Exploring Situational Writing Strategies in English: A Systemic Functional Linguistics Analysis of Student Responses

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Abstract

The research focused on how students effectively establish rapport with authors and readers in essays through linguistic constructs. Using qualitative methods, a group of 20 participants was studied, with three students selected for situational writing assessment. Halliday's (2004) metafunctions framework—ideational, interpersonal, and textual—guided the analysis of their compositions. The findings revealed that students 1, 2, and 3 adeptly employed these metafunctions. The ideational dimension was used to coherently present reasons for incomplete homework while maintaining thematic consistency. Interpersonally, the students employed respectful tones, expressed contrition, commitment, appreciation, and responsibility. Textually, their work exhibited logical structure and cohesion. Through the integration of these metafunctions, students enhanced their communication strategies. The study underscores the significance of metafunction awareness in language education, suggesting that incorporating ideational, interpersonal, and textual dimensions can elevate writing proficiency. It offers guidance for adaptable communication, nurtures comprehensive communication skills, and establishes transferable proficiencies and assessment criteria. Ultimately, this research contributes to effective communication pedagogy across diverse contexts, showcasing the nuanced strategies students employ to connect with authors and readers.

Contribution/Originality: This research serves as a roadmap for authors to construct rational and compelling contextual essays, devoid of emotional reliance, while fostering a compelling reader connection grounded in logic and evidence. Clarity, impartial presentation, and countering opposing views are crucial for captivating essays, employing ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions in writing.

1. Introduction

Writing comes in various forms, each serving unique purposes and audiences. For instance, narrative writing tells stories in fiction, novels, and autobiographies, featuring
characters, settings, and plots. Expository writing explains topics objectively in essays, articles, and textbooks. Persuasive writing aims to convince readers of the writer’s viewpoint in essays, editorials, and advertisements. Descriptive writing uses vivid language to create mental images, found in poetry and travel writing. Technical writing explains complex concepts in manuals and reports.

Academic writing follows a formal style in research papers and dissertations. Business writing includes professional communication like emails and reports. Journalistic writing informs about current events in newspapers and online news. Poetry expresses emotions and ideas through rhythmic language. Scriptwriting creates scripts for theater, film, or radio. Personal writing involves diaries and personal essays. Blogging shares information and opinions on personal or professional websites. Each style demands specific skills to effectively communicate with the intended audience.

Several scholars (Wischgoll, 2017; MacArthur, 2012; Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009; Kellogg, 2008) have debated that writing is the process of expressing thoughts, ideas, information, or stories through the use of written language. It is a fundamental means of communication and has been instrumental in recording human history, preserving knowledge, and sharing ideas across time and space. However, Backer, Van Keer and Valcke (2016) have noted that writing is not the only way of expressing ideas; it also showcases the writer’s cognitive ability to convince readers.

Various grammarians and writers emphasize that writing should exhibit coherence, clarity, reader engagement, and be free of language errors for several important reasons. Firstly, coherent writing means that the content is logical, coherent, and well-organized. It follows a clear structure, with ideas flowing logically from one point to another. Sensible writing allows the reader to easily comprehend the message being conveyed without confusion.

Secondly, clarity is essential to ensure that the intended message is understood by the reader. Ambiguity and vagueness can lead to misinterpretation or misunderstanding of the writer's intentions. By using clear language and well-defined concepts, writers can effectively communicate their ideas and information.

Thirdly, engaging writing captivates the reader’s attention and keeps them interested throughout the text. This can be achieved by using compelling anecdotes, storytelling, relevant examples, and addressing the reader directly. Engaging writing fosters a connection between the writer and the reader, making the reading experience more enjoyable and memorable.

Finally, writing that is free from language errors, such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes, is crucial for maintaining credibility and professionalism. Errors can distract the reader and undermine the writer’s authority on the subject matter. Proper language usage enhances the overall quality of the writing and helps to convey ideas more effectively.

The scholars also note that writing that is coherent, clear, engaging, and free from language errors is essential for effective communication. It ensures that the writer’s message is conveyed accurately, resonates with the reader, and leaves a lasting impact.
Good writing skills are valuable in various fields, including academia, business, journalism, and creative endeavors.

