

Nominal groups in deaf and hearing students' narratives: A functional perspective

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the language aspect of deaf students in reference to their hearing counterparts plays a salient role in providing language teaching and learning treatment for the former. As the initial effort to contribute to the language pedagogy for individuals with deafness, this study reveals the patterns of nominal groups in the Indonesian narratives of four deaf senior high school students and four hearing students of the same level. A qualitative text analysis was adopted as the research design to investigate the nominal group patterns in both data sets. Eight narratives about "being chased by a dog" were first identified in terms of their schematic structure. Then the 'things' or 'participants' in the stories were analysed based on the experiential nominal group framework of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), consisting of Deictic, Numerative, Epithet, Classifier, Thing, and Qualifier. The analysis of nominal group patterns shows that 'participants' in the four stories of deaf writers were most frequently represented with *Thing* only (76.9%), *Thing* + *Deictic* (17.9%), *Thing* + *Qualifier* (3.8%), and *Thing* + *Epithet* (1.3%). In the compositions of their hearing peers, five other patterns were also employed, including those with three constituents like *Thing* + *Deictic* + *Qualifier*. The findings of this study hint at the simplified nature of deaf students' nominal groups. In narratives, complex nominal group patterns contribute to representing things specifically. It is expected that further treatment can be provided to assist deaf students in making meaning of their narratives functionally, for example, by using complex nominal group patterns.

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INTRODUCTION

Written language has been the main mode of meaning making for deaf individuals apart from their sign language. It connects deaf individuals to hearing people since the latter generally does not understand and master sign language. Despite this salient role, the writings of students with deafness have been characterized by 'unique' language employment, especially from the structural or formal grammar. Form-based linguistic studies so far have revealed that irregular grammatical features characterised the writings of deaf student writers (see Andrade et al., 2010; Favero et al.,

2007; Hamidah, 2013; Strong & Prinz, 1997; Van Beijsterveldt & Van Hell, 2009; Wolbers et al., 2014). In syntax, to illustrate, the study of Hamidah (2013) on its background has initially reported that the sentences of deaf elementary students tended to lack either subject or predicate. Another report came from Wolbers et al. (2014) who found the pattern of *noun* + *adjective* instead of *adjective* + *noun* in the English writings composed by deaf student writers. Further, one of the most common linguistic problems of deaf student writers has been linked to how to adopt subordinate clauses in complex sentences (Bowers et al., 2018; Jones et

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al., 2016; Terugi & Gutierrez-Caceres, 2015). In vocabulary, one of the linguistic features associated with the writings of the deaf has been the minimum adoption even the absence of function words (Lintangsari et al., 2019; Van Beijsterveldt & Van Hell, 2009; Wolbers et al., 2012). Lintangari et al. (2019) also revealed that deaf writers had difficulties employing Indonesian verbs. This is confirmed by the lack of affixes and specific verbs.

In the context of education, as the attempt to prepare deaf students to participate in the literate society, language teachers can not only rely on the pedagogical practices of language alone but also need knowledge about the nature of their students' writings. Prior to the provision of specific treatment of pedagogical practices to students with hearing limitation, there is a need for understanding the language nature of the group. The demand for understanding the cogent insight into how deaf students employ their language can be fulfilled by linguistic scrutiny. In other words, the practice of language teaching and learning for deaf students depends initially on linguistic studies. From the functional perspective, for instance, linguistic findings have been expected to be considered as one of inputs for language teachers to comprehend the language nature of individuals with deafness (Anderson, 1989; Kilpatrick & Wolbers, 2020).

Deafness, according to Marschark et al. (2002), has been specifically divided based on the levels of hearing loss. 26 to 40 dB loss is categorised as *mild* level; 41 to 55 dB as *moderate*; 56 to 70 dB as *moderately severe*; 71 to 90 dB as *severe*; and those above 90 dB as *profound* level. In the study of Gold and Segal (2017), individuals with severe-to-profound hearing loss are grouped as being deaf while those with mild-to-moderate hearing loss are considered as hard of hearing. Among various aspects of the deaf, their written language as mentioned earlier has become one of subjects to be researched. This possibly correlates with their lack or limited access to the verbal language input. Due to their limitation of access to oral language, the written linguistic nature of deaf students has posed more questions in comparison to that of their hearing counterparts. The latter is assumed to be less problematic than the former. Thus, by revealing the linguistic problems of the deaf group, it is expected that the linguistic gap between the deaf and hearing peers can be elaborated.

