CRITICAL REVIEW ON A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS RESEARCH: WHAT NOVICE WRITERS CAN LEARN

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Abstract: EFL learners inevitably will enter the world of academia, which makes it mandatory for them to write academic writings, especially in the form of research articles. They are obliged to broaden knowledge in the field of their interest by conducting research. Unfortunately, academic writing has always been a serious challenge for them. Writing research articles indeed requires them to be familiar with the writing guidelines, particularly about how the ideas are developed. This present study is therefore intended to assist EFL learners, particularly those who have just started their academic writing experience. Insight and ideas on how to write a research article are presented in this paper. To do that, a qualitative methodology on discourse analysis is employed. The data is taken from a research article focusing on discourse marker comparisons between academic and non-academic writings. The article is broken down in detail to provide a clear picture of how it is constructed by the authors. The analysis reveals that even though it contains some minor weaknesses, the research article overall is well-written and follows the author guidelines. This study allows EFL learners to receive more explicit input and, hopefully, adapt and adopt the steps of how the article is written.
Keywords: *critical review; novice writer; research article.*

INTRODUCTION

This present study is dedicated to provide assistance to novice writers, namely the EFL learners who have just started their academic writing experience. This assistance is given through analyzing one selected research article. Without prejudice to the authors, their article is analyzed and broken down to reveal its strengths and weaknesses. This is conducted for the sake of learning, especially to give insight and ideas on how to write a research article well and effectively. Writing papers is a necessity for students because they frequently receive writing assignments from their lecturers to create texts for final assignments, group projects, midterm assignments, or just an individual project (Bailey,

2006). They frequently receive writing projects to help teachers determine how well they comprehend a particular subject. Many EFL learners are still developing as writers, thus when given a writing task they may become confused (Qasem & Zayid, 2019). Moreover, it is academic writing like research articles. This is typical since educational assignments do not require writing works. Even while they do exist, classroom learning still hardly ever includes assignments that require composing papers.

A research article is a written piece that includes knowledge and information that has been discovered via research both in the field and in the literature (Bal-Gezegin & Baş, 2020). It is not only anticipated that it will benefit the writer, but

that it will also benefit the writer in some other way—for example, by enhancing the writer's knowledge or by allowing him or her to think more critically. It is important to trust scientific research and avoid manufactured research. The potential for producing high-caliber scientific work is greatest in the academic community (Hanauer *et al.,* 2019). Not just lecturers but also students are a part of the academic community in question. In order to generate written works, including both scholarly writings like books and journals and more accessible scientific writings like research papers, students are required to be able to engage in writing activities as part of the academic environment. In spite of this, writing exercises are not as common among students as other proficiency tasks (Ecarnot *et al.,* 2015). Students still inquire about what a research article is. Because they lack experience producing research articles for their academic projects, students are forced to take the easy route by plagiarizing the work of others. The guidelines for writing research articles must therefore be taught to students as publications of research articles have emerged as a crucial component of academic activity in the modern era (Banks, 2018).

The rules for creating a research article typically give the authors a comparable framework for their articles, starting with the title and ending with references (Saeed *et al.,* 2020). The first and most important component of a text that draws in potential readers is its title. From there, readers determine whether the text is worthwhile reading or not (Li & Xu, 2019). It solely makes use of precise keywords that describe the research's key variables (Kundu, 2018). The authors may also want to mention the site of the research. The abstract should then succinctly define the paper's content and scope, as well as its aims, methodology, findings, conclusions, and study implications (Forero *et al.,* 2020; Tullu, 2019; Heßler *et al.*, 2020). It should contain three to five keywords associated with the article and be between 200 and 250 words long. In introduction, the writers should next explain why this research area is significant and back up their arguments with pertinent references (Graulich *et al.,* 2021). They should also include a review of relevant literature, which is composed of earlier studies in the same or a related topic and the underlying theories for the investigation. They are able to identify the gaps in the earlier study by doing this (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2022; Paul & Criado, 2020). The position of the research in regard to earlier studies should therefore be made clear.

Later on, writers should discuss the research's variables and explain why they think there is a relationship between them. Last but not least, the authors should offer rational, scientific justifications for why they select particular study topics and back up their arguments with pertinent references.

The research article's methods must also be written well. The authors should explain the research's methodology, whether it is qualitative, quantitative, or mixed. They must explain the research design, such as descriptive qualitative, content analysis, or another type, as well as the rationale behind their choice (Busse & August, 2021). Additionally, this part requires for relevant references, particularly those that back up the idea regarding the study design option. The authors must then define the data source for the study and give justifications for their choice. To present this idea, it is also required to explain the research's steps (Ecarnot *et al.*, 2015). Last but not least, the authors should note that they took inspiration from one, two, or more references while deciding on the steps.

