with just his father or brother. They pick up his wife (.) and [then "Go home! Go home!"	Groom, come, wife, father, brother, pick up, go, home	Just, the, to, so, he, with, his, or, they, his, and, then
39 40	**(11) R:** *Wedding separate.*]	Wedding, separate	
41 42	**(12) A:** Yeah (.) separate.	Separate	
43	**(13) R:** *Separate celebrations.*	Separate, celebrations	

APPENDIX G
STUDENTS' TRANSCRIBED WRITING SAMPLES

AKRAM: CAUSE AND EFFECT

LIVING OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Studing overseas could be hard sometimes. It's a new challenge for everyone who venture this step. Some people can endure all the defaculties that occurs. While others cannot. It's usually depend how much intention and time person has to live away from everything he knows and used to do regelurly. One of those is Michael. He is now study in the United State. There had some problems that he encountred while studying in the US, the food, communication with other native speakers and being away from his family and friends.

Usually food is a major problem that persons have to deal with while living in a foreign country, especially if it comes to men, because men usually don't know how to cook for example, Michael. He has to cook by himself while doesn't cook very well. It's a time-consuming, he spend a lot of time cooking and cleaning after it and that is taken from his study time.

Maybe the hardest thing anyone could encounter is communication with other native speakers. Using different language to speak and listen sometime is hard especially when doing important things like asking for information, things that deal with money, housing and immigration regelations. Sometime Michael can't express his feeling well or what he wants. He gets frustrated when they (native speakers) don't understand him. It's really though but as a result, he is learning by the time goes by.

Being away from family and friends is always the biggest challenge anyone may have to deal with. Missing your beloved once and your backlade could be difficult. Therefore, a person has to learn how to depend on himself, which is a good thing. In Michael's case, he misses hanging out with family and friends. As a consequence, he has to meet with new people and friends.

In conclusion, living outside of your comfort zone is something that everybody have to experience it. Dispite its defecalties, but is comes back to the person with great benefits, as a result of his hard life.

AYUMI: CAUSE AND EFFECT

CHALLENGES OF LIVING IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY FOR THE FIRST TIME

Different country has different culture to own country. So it is difficult that foreign come to the U.S. and foreigners have to follow the U.S. culture, habit, and rule. Dawud also had some uncomfortable thing when he came here. He is from Saudi Arabia, so they have different language, transportation, religion, and foods. He has to follow the U.S. culture until he leaves the U.S. Now he lives in the U.S. for about three months, so his feeling is better than he came here soon.

The car is the main transportation in Saudi Arabia. In Gainesville, however, the car and the bus are the main transportation. When he came here soon, he didn't have a car. So, his feeling was bad because he had to take the bus and had to wait for the bus. The car is very convenient because he doesn't need to wait for the bus. And then he sometimes rented the car.

He felt bad hat he didn't have a car, so he decided to but a car. But, now the U.S. economic is bad, so when he bought a car, his dealer was mean. His dealer went up the car price, because he is foreigner and he is rich. And then he gave up his favorite car and he bought a cheap car. He couldn't discount the car price.

It is difficult that find the Arabic foods. There aren't many Arabic in Gainesville, so he couldn't find Arabic foods. Now, he get Arabic foods in Indian market, because Indian foods and Arabic foods are similar, and Indian market has some Arabic foods.

It is difficult that foreigner accept own country culture and habit in the other country. But now, in the world is progressing the diversity, so we who are Japanese and Saudi can enjoy our life style that are own country life style in the other country. When we came here soon, we couldn't accept our life style because we didn't know anything. We spent more than one month in Gainesville, so we can accept our life style here. It is difficult that our lifestyle accept own country life style, but we can make our country life style in the other county.

DAWUD

MY PARTNER'S CULTURE AND MY CULTURE

This world is rich of various culture. There are differences in culture between east and west. Each country has own culture. In fact, I have a friend from Japan and we talked about our culture. Are they similar or not. We talked about our culture in three major: food, clothes, and marriage.