There were several issues highlighted concerning the writing abilities of school students. Cho, Schunn and Charney (2006) emphasized that effective communication through writing is a crucial skill empowering students to express ideas, convey information, and connect with readers. However, it is frequently observed that many students encounter difficulties in producing writing that is coherent, logical, and engaging. This essay aims to explore common challenges faced by students in their writing and propose strategies to enhance clarity, coherence, logical order, and reader engagement in their compositions.

Furthermore, Chanquoy (2008) pointed out that one primary issue hindering students' writing is the lack of clarity in their sentences. This arises when students do not fully grasp the subject matter, leading to the use of vague or imprecise language. Additionally, poor grammar and sentence structure can obscure the intended message.

Another common pitfall, as noted by Braaksma, Rijlaarsdam, Van den Bergh and Van Hout-Wolters (2004), Bandura (2006) is the absence of coherence and cohesion within students' writing. This results in disjointed sentences and paragraphs, making it challenging for readers to follow the flow of ideas. In line with Bandura (2006), Veenman, Wilhelm and Beishuizen (2004) further indicated that students may struggle with arranging their ideas in a logical order, leading to disorganized essays that confuse readers.

Despite these findings from Bandura (1986; 2006) and Topping (2005), underscored insufficient engagement with the reader as a major concern. Establishing a connection with the audience is crucial for maintaining interest and ensuring that the message resonates effectively. However, many students fail to achieve this, resulting in dull and uninteresting writing.

Improving student writing demands a concerted effort to address the various challenges they face. By prioritizing clarity, coherence, logical order, and reader engagement, students can significantly enhance the quality of their writing. Encouraging students to seek feedback, revise their work, and continuously practice their writing skills will contribute to their growth as proficient and effective communicators. Equipping students with these writing abilities will not only benefit their academic endeavors but also prepare them for success in various personal and professional pursuits where effective communication is paramount. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate how students can write with proper language use to create a good relationship with the writer and reader and deliver sensible information in their essay writings.

2. Literature Review

2.1. What is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a comprehensive theory of language developed by linguist Halliday (2004). It views language as a semiotic system that serves three main functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.
This theory is crucial in both spoken and written language because it offers a systematic framework for understanding how meaning is created through grammar, context, and social factors. By analyzing texts and communication situations, SFL allows us to uncover the structure and function of linguistic elements, the impact of social context on language use, and the concept of "register" or language variations in different contexts. SFL's insights have practical applications in language teaching, enabling educators to equip learners with essential language skills for various real-life situations. Overall, SFL plays a vital role in illuminating the intricate connections between language, meaning-making, and social interactions in both spoken and written communication.

In linguistics, the concept of "metafunction" was introduced by Halliday (2004), a prominent linguist, as a way to understand how language serves different functions in communication. According to Halliday (2004), there are three metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. These metafunctions are considered essential in writing, as they allow writers to convey meaning effectively and create coherent and contextually appropriate texts. Let’s explore each metafunction and its significance in writing:

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as elucidated by Halliday (1985, 2004), offers a comprehensive framework for comprehending the intricate operations of language in communication. It achieves this by deconstructing language into three distinct metafunctions, namely the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions.

The ideational metafunction, as the primary constituent of SFL, delves into the role of language as a tool for representing experiences and conveying ideas, primarily pertaining to content and meaning. Within this metafunction, particular attention is devoted to transitivity, a linguistic construct that illuminates the "who did what to whom" aspect of language, thereby elucidating the actors and circumstances involved in various processes. Additionally, SFL scrutinizes mood, which encompasses diverse types of clauses employed to express the speaker's attitudes or epistemic stance, and modality, where speakers articulate their degrees of certainty, possibility, or obligation concerning a proposition.

Shifting focus to the interpersonal metafunction, SFL directs its attention towards the utilization of language for interaction and the establishment of social relationships. Within this context, language operates as a medium through which speakers express their attitudes, intentions, and their positioning vis-à-vis the audience (Halliday, 2004). The interpersonal metafunction encompasses subjectivity, facilitating the conveyance of personal experiences, opinions, and emotions by speakers. It also encompasses modality, which continues to be a conduit for the expression of the speaker's attitude, and appraisal, encompassing linguistic resources employed for the articulation of emotions, judgments, and evaluations.

