CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter highlights the summarised findings and discussion of the present study. It also reemphasises the study contributions both theoretically and practically. At the end of this chapter, the limitation of the study and other possibilities for further related studies are provided. The sub-sections of this chapter are divided into conclusion and recommendation.

5.1 CONCLUSION

This functional and cognitive linguistic study has aimed to examine the language choices in deaf and hearing students' narratives. It has specifically focused on revealing the language choices of deaf writers in respect to their hearing peers in terms of the macro and micro levels. The macro-level is addressed to the generic structure of narrative while the latter is associated with transitivity system, the metaphor within the transitivity system, and the mental state within the transitivity system. Descriptively, whereas the functional perspective is realised by narrative generic structure and transitivity system, the cognitive perspective is manifested by the metaphor and mental state terms. Interpretatively, whereas the functional perspective is adopted to examine students' language choices based on the social function of narrative genre, the cognitive perspective is employed to explain them in relation to the cognitive function.

Further, in the present study, the writings of deaf students are viewed in terms of those of their hearing counterparts. This is to figure out if there are noticeable differences or gap of language nature between both groups. The comparison of language nature between both categories of students is carried out to reveal the insight into the linguistic difficulties faced by deaf student writers in representing their experiences. Thus, in the further phase any treatments can be formulated to assist them how to write narratives more functionally.

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Based on the comparative analysis of the present study, the narrative generic structure constructed by deaf student writers is less complex in comparison to that of their hearing peers. Their stories still lack complex orientation especially abstract and meta-story as well as lack evaluation. The abstract and meta-story in the current study are parts of orientation and they are associated with the introduction outside the events of stories, attracting the attention of the readers. In the stories of hearing students, the abstract reveals the territory of a story while the meta-story shows that the writer has a story to tell. Further, in terms of optional section, the narratives of deaf writers tend to focus on coda (expressive comments) instead of evaluation (cognitive judgment). For comparison, those of their hearing peers tend to focus on the latter.

From the aspect of transitivity system, both deaf and hearing student writers employed the six types of processes. The most frequent processes in both data sets are realized in material clauses followed by relational clauses. The least processes in sequence are existential and behavioural clauses. In terms of the difference, verbal clauses in the hearing students' data narratives outnumber the mental clauses. In the deaf writers' data set, this occurs vice versa. However, the real occurrences of gap between verbal and mental clauses in both data sets are in limited numbers.

Further, when the frequency of each process between both data sets is compared, the writings of deaf students tend to lack relational processes. There is a noticeable gap in the numbers of relational processes (especially the identifying one) between the two data sets. In terms of types of participants, the clauses of deaf writers still lack abstract participants especially in material, relational, and existential clauses. This indicates that the deaf group tended to encounter difficulties in representing abstract things and events. In terms of circumstance, the writings of deaf participants still lack the location of time as the setting of their stories. This lack of time circumstance especially occurs in the material processes. The deaf group instead tended to easily represent their experiences with places as the circumstances. In the data set of hearing peers, the gap between the use of place and time circumstances is more in 'balance'.

Apart from the gap in process, participant, and circumstance types, there are other discrepancies between the narratives of deaf and hearing student writers. In material processes alone, deaf writers tended to represent their physical experiences involving actors only. Their hearing peers on the other hand tended to employ material clauses involving two-side participants, especially actors and goals/ranges. In relational processes, the deaf students were inclined to establish meaning relation with attributive clauses (giving attributes) rather than with identifying clauses. None of identifying relational clauses was found in their writings. In terms of mental experiences, there was the tendency of the deaf group to project physical events instead of relational experience in their mental clauses. In the analysed data of hearing peers, the gap between projected relational and physical events was little. In terms of verbal experiences, deaf student writers tended to project other experiences. In the verbal clauses of their hearing counterparts, this occurred vice versa. Verbiage (things realised in nominal groups) instead of projected clauses were more frequently employed by the hearing group.

From the aspect of metaphorical language, the analysis of the current study has found that deaf student writers in comparison with their hearing peers tended not to employ linguistic features reflecting analogical thinking. The phenomena of 'living' metaphor are absent in their narratives. This reflects that the deaf group had difficulties in explicitly (verbally) comparing two different concepts with metaphorical linguistic strategies. In the data set of the hearing group, there is the adoption of metaphorical linguistic features that mostly occur in material processes and then in relational processes. In material clauses, most metaphorically interpreted linguistic constituents are on the processes employed to compare abstract actors or goals/ranges with the concrete sources outside the clauses. In relational clauses, the metaphorically interpreted linguistic constituents are more on the attributes/identifiers constructed to directly address comparison to the carriers/identified (target in metaphor). The metaphorical linguistic strategies in the material clauses are more complex and indirect compared to those in relational clauses. Moreover, the phenomena of advanced metaphor are often found in material clauses as it is not easy to trace the exact concepts being compared.