Our first debate is food in our countries. Rice is important, it is common in both country. In Saudi Arabia we have rice only on lunch. However, they have rice in Japan in every meal, even in breakfast. Food in Saudi Arabia based on rice with meat or chicken is called Kabsa. There are also Jeresh, Margog and Gorson. And Saudis do not eat pork or drink alcohol. Japan, on the other hadn, has a variety of dishes. They use rice almost with every meal. And they have sushi the most popular dish, also they have domburi and wasabi. In addition, Japanese can eat pork and drink alcohol.

We also have different clothes. In Saudi Aabia, men wear thoub with shomagh. But women wear black cloth it called Abayah. It's just for outdoor. However, in Japan, they have kimono. It is very formal and it is worn by men and women.

Finally, marriage in both countries is different. In Saudi Arabia, there is no specific age to get married. Also, Saudis can get married from any of their relatives except their families. In addition, men can get married of more than one women. Otherwise, in Japan, there are specific age to get married. Guys suppose to be above 18 years old and girl above 16 yars old. Also, in Japan people related by blood cannot get married.

In the end, there are big differences between Saudi Arabia and Japan. Our cultures are different, food, clothes and marriage. I believe that difference make our live enjoyable.

HYUN

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Even though I and my partner Miguel are studying in same place, eating same food, wearing same clothes and enjoying same thing, there are many differences in cultural background between Korea and Venezuela.

First, our religions differ in main belief in each country. Majority of Korean usualls believe in Christian, Catholic, and Buddhism. Of course, our origin religion is Buddhism, but as time passes on, the rate of people who believe in God has been increased. And usually Christians go to church, catholic go to Cathedral and Buddhists go to the temple to pray. On the other hadn, almost every Venezuelan believe in Catholic and they usually go to church for praying. And alos their religion is Catholic. But Catholic usually go to church to pray differently from Catholic in Korea. Therefore, Korean believe in more kinds of religion than Venzuelan.

Second difference is the main food. In Korean, we usually cook rice every meal. Rice is our traditional food and various kinds of dishes are served with rice such as meat, fish, kimchi, etc. However, Venezuelan's main food is Arepa, which is mad eof corn. When they eat arepa, they cut it in half and put various sorts of food such as pork, beef, and vegetable in between each cut. As a result, we are same when adding many kinds of food when eating, but our main food is totally different.

Third, the place of celebration is different. Korean usually hold a celebration inside like wedding in wedding hall, concert in concert hall and birthday party in karaoke. But in Venezuela, they hold concert, wedding, and every kinds of party at the beach.

In conclusion, we are doing many common things as a human, however, there are a lot of differences in cultural background between Korea and Venezuela such as religion, main food and place of celebration. If we accept each cultural difference, it is going to be helpful for development of each culture. And as the culture develops, we can create various kinds of advanced culture.

MIGUEL

WHEN MY PARTNER CAME TO U.S.

The difficult things for a Korean guy in the United States. Living outside your country is not easy. For my partner, it was difficult too, he had problems for his English, the American food, also, with the weather.

Everybody know how difficult it is the first contact with others language. My partners had the same problems when he came to the United States, he could not speak and understand when somebody talked or spoke with him. The communication problems make you feel lonely in others country.

Others problems for my partner was the food. The Asian food, it's very different. As a result he had food problems, he gain weight. He said the serving are very biggest than Korea.

Also, the Florida weather is very hot for him. As you know, we're in summer now. The summer in Florida is very hot and humidity more than Korea.

For any partner learn English was difficult, but learn and living outside your country, it's always difficult.

ROBERTO

CHALLENGES OF LIVING IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY

Going abroad to study, work, and to live can be hard sometimes at begin or during the first month, but as a result of be strong and keeping in the new country can be successful and get a new and better life.

In the case of my partner, he has to get used to somethings like to cook, get used to transportation and get used to the weather.

He doesn't know how to cook, as a consequence of that, he has to buy fast food or eat only eggs at home.

The second thing is he doesn't have a car, consequently, he depend on the bus to go any where and the bus schedule is not good at all. He has to wait for long period to go out at night and weekend.

The third thing is the weather, he is get used to the hot weather, but in Gainesville, very cold sometimes, and it is hard for him to go out, because in his country there is only one season all year, hot.

My partner wants to study at UF, but first he is getting used to three important things and then finally he can be very happy and glad of to be in Gainesville.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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