Lastly, the textual metafunction (Halliday, 1985, 1994, 2004) pertains to the organisation and structural aspects of language that contribute to the creation of coherent texts and discourses. This metafunction is underpinned by fundamental principles, such as cohesion, which employs linguistic devices to establish connections between different segments of a text, coherence, ensuring the overall connectedness and unity of the text, and information structure, which manages the packaging and presentation of information within sentences or discourses, see Table 1. By employing this tripartite framework, SFL provides a potent analytical tool that facilitates a
profound comprehension of how language operates across diverse social contexts, thereby enabling a nuanced exploration of the linguistic choices made by speakers to effectively convey meaning in communication.

Table 1: Three Metafunctions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>METAFUNCTIONS</th>
<th>DEFINITIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ideational Metafunction</td>
<td>The ideational metafunction deals with the content or representation of experience and the expression of ideas in the writing. It focuses on how language is used to convey information about events, actions, and experiences. This analysis involves examining transitivity, mood, and modality within the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Interpersonal Metafunction</td>
<td>The ideational metafunction deals with the content or representation of experience and the expression of ideas in the writing. It focuses on how language is used to convey information about events, actions, and experiences. This analysis involves examining transitivity, mood, and modality within the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Textual Metafunction</td>
<td>The textual metafunction is concerned with how language is organized to create coherent texts and discourses. It involves analyzing cohesion, coherence, and information structure within the writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 1 shows the writing analysis will employ these three metafunctions to determine the significance of the text and draw relevant findings based on how language functions in the given context. By examining the ideational metafunction, we will understand how the writer represents experiences and conveys ideas in the writing. The analysis of the interpersonal metafunction will shed light on how the writer interacts with the readers and establishes social relationships through language use. Lastly, the examination of the textual metafunction will help us understand how the writer organizes the text to create coherence and achieve effective communication. By considering these three metafunctions in the writing analysis, we can gain valuable insights into the writer’s communicative choices, intentions, and the overall effectiveness of the text in achieving its purpose. Figure 1 shows the overview of theoretical framework of the present study.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of Three Metafunctions
2.2. Past Studies

The study conducted by Chueasuai (2017) focuses on the utilization of the SFL interpersonal metafunction to elucidate power dynamics inherent within the novel "Fifty Shades of Grey" and its corresponding Thai translation. The examination centers on intimate conversational exchanges between the principal characters, revealing their intricate power relations. The investigation identifies the strategic implementation of imperative and declarative clauses in the construction of power dynamics. The outcomes unveil certain disparities in power portrayal between the original English version and the translated Thai rendition due to language-specific attributes, such as the deployment of final particles in Thai.

In a similar vein, Fadhillah and Rahmadina (2021) undertakes a study that probes into the interpersonal signification present in a literary response composed by a student of English literature. The research employs the framework of SFL, particularly concentrating on the Mood system, to dissect the textual content. The analysis underscores the student's cognizance of the requisite purpose and linguistic elements essential for the response genre. The utilization of declarative Mood and modality effectively underscores the student's level of conviction and assertiveness. Additionally, the incorporation of appraisal systems serves to convey attitude and engagement, albeit with room for potential enhancement in the integration of more abstract and technical subject matter.

Drawing inspiration from Martin (2019), Fadhillah and Rahmadina (2021) further advances a conceptual framework for the analysis of paralanguage, encompassing non-verbal communication cues, inspired by SFL research. The framework differentiates between non-semiotic behaviors and semiotic meanings. The notion of paralanguage is introduced to encompass both auditory quality and bodily gestures. The research distinguishes between sonovergent resources, which align with prosodic phonology, and semovergent resources that support ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning resources. The study underscores the intermodal relationships among language, paralanguage, and other modes of communication.

Additionally, the study by Bakuuro (2017) delves into Halliday's (2004) SFL, with particular emphasis on the concept of metafunctions. These metafunctions, namely textual, interpersonal, and ideational, are explicated in terms of their role in linguistic utilization. The textual metafunction pertains to themes and rhemes, the interpersonal metafunction is concerned with mood and residue, and the ideational metafunction encompasses transitivity, participants, and circumstances.

Yolanda, Putri and Sinar (2017) on the other hand, examines the textual metafunction elements within a children's picture book. The analysis accentuates the prevalence of prominent thematic elements and the interconnectedness between textual and visual components for effective meaning transmission. Qualitative descriptive methods are harnessed to analyze the linguistic data originating from the picture book.

