# CHAPTER III

# RESEARCH METHOD

## A. Approach and Research Design

The goal of this study is to examine and then describe the profile of grammatical accuracy, cohesion and coherence on English writings which are produced by Thai students at Darawithaya School. Considering the goal, this study is included as qualitative design using descriptive approach, since it tries to describe a phenomenon of language behavior. This study includes library research.

Qualitative research employs words and images to answer questions.[55] As stated that one of the characteristics of qualitative study is the natural setting since its goal is to describe social phenomenon as it occurs naturally without manipulation. Furthermore, the writers define qualitative research as the research which investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations, and materials. It focuses on understanding the context and attempts to explain the intentionality of behaviors.[56] By those functions of qualitative research, it is believed to be an appropriate method in this current study, since it tries to give a description of phenomenon in language behavior naturally without manipulation.

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[55] Donald. Ary, et.al., *Introduction to Research in Education* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2009), 420.
[56] Donald. Ary, et.al., *Introduction to Research in Education* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2009), 420.

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Descriptive approach is designed primarily to describe what is going on or what exists.[57] Whitney states that descriptive qualitative is a data collection which interprets the fact truly.[58] This way agrees with the requirements in this recent study.

In qualitative study, there are three major categories of data collection; in-depth interviews, direct observation and document analysis.[59] The other source, we can see four varied nature of qualitative forms of data. They are: Observations, interviews and questionnaires, documents and audiovisual materials.[60] Document analysis is used in this recent study to collect the data. Document is believed as a valuable source of information in qualitative research. It can include newspapers, minutes of meetings, personal journals, and letters. [61]

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[57] William M. K. Trochim, *Research Methods Knowledge Base* (Cincinnati, OH: Atomic Dog Publication, 2001), 5

[58] F.L Whitney. *The element of research,* Asian Ed,. Overseas Book Co., Osaka, 1960, 35

[59] William M. K. Trochim, *Research Methods Knowledge Base* (Cincinnati, OH: Atomic Dog Pub., 2001), 159

[60] John W Creswell. *Educational research : planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* / John W. Creswell. — 4th ed, 2012, 212

[61] John W Creswell. *Educational research : planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* / John W. Creswell. — 4th ed, 2012, 223

Documents
Keep a journal during the research study.
Have a participant keep a journal or diary during the research study.
Collect personal letters from participants.
Analyze public documents (e.g., official memos, minutes of meetings, records or archival material).
Analyze school documents (e.g., attendance reports, retention rates, dropout rates, or discipline referrals).
Examine autobiographies and biographies.
Collect or draw maps and seating charts.
Examine portfolios or less formal examples of students' work.
Collect e-mails or electronic data.

Documents provide the advantage of being in the language and words of the participants who have usually given thoughtful attention to them. They are also ready for analysis without the necessary transcription that is required with observational or interview data.[62] In this case, the data is taken from students' final writing work while taking the course; *Descriptive Text*. Students' final writing is used as the main data that will be analized, while the other data are also taken from students' writing of their daily work in regular English class. Those additional data are used as refference for this research dealing with participants' work during the semester, but those are not analized.

In this research, both researchers and theories are handled in second and foreign language acquisition field that can offer important evidence of how a second/foreign language is learned by the learners. Learner's knowledge, and the main areas of linguistic and discourse difficulty of learner

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[62]John W Creswell. *Educational research : planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* / John W. Creswell. — 4th ed, 2012, 225

may occur in learning writing in target language. Studies on linguistic accuracy presents appropriate information for research in three parts: second language acquisition, second language writing assessment, and second language writing pedagogy.[63] Thus, the focus on examining grammatical accuracy and the aspect of cohesion and coherence on students' writing in this study may also provide valuable insights concerning the importance of them in assessing the writing quality.

By having the students' final writing work, it is expected to show students' competence in grammar, and coherence and cohesion aspect on English written text. With the result that, the researcher will be able to measure what should be measured.

## B. Researcher Presence

While leading this study, the researcher takes up a role as a *complete or covert participant.* Complete participant is a member of the group or context under study and focuses on the natural activity of the group without informing the group that it is under study. It can be a researcher who becomes a certified teacher and takes a position in a school for the purpose of conducting research without telling anyone.[64] In this study, researcher is a

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[63] C. G. Polio, *Measures of Linguistic Accuracy in Second Language Writing Research*.Language Learning, 47, 1997, 101-143

[64] Donald. Ary, at.al., *Introduction to Research in Education* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2009). 432-433.

teacher for the participants for five months. In collecting the data, researcher does not need to tell anyone.