Until now, one of written genres that has been the focus of linguistic studies on the case deaf students has been the narrative (see Bowers et al., 2018; Lintangari et al., 2019; Terugi & Gutierrez-Caceres, 2015; Wolbers et al., 2014). Knapp and Watkins (2005) have proposed that the genre of narrative demands the writer to be a problem solver. Besides, narrative belong to the creative writing since writers especially students should

develop an event of conflict based on their personal experience or imaginary world (Cruz, 2019). Narratives are characterised by a sequence of experience comprising basically orientation, complication, and resolution (Gerrot & Wignell, 1994; Knapp & Watkins, 2005). The purposes of narratives are not only to entertain readers, but also more important to establish social and moral values as well as to deliver a lesson (Gerrot & Wignell, 1994).

Narratives produced by deaf students have been associated with inaccuracy of language features, as found in the investigations of Bowers et al. (2018), Terugi and Gutierrez-Caceres (2015), and Wolbers et al. (2012). The three studies, for example, have found that the narrative texts of deaf writers contained errors in subordinate clauses. To the present time, to the best of my knowledge, most studies on the language of deaf writers' narratives have tended to employ the formal or conventional linguistic framework. There has been limited insight into the language nature of their narratives viewed from the functional perspective. This has been confirmed by the limited numbers of previous studies adopting the systemic functional framework.

SFL studies on the writings of deaf students have been conducted by Gunawan et al. (2020) and Kilpatrick and Wolbers (2020) but their data were not narratives. The former analysed the textual meanings especially theme-rheme in the recounts produced by low and high achiever deaf students of various education levels from elementary to senior high school. The study found that topical and textual themes were employed by all groups while interpersonal themes were only used by the senior high school students. Previously, Kilpatrick and Wolbers (2020) had implicitly indicated that one of written aspects in the compositions deaf students was characterised by simple noun phrase, verb phrase, and adverbial phrase. The study conducted by Williams (2002) in its conclusion has reiterated that systemic functional linguistics (SFL) has opened possibilities to explore the products of student literacy. The benefit of SFL is its strength to critically assess the linguistic features of students' writings in terms of their social function or goal. The distinct principle of SFL is that language is more than just a set of rules. Rather, it serves as 'a resource for making meaning' through which we interactively shape and interpret our world and ourselves (Halliday, 2009, as cited in Derewianka, 2012, p. 129). One of linguistic features employed to make meaning based on Hallidayan SFL is nominal groups. Experiential nominal groups play a salient role in representing how things or participants of experiences are realized.

In narratives, nominal groups serve as representing things including characters in a story.

Thus, the success of revealing the characters to the readers depends on the skills in representing things with nominal groups. The specification on characters via nominal group patterns provides condensed meaning to the readers. In more a concrete sense, complex nominal groups in representing a character in a story will result in the more specific character as well as the less number of clauses to be employed. Further, this will help writers functionally achieve the goal of their narrative compositions. The study of Williams (2002) has revealed that the manoeuvre on nominal group was one of the strategies in making a story more interesting to read. This is due to the specification, description, and tension built on the characters or figures.

The scrutiny on the nominal group patterns of students' writings can contribute to providing the insight into their difficulties in making meaning functionally especially via the written mode (see Williams, 2002). Student writers have been known to narrate a written story with more speaking-like linguistic features and patterns including plain nominal groups (Williams, 2002). The nature of meaning making via speaking and writing is not alike in that the latter is denser in terms of lexicality (Halliday, 1993). The creation of denser meaning is played by the complexity of nominal group patterns which are still problematic for student writers. The initial investigation of Cruz (2019) on students' essays and stories has reported the simplified employment of nominal groups. The study in its further phase found that the exposure to nominal groups had successfully assisted students in producing more complex nominal group constituents. The students were found able to represent denser and more precise meaning of things, participants, or events.

Theoretically, nominal groups are defined as the groups of words built up around a key noun (Dare, 2010). They especially refer to a group of words representing the main thing that can be accompanied by its specified entities such as quantities, attributes, identities, class, and qualities. From the perspective of SFL, an experiential nominal group can consist of Deictic, Numerative, Epithet, Classifier, Thing, and Qualifier (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Deictic in the nominal group refers to "whether or not some specific subset of the Thing is intended" and its nature "is determined by the system of DETERMINATION (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 312). The term Deictic in a simple way is associated with demonstrative and possessive. The second constituent of nominal group, Numerative, "indicates some numerical feature of the particular subset of the Thing: either quantity or order, either exact or inexact". Another component, Epithet, "indicates some quality of the subset, for example *old, long, blue, fast*" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 317-318). A little bit

different with Epithet, Classifier as another constituent of nominal group "indicates a particular subclass of the Thing in question, e.g. *electric trains, passenger trains, toy trains*" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 319).

