

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the kinds of the use of DMs employed by forty six EFL Indonesian and Thai students in their argumentative writing at an Indonesian university and a Thai university based on the taxonomy adapted from Halliday and Hasan's (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) taxonomies. Then, with these data, the study aimed to compare and contrast the use of DMs by both groups in terms of its nature and problems. Finally, this present study was also aimed to find out whether both groups employed DMs in their argumentative writing appropriately.

Chapter Three explains all procedures employed in this study. It contains the information about research participants, framework for analysis, and data collection and data analysis.

#### **Participants**

Forty six students were employed as the participants of this study. They were the third-year English-majored students coming from an Indonesian university and a Thai university. In each university, the English program recently consisted of two classes which had fifty eight students (for the Indonesian university) and fifty three students (for the Thai university) as the total amount. Two Indonesian classes were Class A (twenty three students) and Class B (thirty five students), while the Thai ones were Section 1 (twenty three students) and Section 2 (thirty students).

On the basis of convenience sampling, the participants of this study were two groups of English students which were from each university. As its name implies, convenience sampling involves surveying individuals who are readily available and that the researcher has access to (Paltridge and Phakiti, 2010). In other words, this sampling technique was done by accessing some available groups of students for the research purpose. For instance, convenience sampling technique used in some studies on writing found from primary level students (Aminloo, 2013; Kusdemir Kayiran and

Karabay, 2012) to tertiary level students (Mustaque, 2014; Heldsinger and Humphry, 2013). The participants of this present study were selected by considering their English proficiency and the courses they had taken. First, regarding the English proficiency, a standardized English proficiency test was administered to find out which groups had equal results. Then, the test results of these four groups were compared to get the average score (mean) achieved from each class. Finally, among four English classes, two classes had been selected representing two groups of participants which have equal English proficiency level. Finally, each group consisted of twenty three students.

Another consideration in selecting the participants was the previous English writing courses they had taken. As mentioned earlier, they had passed some English writing classes. Therefore, it was assumed that they had been exposed to formal writing instruction in class and had attained the level of proficiency high enough to produce extensive and meaningful compositions for the analysis of their use of DMs. In regard to the English writing courses, Thai students have already taken *Basic Writing*, *Paragraph Writing*, and *Essay Writing* courses. Similarly, Indonesian students also have passed several courses such as *Sentence Writing*, *Paragraph Writing*, *Composition*, *Essay Writing*. Finally, in conducting the data collection, an informed consent form was distributed to the students to ask their permission in using their writing for the research purpose. The cover letter was inserted in the Appendix A.

### Framework for Analysis

Halliday and Hasan's (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) taxonomies were used to analyze the compositions.

**1. Addition:** adding information to what comes before and showing information as parallel to preceding information. For instances:

and, furthermore, moreover, in addition, additionally, similarly, that is, in other words, for example, by the way, I mean, to put it another way, for instance, to illustrate, also, nor, likewise, in a different way, in the same manner

**2. Concession and Contrast:** introducing information that is somewhat surprising or unexpected in light of previous information; linking information that is viewed as straight contrast. For instances:



but, yet, though, however, while, on the other hand, on the contrary, in fact, actually, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the other hand, apart from that, except for that, or (else), alternatively

**3. Cause and Result:** introducing information that is a result or consequence of preceding information. For instances:

so, because (of), as, for, since, in view of, hence, therefore, as a result, consequently, that's why, otherwise, there, as to that, in that respect, in other respects, elsewhere, on account of this, for that purpose, then, in that case, if not, still

**4. Enumeration and Ordering:** signaling the order of main points that speakers or writers want to make and indicate a sequence of steps in a process. For instances:

(and) then, after, later, as long as, until, after that, at the same time, meanwhile, first, next, finally, when, to sum up, at least, or rather, to be more precise, by the way, incidentally, in any case, anyway, leaving that aside, in particular, more specially, to resume, as I was saying, in short, briefly, actually, verificative, next, just then, previously, secondly, here, now, up to now, lastly, at once, thereupon, soon, after a while, next time, next day, that morning, at that time, until then, at this moment

#### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

In order to collect the data of the use of DMs produced by EFL Indonesian and Thai university students, several steps were conducted. The data being investigated were related to the research questions of this study. The detail steps employed were as follows.