## C. Research Location

This study takes place at Darawithaya School – Muhammadiyah Islamiyah Islamic Bording House, Kiambang Dalam – Tanyongmas – Rangae Narathiwat, South of Thailand. The researcher formerly attended as an English instructor at that School for about five months both Academic course and Islamic course.

Most students of Darawithaya School disposed mastering their knowledge in religion subjects (Arab). Meanwhile, English becomes a foreign language which is difficult to be mastered, as stated in detail in the previous discussion. English is rarely used in their daily conversation, both spoken and written. They use Thai and Melayu Pattani for their communication language every time. This reality makes them get difficulty in building their competence in English.

While attending at that school as an English teacher, researcher finds some problems dealing with English, especially in writing. It is proven by students' writing works which are found some errors. Grammar and the connection of sentences and ideas are the most frequent problem that found in students' writing.[65]

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[65] This information is taken from the profile of the school and interview on some teachers at 2nd of March 2015, in Thailand.

The participants of this study enroll as students of Mathyum 5 in second semester, year 2014-2015. Mathyum grade is provided from 1 up to 6. Mathyum 1 up to 3 is equal with Junior High School level, and Mathyum 4 up to 6 is equal with Senior High School. So, the participants of this study are equal with second grade students of Senior High School. In this school, Mathyum 5 is divided into two classes; 5/1 class and 5/2 class. The researcher takes 5/2 class for taking the sample, then focuses on female learners only for data collection. That class consists of 25 students with 14 females and 11 males.

Mathyum 5/2 class is selected based on the reality that the researcher only took a role as a teacher at that class for Academic School. Furthermore, as recognized that second grade students are in the middle process in that level, familiarly it is known as transition age. In this age they have experienced learning in first grade that is believed they are capable of doing the instruction/tests given in this study and they need to face one more level after passing this age then. In the last level, third grade, they will face final examination which should be taken by all learners under government rule, included English. Therefore, it becomes something crucial for them also instructor to know their capability in writing English and what they need to improve to be ready in joining the next level, and prepare for final examination.

Female learners become a focus in this study because a certain consideration. During the semester, male students have not attended the class almost two months for joining Maulid agenda every day outside, at citizen's house. Then, male students' seat in the class is also divided from female students in the other room. Thus, they do not get learning optimally during the semester and this case is worried they do not get the material that deals with data collection.

**D. Data and Source of The Data**

1. Data

   a. Primary

      The primary data of this study is students' writing works. The data is taken after those writings are used for the final project of students' English class at Darawithaya School. The data is the documents of students' writing works on second semester study at senior High School, year 2014-2015. This data is included into documentation data.
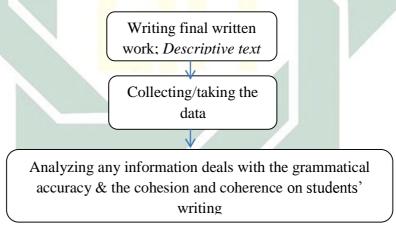
   b. Secondary

      This data is used for supporting the primary data. This data is regarded as additional data which gotten from some sources; books, journals, students' writing works while taking regular English class and others.

2. Source of the data

Source of the data in this recent study is observer as the teacher of the class, and participants as the students who make the primary data.

In collecting the data, researcher takes a play as a *complete* or *covert participant* since researcher becomes a certified teacher and takes a position in a school for the purpose to conduct the research without telling anyone. Firstly, the data is collected when those data have been used as the final project for students' course which is handled by the researcher. The data refers to the participants' final writing works which is supported by the other writing works in regular class as references.

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ Writing final written│
│ work; Descriptive text│
└─────────────────────┘
          │
          ▼
┌─────────────────────┐
│ Collecting/taking the│
│         data         │
└─────────────────────┘
          │
          ▼
┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Analyzing any information deals with the│
│  grammatical accuracy & the cohesion   │
│  and coherence on students' writing    │
└──────────────────────────────────────┘
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**Figure. 3.1** Data Collection Technique.

**E. Research Instrument**

The instruments which are used in this research to collect the data are the documents themselves, guidelines and rubrics. Documents provide the advantage of being in the language and words of the participants, who have usually given thoughtful attention to them. They are also ready for analysis

without the necessary transcription that is required with observational or interview data.[66]

In this current study, the students' final writing works become instruments which then being analyzed to know the grammar accuracy and the cohesion and coherence on the writings which are produced by students. Then, a rubric is chosen to be standard guide to assess students' writings based on the grammatical accuracy and the coherence and cohesion aspect.