Composing the findings and discussions is the next and most crucial step in writing research articles. The findings ought to be short and obvious. Instead of giving extensive data, it should provide a summary of scientific findings. It draws attention to variations between the findings or results and earlier works by other scholars (Ecarnot *et al.*, 2015). The discussion should then focus on the significance of the research's findings rather than just restating them. It is frequently useful to combine the results and discussion sections. The authors should refrain from using numerous citations and discussing published works (Qayyum & Afzal, 2018). It is the most crucial portion of the article when being discussed. Here, the authors have the opportunity to market their data by correlating the discussion to the findings or outcomes while avoiding repetition (Ecarnot *et al.*, 2015). It should frequently start with a succinct review of the key scientific findings. Every result or finding reported should have a scientific interpretation provided by the authors (Behzadi & Gajdács, 2021). They must also make it clear how the outcomes connect to the main issue or the goals mentioned in the introduction.

The next step is to compose the conclusion and references, which can be difficult for novice authors. The research's objectives should be addressed in the conclusions (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). The writers should explain how

their study expands on the current body of knowledge in the field. It is not advised for the authors to simply list the findings of experiments or to repeat the abstract (Behzadi & Gajdács, 2021). They should outline potential applications and extensions as well as a strong scientific explanation for your work. They should also make suggestions for new experiments and/or mention any that are already in progress (Paul *et al.,* 2021). In terms of references, they should ensure that all references may be tracked back (Ecarnot *et al*., 2015). Finally, the references should be arranged alphabetically by author.

It can be seen that writing research article is not a simple matter. Helping students become proficient in research writing and assisting them in making the transition from peripheral to active engagement in the intellectual discourse of their discipline is an important but difficult goal (Cotos *et al.,* 2020). This encourages this present study to be conducted with the purpose to assist EFL learners, particularly those who have just started their academic writing experience. Insight and ideas on how to write a research article are presented in this paper. It is inspired by some previous studies in the similar field. Those are Warren *et al.* (2021), Weatherall (2018), Zheng & Yu (2019), that concern on providing clear pictures of how to write academic writing effectively.

METHOD
In line with Williyan (2020), the methodology used in this study is qualitative. With it, the findings are elaborated as detail as possible and presented in form of paragraph to give the target readers, namely the novice writers, a clear picture on how to write research articles. The data of this present study is a research article written by Choemue & Bram (2021) entitled "Discourse Markers in Academic and Non-Academic Writings of Thai EFL Learners ". This research article is selected because it is published in 2021 by a journal indexed by Scopus Q1 and Sinta 1. This piece of writing is a masterpiece that, ideally, is able to assist the novice writers to adapt or adopt the style of writing a research article. To do this, the process of analyzing is conducted thoroughly from the title until the references. Each part of the articles is given constructive comments so that the readers can also take the positivity and avoid the weakness produced in this research article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The summary of the research paper that is learned in this investigation opens this section. The discussion then moves on to explain the articles' strengths and weaknesses. This section is finally concluded with the justification of the indication of the findings.

Summary of the research article
The research article is written by Choemue & Bram (2021) entitled "Discourse Markers in Academic and Non-Academic Writings of Thai EFL Learners ". It is published in 2021 by a journal indexed by Scopus Q1 and Sinta 1. The writers state that in order to express ideas and concepts in a variety of writing projects, including as academic papers and reflections, EFL students at the university level need to be able to use discourse markers (DMs) to make a text coherent and cohesive. They then point out that to have a better understanding about how DMs are used by Thai EFL students in academic and non-academic writing, their study try to provide more information. Investigating the types, general frequency, distinctions, and similarities of discourse markers in the two writing modes is the main goal. For the primary data, 60 essays are chosen, of which 20 are scholarly and 40 are not. The non-academic pieces are chosen from the XLC English Newsletter, while the academic essays are chosen from the Xavier Learning Community (XLC), Thailand, Critical Reading and Writing course. Using Fraser's taxonomy (2009), they evaluate the data. The findings reveal that 2.521 DMs, which are divided into five types and found in 20 academic and 40 non-academic articles, are contrastive discourse, elaborative discourse, inferential discourse, temporal discourse, and spoken speech markers. Elaborative discourse markers (EDM), F=1,703, are the most frequently used DM. This study comes to the conclusion that increasing knowledge of DMs will help Thai EFL learners create an efficient and logical piece of writing.