The most salient constituent of nominal group is 'Thing' representing participant of experiential meaning in a minimally complete sense. The last component of nominal group is Qualifier defined as "what of the element which follows the Thing" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 323). Different from Deictic, Numerative, Epithet, and Classifier which precede the Thing and all are represented in the forms of words, a Qualifier follows a Thing and it is expressed in the forms of a phrase or clause.

In the narrative genre, as introduced earlier, nominal groups play a role mainly in answering the question of "what is being talked about" (Dare, 2010). To the present time, stories produced by student writers even those of the tertiary level have been characterised by simplified patterns of nominal groups (see Correa & Domínguez, 2014; Cruz, 2019; Kilpatrick & Wolbers, 2020). Further, the studies of Correa and Domínguez (2014), Cruz (2019), and Ko (2010) have proved that the explicit exposure to nominal group practice in writings helped students make meaning more functionally. This can be done, to mention one, by making use of complex patterns of nominal groups. However, previous studies so far have only made use of the linguistic data produced by common or hearing students. The current study hence aims to reveal the insight into the nominal group features of deaf and hearing student writers in their personal narratives. The principle notion behind this purpose is not to genuinely compare the linguistic skills between both since they do not match by nature.

Rather, the ideal goal of the present study is to reveal if there are problems in the nominal group patterns of deaf student writers in comparison with those of their hearing peers. In the further phase, it is expected that any pedagogical treatment can be formulated to help the former writes more functionally through the adoption of complex nominal group patterns. The current study hence contributes to the Indonesian language teaching and learning practice for deaf students by answering the following question: how are the participants in the narratives composed by deaf and hearing writers represented by nominal group patterns?

METHOD

The present qualitative study employed text analysis under the case of deaf and hearing students in two different senior high schools. The text analysis was adopted to figure out the representation of participants or things in the narratives composed by both types of writers. The method was specifically conducted to reveal the

patterns of experiential nominal groups in their narratives. The deaf participants of study were four senior high school students. Three of them were eleventh-grade students and one of them was a tenth-grade student. All were instructed to narrate their real-life story about being chased by a dog at a given time of one hour. From the hearing group, the same number of participants of equal grades were also conditioned to write the same story at the equally provided length of time. The data of the two groups were elicited at different times. Before the writing process, all participants of both groups had been confirmed to have personal experiences about being chased by a dog. For the deaf students, the instructions were delivered in the form of written forms, then they were also explained directly by a teacher who mastered the sign language.

The four deaf female students in the current study were initialised AL, AU, UC, and NA. Student AL was 17 years + 4 months old while student NA was 19 years + 2 months when the data were elicited. Both have experienced profound deafness since their birth because of the virus of Rubella infecting the foetus during the pregnant period. Student UC was 18 years + 4 months old when the data were elicited and have had profound deafness caused by frequent illness after birth. The fourth student, student AU who was 18 years + 9 months old when the date were collected, has experienced profound deafness caused by drugs

since the age of one year. The four participants from the hearing group consisted of three females (NU, IR, and NO) and one male (RA). All have no problems with their hearing. In the time of data elicitation, the ages of student NU, IR, NM, and RA in sequence were 16 years old, 17 years + 5 months old, 17 years old, and 16 years + 2 months old.

For the data analysis, eight Indonesian personal narratives composed by both types of deaf and hearing student writers were initially evaluated in terms of their three basic elements of generic structure. The basic elements of narrative schematic structure were orientation, complication, and resolution. The subsequent analysis was on the components of transitivity system namely, the process, participants, and circumstances. Then experiential nominal groups representing participants or things of the narrative stories were scrutinised.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study is to depict the representation of participants or things in the real-life narrative constructed by deaf and hearing senior high school students. Specifically, it aims to reveal the experiential nominal group patterns in their stories. Below are depicted the patterns of experiential nominal groups employed by deaf and hearing student writers in their stories.