## F. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis deals with processing the data such as organizing, breaking into manageable units, synthesizing, discovering the patterns, finding out the important points, and deciding what should be explained to others. All qualitative analysis includes trying to comprehend the phenomenon under study, synthesize information and explain relationships, theorize about how and why the relationships perform as they do, and relink the new knowledge with what is already known. The task of analyzing qualitative data can appear overwhelming but becomes manageable when broken down into key stages. [67] In order to come to the last step of analyzing data, there are several steps should be done.

As the data in this study is the writing samples produced by the participants of this study, the first step of this analysis data process is

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[66] Donald. Ary, et.al., *Introduction to Research in Education* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2009), 432.
[67] Donald. Ary, at.al., *Introduction to Research in Education* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2009), 481

organizing all the writing samples. The next step is analyzing all the writing samples to see the grammatical accuracy and the cohesion and coherence which are performed on participants' writing.

After analyzing those two aspects in the writing samples, the last step is describing and interpreting what have been known dealing with the grammatical accuracy and both cohesion and coherence on students' writing. Then, conclusion will be provided. Here are the steps of this analysis technique.
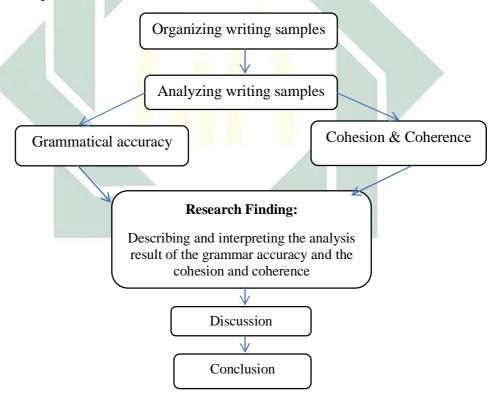
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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   Organizing writing samples    │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│    Analyzing writing samples    │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
      ↙                       ↘
┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
│  Grammatical     │   │  Cohesion &          │
│  accuracy        │   │  Coherence           │
└──────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘
      ↘                       ↙
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│       Research Finding:         │
│  Describing and interpreting    │
│  the analysis result of the     │
│  grammar accuracy and the       │
│  cohesion and coherence         │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│          Discussion             │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│          Conclusion             │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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**Figure. 3.2** Steps of the Data Analysis Technique

In this case, to examine the grammatical accuracy on students' writing samples, firstly, the composition are classified and analyzed using a measurement of grammatical errors. This measure has been used in several previous studies in second language writing to measure grammar accuracy in English written, for example in a research done by Chastian,[68] Frantzen,[69] Kobayashi & Rinnert,[70] Kroll.[71] Those researches have showed to offer theoretically valuable information dealing with this current study. All grammatical errors which are established in the students' works are identified based on Standard English grammatical rules which provided in any grammar book. The following guidelines suggested by Polio.[72]

1. Do not count spelling errors

2. Do not look at the sentence in isolation.

3. Don't count British usages as errors (e.g., "in hospital," "at university," collective nouns as plural).

4. Do not count errors in capitalization.

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[68] K. Chastian, "Characteristics of Graded and Ungraded Compositions ".*Modern Language Journal*, 11, 367-383.

[69] D. Frantzen, "The Effects of Grammar Supplementation on Written Accuracy in An Intermediate Spanish Content Course". *Modern Language Journal*, 79, 1995, 329-344

[70] H. Kobayashi - C. Rinnert, "Effects of First Language on Second Language Writing: Translation Versus Direct Comparison". *Language Learning*, 42, 1992, 183-215.

[71] B. Kroll, *What Does Time Buy? ESL Student Performance on Home Versus Class Compositions*. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 140-154). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990

[72] C. G. Polio, *Measures of Linguistic Accuracy in Second Language Writing Research*.Language Learning, 47, 1997, 101-143

5. Count errors that can be made by native speakers (e.g., between you and I)

6. Ignore an unfinished sentence at the end of the essay.

This guideline measures the errors which appear on students' writing, a method used by Kroll to tabulate composition error. Then, it can prove useful finding since it allows for comparison of compositions of any length. This measurement is specified into some categories of grammatical errors involved errors such as pronouns, articles, singular/plural nouns, prepositions, tenses, verb formation, word formation, fragments, verb omission, extraneous subject, subject omission, and subject-verb agreement. The errors are highlighted or underlined to make it easy in categorizing the various types of errors.

