

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the research findings in response to the research questions presented in Chapter One. It provides the conclusions about the use of discourse markers in the argumentative writing of EFL Indonesian and Thai university students. In addition, it also presents the recommendations for further research study, the limitations and the implications of the present study.

Conclusions

This present study has investigated the use of DMs in the argumentative writing of EFL Indonesian and Thai university students. This study dealt with three main objectives. First, it was aimed to investigate the kinds of DMs employed by Indonesian and Thai students in their argumentative compositions. Second, the objective was to compare and contrast the use of DMs produced by both groups in terms of its nature and problems. The last objective was to find out whether EFL Indonesian and Thai students employed the DMs appropriately.

The data obtained were 46 argumentative writings: 23 written by Indonesian students and 23 written by Thai students. According to the taxonomy of DMs adapted from Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the DMs examined in this study covered four categories: 1) addition, 2) concession and contrast, 3) cause and result, and 4) enumeration and ordering. After the data collection, the students' writings were examined by the researcher and native speaker of English. The native speaker of English was an English lecturer who was selected as he has been experienced in teaching writing and grammar for more than five years. Finally, the DMs found in the composition were identified, counted, and analyzed.

According to the first research question, this answer was the kinds of DMs employed by EFL Indonesian and Thai university students. The findings revealed that the number of DMs occurred in the Indonesian students' writing was lower than that in the Thai students'. However, the number of words in the Indonesian writing was

higher than that in the Thai writing. Thus, this might become one of the reasons of the different tendency of the use of DMs in both groups. Next, in terms of the types of DMs, among the types of DMs, Indonesian and Thai students shared similar tendency to employ *because* in more frequent occurrence. This indicates that they made causative relation more in expressing their points of view toward a case.

Further, there were found some similar problems the EFL Indonesian and Thai students encountered when using DMs in their argumentative writing such as the lack of the use of DMs, overuse of the DMs, and repetition of the use of DMs. Plausible causes of the problems were given in relation to insufficient knowledge of complex-sentence formation, unawareness of grammatical restrictions DMs with variant, L1 interference, written Thai style transfer, and oral culture influence (Prommas, 2011; Bennui, 2008; Petchprasert, 2007; Pongsiriwet, 2001; Mustapa, 2014).

Next, regarding the second research question, this answered the similarities and differences regarding the use of DMs in the argumentative writing produced by EFL Indonesian and Thai university students. To sum up, the similarities of the use of DMs produced by Indonesian and Thai students are summarized as follows.

Table 11 Similarities of the Use of Discourse Markers

No	Aspects	Indonesian Students	Thai Students
1.	Frequency of the use of DMs	DMs of <i>cause and result</i> and <i>enumeration and order</i> became the third and fourth category of DMs produced by Indonesian and Thai students. Here, it indicates that both groups make use of the function of these DM categories in their argumentative writing. The functions are to show the reason, result, and purpose of the preceding information (<i>cause and result</i>) and to signal the order of the main points that speakers or writers want to make and indicate a sequence of steps in a process (<i>enumeration and order</i>).	
2.	Types of DMs used	Among all types of DMs, Indonesian and Thai students highly employed <i>because</i> , so it became the first most often-appearing DM.	

Further, there were some elements of DMs used differently. The differences of the use of DMs by Indonesian and Thai students discovered in this study are summed up as follows:

Table 12 Differences of the Use of Discourse Markers

No	Aspects	Indonesian Students	Thai Students
1.	Total number of DMs occurred	Indonesian students employed 4.53% of DMs in their argumentative writing.	There were 5.63% of DMs occurred in Thai students' writing.
2.	Frequency of the use of DMs	DMs of <i>addition</i> were the most frequent used DMs found in the Indonesian writing.	For Thai students, DMs of <i>concession and contrast</i> were the first rank of DMs used.
3.	Types of DMs used	Among all DMs, the top seven of most-often appearing DMs were <i>because, if, and, when, also, such as, and so</i> .	The seventh most-frequent occurring DMs were <i>because, and, when, if, so, but, and such as</i> .