Table 1
Nominal group patterns in deaf students' narratives

Patterns	Occurrences	
	Frequency	Percentage
Thing	60	76.9
Thing + Deictic	14	17.9
Thing + Qualifier	3	3.8
Thing+ Epithet	1	1.3
Total	78	100

Table 2
Nominal group patterns in hearing students' narratives

Patterns	Occurrences	
	Frequency	Percentage
Thing	47	55.3
Thing + Deictic	19	22.4
Thing + Qualifier	6	7.1
Thing + Epithet	5	5.9
Thing + Classifier	3	3.5
Numerative + Thing	1	1.2
Thing + Epithet + Qualifier	1	1.2
Thing + Deictic + Qualifier	2	2.4
Thing + Numerative +Qualifier	1	1.0
Total	85	100

As depicted by both tables of nominal group patterns above, there are similarities and differences between deaf and hearing students in representing participants or things in their stories about being chased by a dog. The similarities exist

apparently in terms of the most frequently employed nominal group patterns while the gap lies in the variations of their complexity.

In terms of similarities, the most frequently employed nominal groups in the narratives of deaf

and hearing students sequentially encompass Thing only, Thing + Deictic, Thing + Qualifier, and Thing + Epithet. Thing in the deaf students' writings reaches 76.9 % and it is counted 55.3% in the data of their hearing counterparts. The second highest pattern of nominal group, Thing + Deictic, appears 17.9 % in the former and 22% in the latter. The third frequent pattern, Thing + Qualifier, occurs in 3.8% in the deaf students' compositions and 7.1% in the writings of their hearing counterparts. The fourth frequent pattern, Deictic + Epithet, reaches 1.3% in the former and 5.9% in the latter. The examples of four nominal group patterns in both data sets are provided below.

Extracts from deaf students

Thing

waktu dulu kecil saya^T pernah dikejar anjing^T
(When I was a kid, one day I^T was chased by a dog^T.)

Thing + Deictic

anjing^Tnya^D pergi jauh tidak datang Dekat Lagi
(The^T dog^D went away not getting close anymore.)

Thing + Qualifier

nah itu ada anjing^T yang suka main di pinggir jalan^Q
(Well, there's a dog^T that liked playing on the road side^Q.)

Thing + Epithet

ber bulu^T hitam^E
(It had black^E hair^T.)

Extracts from hearing students

Thing

Dalam perjalanan ke toko, saya^T melewati rumah berwarna putih
(On the way to a shop, I^T passed a white house.)

Thing + Deictic

Ketika kami sudah berlari jauh anjing^T itu^D pun berhenti dan kembali ke rumahnya
(When we had run far, then the^D dog^T stopped and went back to its house.)

Thing + Qualifier

dan ia memelihara anjing^T yang tidak dipelihara dalam kandang melainkan berkeliaran begitu saja^Q
(and she had a dog^T that was not kept in a cage but it just wandered around^Q.)

Thing + Epithet

itu anjing^T gila^E
(it's a mad^E dog^T)

Despite the mentioned similarities in the ranks of four nominal group patterns, the occurrences of Deictic only in the stories of deaf students much surpass those in their hearing counterparts. This correlates with the more various nominal group patterns produced by hearing writers. As shown by the tables above, only four patterns of nominal groups were employed by deaf students, while in the data of their hearing peers nine patterns were employed.

Further, the most noticeably gap of nominal group patterns found in the narratives of deaf and hearing students lies in the variability of the patterns. Five patterns of nominal groups were found in the data set of hearing writers but absent in the compositions of their deaf counterparts. The five patterns encompass Numerative + Thing, Thing + Classifier, Thing + Numerative + Qualifier, Thing + Deictic + Qualifier, and Thing + Epithet + Qualifier. Of the five patterns, three are realised in three-constituent-word nominal groups and two are in the forms of two constituents. The five patterns of hearing students' nominal groups that do not exist in the data set of deaf students are shown below.

Thing + Classifier

dan mendengar suara^T anjing "guk... guk... guk..."^C
(and I heard a dog^C bark "woof... woof... woof..."^T)

Numerative + Thing

tiba-tiba datang tiga^N anjing^T dari arah yang berbeda.
(Suddenly three^N dogs^T came from different directions.)

Thing + Epithet + Qualifier

Hari itu, hari dimana aku dan ayah dikejar anjing menjadi momen^T menakutkan^E yang menjadi cerita lucu^Q
(That day, the day when my father and I were chased by a dog became a scary^E moment^T which became a funny story^Q.)

Thing + Deictic + Qualifier

karena setiap pulang sekolah, kita melewati rumah^T bu merry^D yang dipenuhi anjing kesayangannya^Q
(because every time we went home from school, we passed Mrs. Merry's^D house^T which was full of her beloved dogs^Q.)