The title
There are three things writers should notice in formulating the title of their research articles. Maximum 14 words are allowed in the title. It solely makes use of particular keywords that describe the research's key variables (Paul & Barari, 2022). Optionally, the writers have included the place of the research. Below is the title of the research article being studied in this current study.
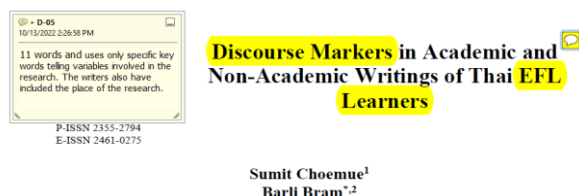
Figure 1. *Research title*

The title of this research consist of 11 words. It uses only specific key words telling variables involved in the research. The writers also have included the place of the research in the title (Kundu, 2018). The novice writers can learn from this data about how to formulate the title of their research articles.

The abstract

The abstract should contain several main points of the research. The research's major findings should be summarized in the abstract. It must first express the purposes in full. Second, an explanation of the research's methodology needs to be included in the abstract. It must then include the results and conclude with the conclusions. The document must also include the publication's scope and substance, as well as any implications of the study. It should contain three to five keywords related to writers' content (Murphy & Bolderston, 2022), and be between 200 and 250 words long. Below is the abstract of the research article studied and analyzed in this current study.
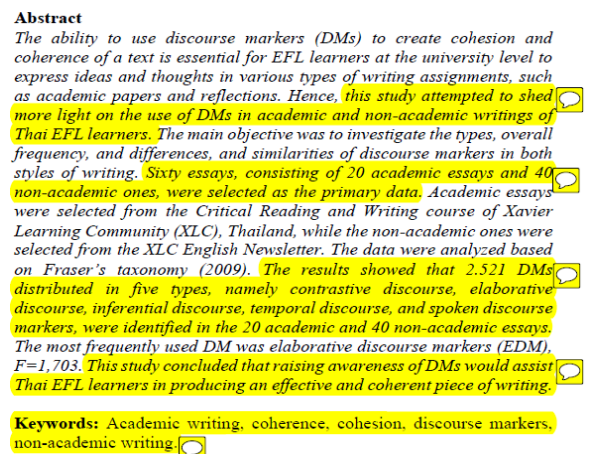

Figure 2. *Research abstract*

The writers have concisely describe the content and scope of the paper and identify the objectives, namely to provide greater insight into how Thai EFL learners use DMs in their formal and informal writing. The primary goal of their study is to compare and contrast the discourse markers that are used in academic and informal writing. Its methodology and its findings have been presented very well. A brief conclusion is used to wrap up the abstract. Unfortunately, no explanation of the study's implications is given. The article is 205 words long and ends with five keywords that are pertinent to it (Forero *et al.*, 2020). The novice writers must take something away from this information. They must make sure that their abstract covers each of the aforementioned points.

The introduction

In introduction, the authors are required to consider some elements. They must explain the significance of the research field (Paul & Barari, 2022). They are also required to back up their idea with relevant references. Review of pertinent literature, including theories guiding the study and earlier research in the same or a related topic, must also be included by the authors. They must identify any gaps in the earlier research. The authors need to make clear how the current research fits into the context of the earlier investigations. The research's variables must also be mentioned by the authors clearly. The authors should explain their reasoning for thinking that the relationship between the variables exists. The writers are required to give scientific justifications for their selection of particular study themes (Macnab, 2022). The writers must provide appropriate sources to back up their ideas regarding the topic selection. The small piece of the introduction of the research article that is studied and analyzed in this current study is displayed below.
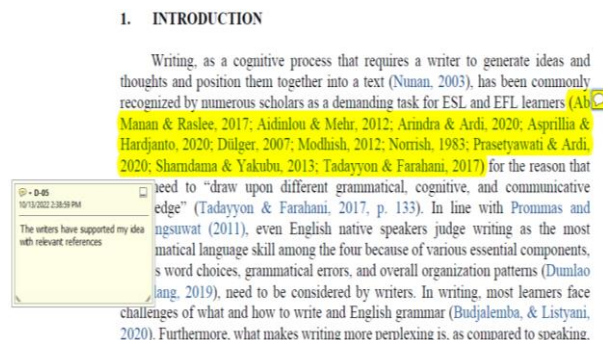

Figure 3. *Research introduction*

The authors have successfully deliver the introduction. The authors have explained the significance of this research field in the introduction section (Graulich *et al.*, 2021). They state that the findings of the study will help teaching and learning the English language, especially in writing classes, as it allows Thai students to learn about different DMs and use them in their writing. Then, the notion has been backed up with pertinent references from the

authors. The authors have reviewed relevant literature, including earlier investigations in the same or a related subject and hypotheses supporting the study. The authors have identified any gaps in the earlier studies (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2022). They say that no research has looked into how DMs are used by Thai students in their academic and informal works. Additionally, the writers have made clear how the latest research fits into relation to earlier investigations. The variables used in this study have been discussed by the authors. The authors have explained why they think there is a relationship between the variables. For their selection of particular subjects for this research, the authors have offered scientific justifications. The choice of subject was backed up by the authors' use of pertinent sources. The novice writers can definitely learn from this introduction. They can adapt the way the authors of this research article develop the introduction.