**1. RQ 1: What kinds of DMs did EFL Indonesian and Thai university students employ in their argumentative writing?**

The data collection was started by conducting the pilot study. The pilot study was necessary to conduct in order to determine the effectiveness of the topic, the appropriateness of the time allowed, and the average number of words that students are able to compose within the time limit. The pilot study was conducted in an Indonesian university. As a standardized English proficiency test was administered earlier and its equal groups of participants were already achieved, it was assumed that the Indonesian university could be the only representative of the two groups of

participants. The participants for the pilot study were another group of English students who was not selected as a group of participant for this study. The pilot study was conducted by administering writing prompt. The students were required to write a piece of writing based on a provided instruction in terms of the topic, time allotment, and total number of words.

Then, this was continued by conducting an actual writing prompt. The data were collected from students' writings in which all students, without any instruction, were given a topic to write an argumentative text. The reason underlying the absence of English writing instruction was that it is aimed to avoid the influence of this instruction. An instruction might bring an impact towards students' understanding of the knowledge of DMs. Thus, without any English instruction, it was hoped that the students will result their actual knowledge of DMs as well as their writing skill. Further, they were required to compose a three-paragraph essay on "*Facebook, et.al: Are the social media bringing people together or are they setting people apart?*" The composition was required to be 200-250 words, which is the usual length of essays for English writing practices in the classroom. A total of one and a half hours was given to the students for the completion of the whole writing task. This was to ensure that the subjects write individually under identical conditions. Further, the form of written assignment can be seen in the Appendix B. In addition, the writing prompt was conducted in the English writing class and monitored by both the writing instructor and researcher in order to maintain the quality of the writing prompt.

Further, regarding the data analysis in this study, the data were analyzed by the researcher and inter-rater. However, to ensure the reliability of the data analysis, a native speaker of English was asked to do the data analysis—specifically analyzing students' writings. According to Richards and Schimdt (2002), reliability can be defined as a measure of the degree to which a test gives consistent results. Similarly, Paltridge and Phakiti (2010) also state that reliability refers to consistency and is a way of ensuring that our constructs are being measured appropriately. They also add that in applied linguistics research it is frequently used when raters are making judgments about data. This is referred to inter-rater reliability (when more than one rater is involved) and intra-rater reliability (when only one researcher's evaluations are used) (Paltridge and Phakiti, 2010). In this study, the inter-rater



reliability was chosen. The rater was a native speaker of English who was selected as he had been experienced in teaching writing and grammar for more than five years. Related to data analysis of the first research question, this was done by the inter-rater through analyzing all pieces of students writing based on the categories of the DMs used in this study (*addition, concession and contrast, cause and result, and enumeration and order*). Then, this was continued by the researcher by checking the inter-rater's data analysis in order to achieve the final result.

As mentioned earlier, the data analysis of the first research question was done by identifying and counting the DMs. The first step was to put the selected DMs into the table provided. The data were classified into the semantic-functional categories (adapted from Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004)). The result showed the DMs which were already classified with their categories. Table 2 was used to reveal the data of types of DMs while Table 3 showed the data of frequency of the use of DMs.

Further, the following procedures were used as a guideline for categorizing DMs in each student's composition.

1. Each composition was given the data number.
2. For Table 2, each sentence in a composition was given an index number (especially for the sentences which contain DMs).
3. Each composition was read sentence by sentence to identify and mark the DMs presented by virtue of the coding scheme set up (Note: for Table 2, each item of markers was recorded in the explanation column provided in the table).
4. Each DM was rechecked to make sure if it was correctly classified.

Table 2 Types of Discourse Markers

Group: ID Composition No: 01						
No	CODE (example)	CATEGORIES OF DMs				EXPLANATION
		AD	CC	CR	EO	
1.	DM/ID/S01				1	EO: <i>first</i>
2.	DM/ID/S06	1				AD: <i>in addition</i>
3.	DM/ID/S12			1		<i>etc.</i>

After that, the collected data would be the basic information on how the DMs were distributed within students' writings. This revealed what types of DMs were mostly employed by Indonesian and Thai students in their argumentative compositions. Among the DMs mentioned in the framework, there were certain DMs frequently used to link the sentences in the argumentative writing. Thus, the findings resulted in a variety of DMs found in both Indonesian and Thai students' writing. In addition, the data were used for a further step, which was about the frequency of the use of DMs employed by Indonesian and Thai students.