The last finding of this study is the mental state terms. They were employed by both groups of deaf and hearing students. Explicit mental state terms commonly occur in the mental and relational processes. In the former, the mental state terms appear in the processes while in the latter they occur in attributes. In reference to the data set of hearing peers, the mental state terms employed by deaf student narrators are less various. This especially occurs in the mental state terms representing positive qualities of characters. This phenomenon can be associated with the shorter and simpler orientations of deaf students' narratives. For comparison, longer orientation sections in the narratives of hearing writers serve as portraying positive mental state of characters preceding the peak of problems.

In general, based on this functional and cognitive linguistic analysis on the narratives of deaf and hearing high school students, it is concluded that the former tended to have problems in the meaning making that involved advanced cognitive abilities. This occurred especially in the abstract meaning making, evaluative meaning making, and analogical meaning making. The difficulties in evaluative meaning making are reflected from the less complex generic structure in the narratives of the deaf group. Second, the difficulties in abstract meaning making are indicated by the transitivity system. Third, the problems of analogical meaning making are confirmed by the absence of living metaphor in the deaf group's narratives.

Based on the findings of the present study, the language choices of deaf and hearing students in making meaning of their narrative experiences were determined not only by their understanding about the social function of stories, but also by the availability of rich linguistic resources in their cognition. Advanced cognitive skills such as abstracting, evaluating, and analogizing require rich contextualized lexico-grammatical features in the mind. The present study believes that deaf students have these cognitive skills but in implicit ways. The problems arise when they need to make meaning explicitly. Thus, rich meaningful lexico-grammatical features are needed by the cognition to make explicit meaning with advanced cognitive skills.

The present study infers that deaf students' difficulties in making meaning of their narratives is believed as the result of their delayed access to the natural language linking experiences to the establishment of concept in the cognition. This commonly occurs during the critical period in childhood. Existing body of literature to the present time has claimed that deaf individuals raised in hearing families (especially during the critical period in childhood) tend to have lower level of literacy compared with those raised by deaf parents. This is due to the limited input of natural language provided by hearing parents. Under the present study, all deaf participants have been raised in hearing families. In hearing individuals, the unlimited access to meaningful spoken language from the environment during this period allows them to integrate experiences, linguistic resources, and concept in their cognition. In turns, the existence of contextually rich linguistic resources in the cognition then will help in making meaning explicitly via verbal symbols. Individuals without intellectual disability including deaf students by nature have basic cognitive skills to detect meaning implicitly. Again, the problems appears when the implicit meaning in the cognition needs to be transformed into explicit representation especially in the written mode.

In respect to the findings of the current study, it is expected that there are two types of benefit that can be offered. Theoretically, this study contributes to developing the knowledge about the linguistic nature of deaf students from the perspective of functional and cognitive linguistics. It provides the insight into deaf students' linguistic choices in reference to those of their hearing peers.

For further development of grounded theory in linguistic field alone, the analysed data have provided a new insight into the model of meaning making. In terms of linguistic metaphor, the creation of metaphoric meaning tends to be mediated by material and relational clauses though this can be also found in other types of clauses. In material clauses (the process of doing/happening/action), the metaphoric linguistic strategies are basically played by the processes. In relational clauses (the process of establishing relations especially with 'being'), the linguistic features made metaphoric lie in the attributes or identifiers. Besides, whereas the metaphoric strategies in the

material clauses tend to be complex and indirect, in the relational clauses they tend to be vice versa. Further, in terms of mental state within the transitivity system framework, the terms reflecting mental state exist explicitly in mental and relational clauses. When represented in mental clauses, they exist in the processes. When constructed in relational clauses, the mental state is reflected in the attributes. The new model of meaning making offered by the present study, however, still needs further evidences due to the limited numbers of study participants and due to the specific context of the study.