The method
In this section of the article, the authors need to make sure that their articles contain some main elements. The methodology section is where the authors describe the research's methodology, whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed. The authors should also provide details on the research design, such as descriptive qualitative analysis, content analysis, or others, as well as the reasons. The authors must cite appropriate sources to back up their arguments for the study design they chose. The authors clearly state where the data for this study came from. The authors then need to give justifications for their decisions about the data sources they used. The number of research steps must also be mentioned by the authors in this section. Lastly, the authors acknowledge that while choosing the stages, they used some references in their adoption or adaptation of the steps. Below is the small piece of the method of the research article that is learned in this present study.
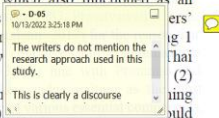

Figure 3. *Research method*

The authors have identified the source of the data used in the study. As the primary data, 60 essays are chosen, 20 of which are academic and 40 of which are not. The authors have also given justifications for their decision to use a particular source of data. The number of steps in this research have been given by the authors very clearly as well. The authors have disclosed that they adopted or modified the steps from several references in making their decisions (Ecarnot *et al.*, 2015). What the authors plan to do with the data they have collected has also already been stated. The authors have provided pertinent hypotheses and references to back up their ideas regarding the data analysis. Unfortunately, the authors fail to specify the methodology employed for this study. Despite the fact that the researchers do not directly declare it, this is obviously a discourse study (Busse & August, 2021). In summary, the novice writers can learn about aspects that should be included in the methodology.

The findings and discussion
To present the findings and discussion of the research articles, the authors' findings need to do some steps in order to be clear and concise. It should summarize scientific findings rather than providing data in great detail (Mayyas & Alzoubi, 2022). It also highlights differences between the findings and the previous publications by other researchers. The discussion furthermore should explore the significance of the results of the work, not repeat them. A combined findings and Discussion section is often appropriate. In the discussion, the writers should avoid extensive citations and discussion of published literature. This section is the most important section of the article. Here, the writers get the chance to sell their data and make the discussion corresponding to the results, but do not reiterate the results. Often it should begin with a brief summary of the main scientific findings not experimental results. In addition, the discussion should also include the explanation about how the results relate to the original question or objectives outlined in the Introduction section and how the writers provide interpretation scientifically for each of the results or findings presented. Below is the small piece of the results/findings and discussion of the research article being studied in this current study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From 20 academic essays and 40 non-academic essays written by Thai EFL learners in this study, five discourse markers (DMs) were identified, namely contrastive discourse, elaborative discourse, inferential discourse, temporal discourse, and spoken discourse markers. The findings can be seen in Figure 1 below.
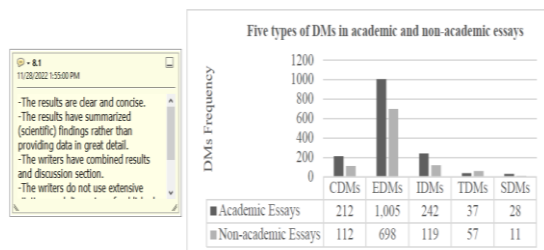

Figure 4. *Research results and discussion*

The writers have presented the findings clearly and concisely. They have summarized the scientific findings rather than providing data in great detail in the finding section. The analysis of the 20 academic and 40 non-academic writings reveals a total of 2.521 DMs, split evenly across five categories, namely contrastive, elaborative, inferential, temporal, and spoken discourse markers. Elaborative discourse markers (EDMs) are the most common type of DM, with a frequency of F=1,703. Also, the differences between the results or findings and the previous publications by other researchers have been highlighted (Yu & Jiang, 2022). They also do not use extensive citations and discussion of published literature (Qayyum & Afzal, 2018). Although, it is common to separate the sections of findings and discussion into two differences explanation, the writers of this article have combined results and discussion into one section. Besides the strength mentioned previously, there are also several weaknesses that the novice writer can learn so that they can avoid to do the same things in their research article writing. The significance of the results of the work which should be explored in the discussion is not clear. The writers seems only describing the findings and what the findings indicate. In the results and discussion, the writers unfortunately do not clearly state how the results relate to the original question or objectives outlined in the Introduction section. Lastly, the writers also do not clearly state interpretation scientifically for each of the results or findings presented (Behzadi & Gajdács, 2021). In sum, the writers have successfully presented the findings and the discussion. The novice writers can definitely learn from these sections. They can adapt the way the authors of this research article develop the findings and discussions.

