

## ABSTRACT

This study reports the investigation of the realisation of nominalisations in students' texts. Nominalisation is one of grammatical metaphors that dominates the language of science. It is defined as the process of turning words that are not normally nouns into nouns. Three research questions are posted, inquiring about the students' level of understanding nominalisation, its manifestation, and its types. This study is largely qualitative although some numerical data are used. The data were collected from 20 Polytechnic students, majoring in mechanical engineering, by conducting two English tests and an interview. One test examines students' understanding of nominalisation through a reading text, and the other examines the use of nominalisation by students in an essay test. Analyses of the data used the framework of nominalising metaphors proposed by Halliday (1998, in Ravelli & Ellis, 2004). The study found that the students have moderate level of understanding on nominalisation. This moderate understanding is a bit above the average, which is 65%. Some students are high achievers but some others are low. They produced four nominalisations in their texts using suffixes *-ment* and *t/sion* like *advancement* and *calibration*. Moreover, they used 'default' nominalisations, the ones that usually appear in academic texts of their fields of study. This study concludes that the students' moderate understanding on nominalisations in a reading text is not sufficient to produce nominalisations optimally in written texts. Furthermore, they still experience some difficulties in understanding scientific texts, since nominalisation is one of the characteristics of scientific text. These data are relevance to the students' ability in understanding scientific text. This study recommends that explicit teaching be given to them to improve their grammatical competence, particularly nominalisation.

**Key words:** *nominalisation, suffixes, grammatical metaphor*