Finally, related to the third research question, it answered whether EFL Indonesian and Thai university students employed DMs in their argumentative writing appropriately. This study revealed that the DMs were used appropriately in the argumentative writing composed by Indonesian and Thai students. The discourse markers were used to connect the components of the sentences in the text, and then it also dealt with the way how to make the flow of the ideas in the text. Thus, the appropriateness of the use of discourse markers helped the students to produce a well-organized text, as well as, an understandable one. Further, in this present study, the inappropriate text might be caused by the matter of DMs (i.e. the restricted/over-/misuse of DMs). As mentioned earlier, based on previous research studies, this may be caused by L1 interference. Here, students' L1 influenced to their L2 writing and caused some problematic errors (Odlin, 1989; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996; Mirahayuni, 2002; and Budiharso, 2006). Grabe and Kaplan (1996) investigated the rhetorical

contrasts between English and Thai in student writing also revealed that Thai writers used more repetition, made extensive use of lists, often did not use conclusions, and tended to be more impersonal. Also, Mirahayuni (2002) found the absence or the overuse of explicit lexical signals appears as a problem which is indicated as the influence of writing practices in the non-native writers' first language and the Indonesian writer's attempt to find an appropriate format in the absence of well-established research writing conventions in the first language, as well as an impact of the sufficient knowledge and the lack mastery of various linguistic resources. Similarly, Budiharso (2006) reveals that the problems result from the transfer of L1 cultural conventions to L2 performance in the three rhetorical aspects, such as in general patterns of thought (linear or non-linear), development of ideas, and coherence. Therefore, related to the pedagogical implications, it is suggested that the knowledge of DMs should be taken into account explicitly in the writing class in order to improve students' knowledge of DMs. As a result, the students can be able to produce a cohesive and coherent text.

Recommendations for Further Research Study

1. The future study can also investigate the EFL student writers' DM usage in other genres of writing. As this study was aimed to investigate the DMs used in the argumentative writing, the preliminary finding revealed that the DMs of *addition* and *concession* and *contrast* categories apparently occurred in the Indonesian and Thai writing respectfully. The future study may emphasize on other writing genres which may characterize most frequent DMs from different semantic categories. For instance, in the narrative genre, DMs of *addition* or *enumeration and order* categories may appear more frequently than others.

2. Although the students have employed the discourse markers well, sometimes particular consideration should be given to the teaching of academic writing with reference to cohesion and coherence as the more important features. For instances, emphasizing on how the writer should also consider readers' position toward a text.

3. To obtain in-depth data and a clearer picture of using discourse markers by the students, in further research it is important to conduct an interview with some of the participants whose writings contain inappropriate use of DMs. For instance, to address the assumption on L1 interference affecting different writing styles and resulting in erroneous DM usage.

4. Regarding the participants of the present study which involved Indonesian and Thai EFL university students, it is interesting to conduct similar study in other ASEAN countries such as among Singapore, Philippine, Malaysia (ESL), Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Bhutan (EFL), etc. in order to achieve different interpretations on how such DMs are taken into account.

5. It is also interesting to conduct similar qualitative research study to investigate the use of discourse markers in oral communication.

Limitations of the Study

1. Since this study was limited to small number of corpora, similar research study should be conducted with larger corpora, probably contributing different and broadened findings in aspects of functions, syntactic distribution or even problems discovered.

2. This study was only carried out with a small number of compositions produced by particular groups of EFL university students.

Implications of the Study

1. Implications for Teachers

To increase the effectiveness of discourse markers in EFL Indonesian and Thai students' academic writing, the following points should be more concerned, especially for English teachers or writing instructors:

1.1 Focus should be placed on helping students to master the primary functions of frequently-used DMs like the additive function of *and*, the contrastive function of *but*, the causative function of *because*, and soon. Therefore, interactive activities that focus on discourse markers and other local cohesive devices may also be useful (McCarthy, 1991).

1.2 Teachers should design materials in which the students are able to be exposed to the use of formal discourse markers (e.g. *also, however, due to, on the contrary, eventhough*) which the students have hardly been taught in academic writing classrooms. For instances, by considering the problems which were usually occurred when the students used discourse markers.

1.3 Moreover, not only to use discourse markers correctly, the teacher should also encourage their students to use more various discourse markers available in each semantic function to foster cohesion and coherence of academic texts.

1.4 Instead of teaching the students how to use the discourse markers correctly, the teachers should teach the students how to employ the discourse markers appropriately, depending on its context.

1.5 Without conscious awareness of the errors involved in use of DMs i.e. grammatical errors, the students will probably continue to produce similar errors. Hence, the teachers must play a role in raising their awareness of the errors discovered.

2. Implications for Students

2.1 Students should pay much attention to creating and consistently improving coherence in academic writing which requires more than an ability to grammatically put sentences together but also an ability to produce coherently-united texts fostering assisted interpretation for readers.

2.2 Students should engage themselves in studying English academic texts possibly produced by English-native speakers or advanced learners and noticing how they appropriately and variously use discourse markers to construct their texts.

2.3 Students should be made aware of different norms of using discourse markers or writing in the foreign language (in this context is English) in order to avoid L1 interference in their foreign language writing.