Thing + Numerative + Qualifier

Panik dan takut menjadi hal^T pertama^N yang kurasakan^Q saat itu
(Being panic and fear was the first^N thing^T that I felt^Q at that time)

Based on the findings of the current study, participants in the narratives of deaf and hearing students were represented by nominal groups in similar and different ways. The similarities are seen from the four most frequently employed patterns of nominal groups. As depicted earlier, the four most frequently employed nominal group patterns in both data sets of deaf and hearing writers in sequence refer to Thing, Thing + Deictic, Thing + Qualifier, and Thing+ Epithet. The tendency to employ Thing only and Thing with Deictic was also found in the study carried out by Cruz (2019). The study further reported that the simplified forms of nominal groups produced by hearing students became more complex after the students were taught with SFL experiential nominal group.

In terms of differences, the first gap of nominal group patterns between the narratives of deaf and hearing students indicates that in general the former tended to employ one or two-constituent nominal group patterns. The one-constituent pattern refers to Thing only while the two-constituent patterns cover Thing + Deictic, Thing + Qualifier, Thing + Epithet. For comparison, hearing students did not only use one or two-constituent nominal group patterns but also the three-constituent patterns like Thing + Numerative + Qualifier, Thing + Deictic + Qualifier, and Thing + Epithet + Qualifier. A previous study conducted by Kilpatrick and Wolbers (2020) has also implicitly indicated that one of the challenges faced by deaf student writers was associated with their adoption of simple nominal groups.

Another insight into the gap of nominal group patterns between deaf and hearing writers in the current research is noticed from the use of Numerative + Thing and Thing +Classifier. Whereas both were employed in the narratives of hearing students, none of those formations were found in the data set of deaf writers. Concerning the case of Numerative alone, in another discourse like business, this element of nominal group compared with others was employed in the least frequency (Ruan & Jiaotong, 2016). The corpus-based study on English business texts has revealed that Numerative occurrences only reached 1.4 % compared with Deictic, Epithet, Classifier, and Thing. Further, in terms of Classifier, their corpus-based study reported that the occurrences of Thing + Classifier only reached 3.4%, compared with other combinations of nominal group elements. Related with the present study, their findings hints that the concept of Numerative and Classifier is more challenging to comprehend compared to other constituents.

The fact of simplified forms of nominal group patterns produced by deaf students in the current study was also underpinned by Lintang Sari et al. (2019). Their data relied on deaf elementary students' written narratives that were prompted

based on an audio-visual film. In particular, their analysis on the micro structure of narratives has revealed that the children tended to write '*anak laki-laki*' (boy) for '*tiga anak laki-laki*' (three boys). What can be noticed from the data analysed by Lintang Sari et al. (2019) is the absence of Numerative in the written version of the deaf children and this problem is also found by the present analysis. Although the study participants of their research were deaf elementary school students, some of their findings agree with the case of deaf senior high school students in the current study. Deaf students regardless of their different grades seem to have challenges in representing things specifically in their stories, especially by using numerative to represent participants. Even after deaf students were provided with more concrete and real stories in the form of films, their recreated narratives in the written mode still lacked specific things (Lintang Sari et al., 2019). Compared with the things in the audio-visual forms of narratives, those in the written forms produced by deaf students were simpler and less specific.

Deaf students' less complex patterns of nominal groups to represent participants in their stories about being chased by a dog possibly correlate more with their limited access to the verbal language rather than with their basic cognitive skill. By nature, either deaf or hearing individuals without intellectual disability have the abilities to store their experiences in their cognition. This includes the specification of the characters, things, or events of their stories. Briefly speaking, whether people have rich linguistic resources or not in their mind, they still have basic cognitive function to store memories including experiences. However, the problem arises when the meaning in their cognition is needed to be transformed into explicit verbal representation especially in writings. This phenomenon has triggered a gap between the implicit meaning that exists in the cognition and that in the explicit verbal representation. Thus, the existence of explicitly rich linguistic resources (especially nominal group elements and patterns) in the mind is believed to help in representing characters or events specifically. The current study insists that the inadequacy of pertinent linguistic resources in the cognition contributes to the simpler nominal group patterns in deaf students' compositions.