Furthermore, Arunsirot (2013) addresses the English writing competence of Thai EFL learners through the lens of SFL. The study identifies five issues related to Theme selection and Thematic progression patterns, including instances of empty Theme, entirely new Theme, excessive employment of constant progression, vacant Rheme, and perplexing selection of textual Theme. The research endeavors to contribute to the
amelioration of English writing aptitude and instructional materials for Thai EFL learners. In summation, these studies collectively exemplify the remarkable adaptability of SFL in dissecting a diverse array of linguistic phenomena. Encompassing power dynamics in literary contexts, paralanguage in communicative exchanges, thematic selections in writing, and metafunctional dimensions of language application, each study furnishes valuable insights into the multifaceted potential of SFL in elucidating the intricacies of language structure and utilization across varying contexts.

2.5 Research Gap

While previous studies have delved into different dimensions of language use and structure, they have predominantly focused on specific linguistic features or phenomena, such as power dynamics, paralanguage, thematic selection, and metafunctions. However, there is a limited body of research that directly addresses how students can harness the insights provided by SFL to craft well-structured essays that not only convey information but also establish a strong rapport with both the writer and reader. This research gap highlights the need for a study that bridges the theoretical insights of SFL with the practical application of improving students’ writing skills, resulting in essays that are not only linguistically proficient but also engaging, relatable, and coherent.

3. Method

The study utilizes qualitative methodology, employing interviews, as it offers a nuanced exploration of complex phenomena, captures contextual insights, and prioritizes participant voices. This flexible approach yields rich data, complements quantitative findings, and aligns with the study’s objective of in-depth understanding (Creswell, 2014).

3.1. Consent

Consent was obtained from both the students and the management to conduct this study. Verbal permission was granted, as there was no letter available as evidence.

3.2. Sampling

A cohort of twenty students was recruited for the present study. These individuals are enrolled in Form Three of the Pentaksiran Tingkatan Tiga (PT3) and have actively engaged in supplementary English Writing Coaching sessions. The student cohort, drawn from the public school system, encompasses a diverse array of educational institutions. While English is a part of their standard curriculum, these students have voluntarily enrolled in additional English classes, a decision driven by both personal preferences and parental initiative. The process of participant selection employed a combined purposive and random sampling strategy. Certain students were deliberately chosen based on their demonstrated English proficiency, while others were selected at random to ensure a comprehensive and varied representation of participants. Demographically, our study encompasses a heterogeneous group of participants, spanning a spectrum of ages, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
3.3. Setting

This English coaching center is located within Kuala Lumpur City. The center offers language courses covering four components: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. There is consistently high demand for English classes at this center, and the courses cater to all proficiency levels. The teaching staff mostly consist of part-time instructors with master's degrees in English.

3.4. Data Collection

The students were assigned to write a situational piece on how they could interact well in a logical order to convincingly persuade the teacher in a polite manner. The question is as follows, See Table 2.

Table 2: Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 31 Part 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One of your friends is asking your opinion to study in your country. Suggest <strong>which</strong> school is suitable, <strong>why</strong> and <strong>where</strong> is it located?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Your answer should not be more than 25-30 words.*

The students were tasked with crafting concise responses in 10 minutes, limited to 35 words. Subsequently, their submissions underwent assessment using the coaching centre's scale, Figure 2.

Figure 2: Assessment of Writing Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.</td>
<td>Text is connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices.</td>
<td>Uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriately, while occasionally overusing certain lexis. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.</td>
<td>Text is connected using basic, high-frequency linking words.</td>
<td>Uses basic vocabulary reasonably appropriately. Uses simple grammatical forms with some degree of control. Errors may impede meaning at times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.</td>
<td>Production unlikely to be connected, though punctuation and simple connectors (i.e. ‘and’) may on occasion be used.</td>
<td>Produces basic vocabulary of isolated words and phrases. Produces few simple grammatical forms with only limited control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Performance below Band 1.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each student made three attempts, aligned with the scale. Post the first try, the teacher discussed the incorporation of 'why,' 'when,' and 'what' in the responses. This gauged comprehension and reasoning. The second attempt assessed engagement, coherence, cohesion, and language use. The third, final attempt was evaluated using the Cambridge Writing Rubric. Teachers, employing CEFR, assessed writing. However, this study employs Halliday's (2004) Systemic Functional Linguistics framework specifically focusing on ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, as elaborated in the data analysis section below.

3.5. Data Analysis

The written text will be analyzed based on Halliday's (2014) SFL framework, which involves three metafunctions: ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, and textual metafunction (see Figure 1). Three students’ (students 1, 2 and 3) writing samples have been selected for the analysis based on the objective of the study.