In terms of practical benefit, it is expected that the results of the present study can be used as one of inputs for the language educators of Bahasa Indonesia to assist their deaf students in constructing functional stories. This can be conducted by providing explicit and contextualized scaffolding within the framework of transitivity system under the genre-based instruction. In teaching metaphor, material and relational clauses under the narrative genre can be employed. Metaphor within relational clauses should be taught and learned before that within material clauses due to the more direct metaphoric strategies in the former. Further, mental state terms under the genre-based instruction can be taught and learned within the mental and relational clauses. In addition, evaluative strategies can be taught and studied especially within attributive relational clauses. More important is that making definition or characterisation can be taught and learned within identifying relational clauses. Pedagogical practices for deaf students within SFL framework, however, need modifications that are adapted to students' condition. This can be carried out, for example, by using practical terms and techniques that can be understood easily by deaf students.

To conclude, the present study has revealed that deaf students' main problems in their narratives exist specifically in the meaning making that involves advanced cognitive abilities. They encompass constructing abstract meaning, constructing evaluative meaning, and constructing analogical meaning. Based on the functional perspective, the three categories are associated with some of characteristics of advanced narratives. Abstract meaning making contributes to more dynamic plot of stories while evaluation allows a problematic event to be loaded with judgmental values. In addition,

metaphor represents problematic experiences with different but vivid ways and it will create cognitive effects on the readers. 'Abstraction', evaluation, and metaphor all contribute to achieving the social function of narrative text.

Based on the cognitive view, whereas meaning making of abstract events/things demands more advanced cognitive ability compared with the meaning making of concrete events/things, evaluative skill involves the second highest level of cognitive abilities. Different from both, constructing metaphor even needs not only abstract but also analogical thinking skills. Before being able to do analogy with metaphoric linguistic features, the cognition has firstly to be able to make meaning of abstract things. Overall, abstract meaning making, evaluative meaning making, and metaphorical meaning making are considered cognitively challenging since they demand more effort in the cognition. Thus, the pedagogical practices of Bahasa Indonesia for deaf students in the secondary level should emphasise the meaning making that involves advanced cognitive skills such as representing abstract experiences, evaluating things, and making analogy. Further, with meaningfully rich linguistic resources constructed in the cognition, it expected that abstract, evaluative, and metaphorical meaning making will be easily mediated.

Finally, the knowledge produced by this SFL and cognitive linguistic study is possibly not free from any drawbacks. Nevertheless, as long as the tendency of linguistic phenomena between both groups of deaf and hearing students is not affected, then it can be concluded that the knowledge generated by the current study is scientifically reliable and valid. Last but not least, the present study does not aim at achieving absolute conclusion, but rather at getting closer to the truth.

5.2 RECOMMENDATION

Despite its findings, the current study has only relied on the case of thirteen hearing and eleven deaf students from three different senior high schools. The hearing group studied in a state-run school while the deaf group studied in two distinct schools that were also run by the Indonesian government. Due to the limited numbers of

participants participating in the study, the findings can or cannot be conclusive to other cases. On account of that, related studies in the future can extend the present findings by involving larger numbers of participants with a quantitative design. To illustrate, subsequent studies can employ experimental or correlational designs to confirm the tendency of deaf students to make meaning with attributive vs identifying relational clauses. Apart from the linguistic field, educational studies can prove if metaphor for deaf students can be effectively taught within the material and relational clauses.

Further, in terms of intervening factors, the current study does not lay its foci on students' levels of intelligence, sex, and other aspects that might contribute to their writings. The focus of this study is limited to the written language of deaf student writers in respect to that of their hearing counterparts. For the deaf group alone, their narratives were not studied in regards to various levels of deafness since all participants of the study had profound deafness. Their narratives were also not evaluated based on whether they were equipped with hearing aids. The main similarities among the eleven senior high school deaf group were that all of them had no intellectual disabilities and that they were able to write. Besides, none of them had a family member with deafness. Due to the elaborated limitation on the attributes or characteristics of the study participants, again, the findings of this study can or cannot be generalizable to other contexts. Thus, future functional and cognitive linguistic studies can examine the writings of deaf students by dividing them into certain groups based on their specific attributes.

Another limitation of the present study exists in the topic of the writing. The narratives in the present study were only limited to the stories about 'the most disappointing experience in my life'. As the effort to extend the current findings, future studies can make use of narratives with various topics. Besides, for the knowledge development of genre-based approach, other functional and cognitive linguistic research can also analyse other genres such as recount, descriptive essay, even argumentative essay. The more various genres used as the media to understand the written language of deaf students, the more insight into their linguistic nature will be gained and finally a holistic knowledge about the language of deaf individuals will be produced.