The conclusion

In conclusions, the writers must consider some standards. Conclusions should answer the objectives of research. In this section, the writers tells how your work advances the field from the present state of knowledge. They are not suggested to only repeat the abstract, or just list experimental results. They then must provide a clear scientific justification for your work, and indicate possible applications and extensions. The writers state that their research find that informing Thai EFL students about DMs will help students write better and more coherently Lastly, the writers should also suggest future experiments and/or point out those that are underway. Below is the small piece of the conclusion of the research article being studied in this current study.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of this present study indicated that 60 essays produced by the Thai EFL learners at the Xavier Learning Community presented the 'superiority' of four categories of DMs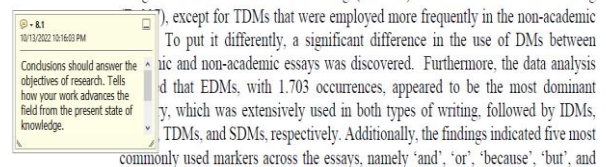 in academic writing (F=1.524) over the non-academic writing [...], except for TDMs that were employed more frequently in the non-academic [...]. To put it differently, a significant difference in the use of DMs between [academ]ic and non-academic essays was discovered. Furthermore, the data analysis [showe]d that EDMs, with 1.703 occurrences, appeared to be the most dominant [categor]y, which was extensively used in both types of writing, followed by IDMs, [...] TDMs, and SDMs, respectively. Additionally, the findings indicated five most commonly used markers across the essays, namely 'and', 'or', 'because', 'but', and

Figure 5. *Resaerch conclusion*

The authors address the goals of the study in the conclusion and explain how their work expands upon the body of knowledge already known in the subject. They do not just list the outcomes of the experiment or reiterate the abstract (Behzadi & Gajdács, 2021). The authors have also identified potential applications and extensions as well as a clear scientific explanation for their study. Last but not least, they mention any ongoing or upcoming experiments as well as offer suggestions for new ones (Tabuena, 2020). The novice writers can definitely learn from this conclusion. In conclusion, the writers does a good job of presenting the findings and the discussion. They can adapt the way the authors of this research article formulate the conclusion.

The references

There are some elements that the writers should consider in writing the references. The authors should make sure that all citations can be tracked back. The references also must be arranged alphabetically. In this research, the authors have taken care to ensure that all references can be tracked back (Ecarnot *et al.,* 2015). Additionally, they have ordered the references alphabetically. The quantity of references satisfies another

requirement of a research article. Although there are other reference writing styles outside APA style, the authors of this study followed APA style correctly, and 90% of the references are also created within the last ten years. In conclusion, the references are well written by the authors. They can modify how the authors place the references in this study article.

CONCLUSION

After all parts of the research article have been broken down, we can see clearly that the author has produced an extraordinary scientific paper. In writing a research article, the writers begins by formulating a title that can attract every reader, especially those who are fanatical about discourse studies. The abstract has been compiled very densely and is rich in information regarding the important points of their research. Readers are very spoiled by the abstract because it has summarized all the important things from the research. Then, in the introduction the author has explained very clearly the background of the study, the theories underpinning the study as well as the previous studies. The method is also written in full point by point so that readers, in this case novice writers, can later adapt the steps of this research. Findings and discussion along with conclusions are presented in a very complete and clear manner. Thus, readers can understand things about discourse markers and the differences between academic and non-academic writing. However, there are no perfect words in a piece of writing; there will undoubtedly be flaws, which have been described in this paper for the sake of learning. Hopefully novice writers can take many positive points from this present study. Hopefully novice writers can take many positive points from this present study.

Additionally, there are a lot of prospects for further research given by this current study. Future research can first examine how to compose nonacademic writing, like a novel. Second, they can explain the many text types—argumentative essays, narratives, descriptive texts, and so forth—and how to compose each one. Third, academics can analyze specific text types to inform readers about the unified and coherent writing process. Last but not least, they can concentrate more on spoken language in order to assist the EFL learner in giving excellent presentations. As the writers of this present study, hopefully the information in this study can inspire a lot of people to conduct further studies so that the wealth of knowledge can be enriched.

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