Before the present research was conducted, there had been limited knowledge about the nominal group patterns employed by deaf writers to represent participants in their stories. Linguistic studies to the present time (except the present study) have tended to focus on the nominal groups of hearing writers especially students. The previous linguistic studies on the nominal group patterns of hearing student writers alone even have claimed that their writings were still characterised by

difficulties. This has been proved by the use of simple nominal group patterns. The study carried out by Cruz (2019), to illustrate, has revealed that the complete nominal group patterns consisting of Deictic + Epithet + Classifier + Thing + Qualifier were rarely found in the writings of hearing students. Instead, based on the study, the most frequently employed three-constituent nominal group patterns referred only to Deictic + Thing + Qualifier.

In reference to the discourse community of written narrative, one of its linguistic feature characteristics is associated with the density of nominal groups in a clause. Dense nominal groups in the genre of narratives serve to assist the creation of functional meaning by giving qualities to the participants in a story. In short, they allow writers to represent the participants or things involved in a story in more specific ways. As it has been proposed by Fang et al. (2006), the process of making specific meaning is mediated by the specification of the nominal group formations. To illustrate, complex nominal groups in narratives have been found to play a role in representing main characters (Ko, 2010). The more specific participants represented in an event, the more interesting a story to read. Besides, participants represented in details through the adoption of complex nominal groups will help readers imagine the event of a story in their minds.

The present study scrutinizing participant representation in the real-life narratives of deaf and hearing students has offered a new insight into the linguistic skills in employing nominal group patterns. What can be noticed from the present study is that deaf students employed less complex nominal group patterns to represent things in their stories compared with their hearing counterparts. Further, based on previous related studies, even the nominal group patterns of hearing students have been found to be less complex in comparison to the target writings expected by the discourse community of narratives. Thus, deaf student writers encounter double challenges to employ nominal groups for representing participants in their stories. First, their meaning making with nominal groups is expected at least to match that of their hearing counterparts. Second, their use of nominal groups is also expected to approach the ideal or target writings set by the discourse community of narrative genre. The two gaps of writings between the deaf and hearing students and between hearing students and professional writers have possibly triggered two divisions of linguistic studies until now. The first one has been carried out by analysing the data of deaf and hearing student writers. The latter has been conducted by working on the data of hearing students and advanced writers.

Despite the two distinct types of data, the final and main objective is the same, that is, to figure out the linguistic nature between developing and more developed writings. This has been linked to the attempt to help language learners write functionally based on the expectation of discourse community. For instance, the corpus-based study of Borucinsky and Kegalj (2019) on the nominal groups of technical English has provided the input for ESP teachers for assisting their students in how to write functionally with appropriate lexical density. This feedback has been also offered by the study of Ruan and Jiaotong (2016) on the nominal groups of business English. Similarly, the current study making use of the data from deaf and hearing students also provides pedagogical input for Indonesian language teachers.

In the further phase, it is expected that deaf students' challenges in employing nominal groups can be mitigated by certain language teaching and learning treatments. One of the teaching and learning methods that can cater for this is associated with the genre-based approach. This approach has been confirmed successful in helping student writers compose nominal groups consisting of pre- and post-modifiers (Ko, 2010). The study of Ko (2010) has even claimed that the exposure to the approach enabled students to construct embedded clauses for qualifying the Thing in their nominal groups. Thus, deaf students' practices of employing complex nominal group patterns including in Bahasa Indonesia are expected to be carried out under the genre-based instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study has found that nominal group patterns in the narratives of deaf students were less various in comparison with those of the hearing students. The writings of deaf students were also inclined to comprise nominal groups with two constituents rather than those with three elements. The less various and less complex nominal group patterns in the narratives of deaf student writers have resulted in less specific participants or things. Ideally, more specific things in a story reflect more vivid characters. This is one of the aspects for achieving the social purposes of narratives. Despite the gap of findings in both data sets of deaf and hearing writers, there is a similar nominal group pattern in the writings of the two groups. Their writings contain four most frequently similar patterns of nominal groups. This phenomenon indicates that the four patterns (as explained in the finding and discussion section) are the easiest way of representing things in a story.

Apart from its findings, this study has only focused on the case of four deaf individuals in a state special senior high school for deaf students and four hearing individuals of the same level.

Besides, the stories were limited only to the experience about being chased by a dog. Thus, the results of the current study may or may not be conclusive for other cases. Last but not least, there still lies a need for further analyses on the writings of deaf and hearing students, for example, based on another framework of SFL or based on other genres of written compositions. More comparative functional-based linguistic research is needed to construct a holistic understanding about the language nature of deaf students in relation to their hearing peers. Hence, in the further phase, it is expected that the holistic knowledge can be used to help the former write better.

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