Table 3 Use of Discourse Markers

No	CODE (example)	TOTAL WORDS	TOTAL DMs				TOTAL
			AD	CC	CR	EO	
1	DM/TH/01						%
2.	DM/TH/02						%
3.	DM/TH/03						%
Total		%	%	%	%	%	%

Regarding the frequency of the use of DMs by Indonesian and Thai students, the data yielded the numerical information about the percentage of DMs identified. Next, this information specifically showed what the types DMs were mostly employed by Indonesian and Thai students.

Note: DM : discourse markers  
 ID : produced by Indonesian students  
 TH : produced by Thai students  
 S : sentence  
 01 : datum (either a composition or sentence) number...  
 AD : addition  
 CC : concession and contrast  
 CR : cause and result  
 EO : enumeration and ordering

**2. RQ 2: What were the similarities and differences regarding the use of DMs in the argumentative writing produced by EFL Indonesian and Thai university students?**

For the second research question, this was further analyzed by the researcher based on the findings of the first research question. In this step, the findings of both the types and frequency resulted in the information about the similarities and differences of how the two groups of students employed the DMs in their argumentative writing. The similarities revealed the similar tendency toward the use of DMs which might be resulted from their equal English proficiency while the differences might show students' personal preference on the use of specific DMs which might be caused by certain issues such as students' L1 interference (transfer) and culture.

**3. RQ 3: To what extent did EFL Indonesian and Thai university students employ DMs in their argumentative writing appropriately?**

Considering to the last research question of this study, a native speaker of English was asked to examine the students' writing in terms of the appropriateness of the use of DMs. Similar to what the researcher and native speaker did for the first research question, the native speaker also examined the students' writing related to the appropriate use of DMs in the text. Then, the researcher concluded the result into the final findings. As mentioned earlier, a guideline was provided for the native speaker of English before they read the passages. The following table was used to reveal the data of the appropriateness of the use of DMs.



**Table 4 Appropriateness of the Use of Discourse Markers**

<b>Group: ID Composition No: 01</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>CODE (example)</b>	<b>APPROPRIATENESS OF DMs</b>		<b>EXPLANATION</b>
		<b>Appropriate</b>	<b>Not Appropriate</b>	
1	DM/ ID/ S01	√		-
2.	DM/ ID/S05	√		-
3.	DM/ ID/S11		√	a misuse of additive DMs (and)
<i>Total Percentage</i>		%	%	%

Finally, after the findings were revealed, they were elaborated. In doing so, this step was done by relating them with the theories. In other words, the findings were further analysed by referring them to the theories mentioned in the previous chapters, for instance related to the similarities and differences of the use of DMs, the problems and its plausible causes found, etc. In addition, the results of this discussion greatly contributed to the next step, which is the reporting step. Next, after analyzing the data, the conclusions were drawn. Moreover, the limitations, implications and recommendations were added.

To sum up this chapter, with regard to the first research question, which is 'What kinds of DMs did EFL Indonesian and Thai university students employ in their argumentative writing?', each writing was examined sentence by sentence. The DMs used in the writings were identified and counted following the taxonomy of DMs adapted from Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). The taxonomy in the present study was classified into four categories: 1) addition, 2) concession and contrast, 3) cause and result, and 4) enumeration and ordering. For the rater and the rating, this was performed by the researcher and a native speaker of English. Next, after identifying and counting, the type and frequency results were identified and compared to determine the high frequent types of DMs between the two groups—Indonesian and Thai students.



To address the second research question which is 'What were the similarities and differences regarding the use of DMs in the argumentative writing produced by EFL Indonesian and Thai university students?', the most frequent DMs used by both groups were compared and contrasted one another in order to investigate the similarities and differences of the use of DMs.

Finally, for the third research question, 'To what extent did EFL Indonesian and Thai university students employ DMs in their argumentative writing appropriately?', each passage was analysed in term whether the two groups employed DMs appropriately. In other words, it was on how each DMs produced by the students in their argumentative text was used appropriately. Particular consideration was given to several causes of the inappropriate DMs.