**Table 3.1** Guideline for measuring frequent grammatical error**.**

| No. | Error Category | Frequency |
|-----|----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Singular/plural noun | |
| 2 | Pronoun | |
| 3 | Tense | |
| 4 | Article | |
| 5 | Preposition | |
| 6 | Word form | |
| 7 | Verb formation | |
| 8 | Verb omission | |
| 9 | Subject omission | |
| 10 | Extraneous subject | |
| 11 | S-V agreement | |

| 12 | Fragment | |
|----|----------|---|
| | **Total** | |

After categorizing the various types of errors, each composition is then measured to know the level of the grammatical accuracy from each composition. To measure this grammatical accuracy, grading rubric adapted from the Assessment rubric for The Writing Task based on CEFR descriptor at Universitat de le Illes Balears (UIB) is used. **(See appendix B)**

Then, for the coherence and cohesion are firstly measured by the rating scale which is collected of two subscales aiming at two major areas of cohesion and coherence. The rating scale is based on Chiang's theory which is aimed to measure the "effectiveness and appropriateness in the organization of ideas above the sentence level and among different parts of the text".[73] This theory is taken to check an acceptable discourse and students' writing understanding involving 7 features for cohesion and 7 features for coherence. But, this study uses rating scale which consists of only 6 features for cohesion and 5 features coherence. The point of *the use of reference"* in cohesion aspect is not included. Since, that point has been evaluated in grammar category as *"the use of pronoun"*. Then, there are two points of coherence which are not used, they are *"the division of paragraphs is justifiable in terms of content relevance"* and *"transition between sentences and paragraphs is smooth"*.

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[73] S. Y. Chiang "Assessing Grammatical and Textual Features in L2 Writing Samples:The Case of French as A Foreign Language". *Modern Language Journal*, 83, 1999, 219-232

This consideration is based on the compositions which are used as data in this study are simple writings about descriptive text under the topic MY FAMILY which consist only one paragraph in each composition. Therefore, those categories are not obtained.

Please circle the number that reflects the degree to which you agree with the statement about the composition.

4 = Strongly Agree        3 = Agree        2 = Disagree        1 = Strongly Disagree

Cohesion

4 3 2 1        A. The same vocabulary/expressions are repeated consistently.

4 3 2 1        B. Ellipsis is used where needed.

4 3 2 1        C. Junction words are used accurately.

4 3 2 1        D. New information is introduced in an appropriate manner.

4 3 2 1        E. Examples are introduced judiciously.

4 3 2 1        F. Punctuation is employed appropriately to separate ideas and sentences.

Coherence

4 3 2 1        A. The beginning section is effective in introducing the subject.

4 3 2 1        B. The ideas in the composition are relevant to the topic.

4 3 2 1        C. The ideas are well-related to one another.

4 3 2 1        D. The writer's overall point of view is clear.

4 3 2 1        F. The ending gives the reader a definite sense of closure.

**Figure 3.3** Rating Scale for Discourse Features: Cohesion and Coherence

Then, each feature from those 11 features is categorized into four numbers based the criteria of measurement, why getting 4, 3, 2, and 1. This categorization has been approved by Prof. Furqon as the writing lecture at UIN Sunan Ampel. **(See appendix D)** Further, after analyzing the cohesion and coherence aspects through the rating scale above, each composition is finally measured to examine the level of the cohesion and coherence from each composition through grading rubric adapted from the Assessment Rubric for The Writing Task based on CEFR descriptor at Universitat de le Illes Balears (UIB) is used. **(See appendix B)**

There are five levels provided on assessment rubric for the writing task with the highest score up to the lowest score; from 1, 0.75, 0.5, 0,25, and 0. In this case, researcher decides those five levels as *very good, good, fair, weak,* and *failed* to determine the grammatical accuracy, cohesion and coherence level of students' writings.

**G. Checking Validity of Findings**

In checking the validity of findings, firstly, researcher consults the instruments used in analyzing the data to some qualified lecturers including the advisors. After that, the researcher analyzes the data many times until the same result is gotten. Then, researcher also relates the findings with some theories needed, as theory of grammar use, cohesion and coherence theories. After relating the findings with the theories, researcher also asks other researcher to analyze the data in order to check whether the result of the analysis is same or not. Further, the researcher

consults the finding to some qualified lecturers including the advisors to get the appropriate interpretations and descriptions.