3.6. Reliability and Validity

The acquired textual data has been systematically organised and classified utilizing NVivo, qualitative data analysis software, in order to ensure the scrupulous selection of pertinent data conducive to subsequent analysis. Furthermore, to validate the precision of the data categorisation in accordance with the framework's stipulated parameters, two experts in the subject matter meticulously scrutinised and endorsed the process. Given the intrinsic qualitative nature of this study, the utilization of multiple samples is of paramount significance for the facilitation of the qualitative analysis. As expounded by Creswell (2014), the incorporation of several samples in qualitative studies is pivotal to bolster the reliability and robustness of the obtained findings. This alignment with the study's objectives and the profundity of the analysis is vital. Therefore, in the context of this study, the analysis exclusively encompasses the data from the three identified students.

4. Analysis

The analysis presented is based on five students (Students 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) and three attempts. Over a series of three attempts, student 1 progressively hones their communication skills by deftly integrating the Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual metafunctions in their correspondence with the teacher. In the initial endeavor (attempt 1), the primary emphasis is placed on the Ideational aspect, where the student elaborates on the reasons for their incomplete homework – specifically, the hospitalization of their cousin. Within the Interpersonal metafunction of this attempt, a courteous and apologetic tone is evident, as the student addresses the teacher respectfully and concurrently seeks permission for a delayed submission of the assignment. Textually, attempt 1 adopts a straightforward structural arrangement, sequentially advancing from the declaration of incomplete homework to the elucidation of the underlying reason, culminating in a plea for an extension.

Transitioning to Attempt 2, Student 1 not only reiterates the causative factor for their incomplete homework (i.e., their cousin's hospitalisation), but also introduces a lucid entreaty for an extension. The interpersonal dimension of this note evolves into a more nuanced manifestation, commencing with a tone of contrition, expounding upon the extenuating circumstances, and culminating with a pledge that underscores
responsibility and unwavering commitment. Textually, Attempt 2 evinces heightened organisational coherence, characterised by a logical progression, inclusion of a specific deadline extension request, and an implicit display of gratitude.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attempt 1</th>
<th>Attempt 2</th>
<th>Attempt 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dear Teacher Peter,</td>
<td>Dear Teacher Peter,</td>
<td>Dear Teacher Peter,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very sorry to tell you that I did not complete my homework. The reason is because my cousin has been admitted in the hospital. May I finish and send the work by 2.00 pm today? I will make sure I will not repeat this. Thank you Regards, XXXX</td>
<td>I am very sorry to tell you that I did not complete my homework. The reason is my cousin has been admitted in the hospital. I will finish and send the work by 2.00 pm today? I will make sure not to repeat it again. Thank you Regards, XXXX</td>
<td>I am very sorry to tell you that I did not complete my homework. The reason is my cousin has been admitted in the hospital. May I finish and send the work by 2.00 pm today? I will make sure not to repeat this. Thank you Regards, XXXX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attempt 1**

Ideational metafunction: - in the response, the student explains the reason for not completing the homework, which is the cousin's hospitalisation.

Interpersonal metafunction: - the response adopts a polite and apologetic tone, addressing the teacher as "Dear Teacher Peter." The student apologizes for not completing the homework and asks for permission to submit it later.

Textual metafunction: - the student first states that they didn't complete the homework, then provides the reason for it, and finally asks for permission to submit it later.

**Attempt 2**

Ideational metafunction: - reason for not completing homework: The note explains that the student's cousin has been admitted to the hospital, which is the cause for not completing the homework. This information is conveyed using a cause-and-effect relationship.

- request to complete homework: The student is requesting permission to finish and send the homework by 2.00 pm today. This is the main purpose of the note and is expressed in a clear and direct manner.

Interpersonal metafunction: - apology: the note starts with an apologetic tone, conveying regret for not completing the homework. This acknowledges the responsibility and the potential inconvenience
-explanation and Excuse: the reason for not completing the homework is explained by stating that the student’s cousin has been admitted to the hospital. This serves as an excuse for the incomplete work.

-request for Extension: the student makes a request to finish and send the homework by 2.00 pm today, indicating their willingness to rectify the situation. This showcases a sense of responsibility and commitment.

-promise and assurance: the note ends with a promise not to repeat the situation again, implying a commitment to better performance in the future.

Textual metafunction:
-sequential structure: the note follows a logical sequence, moving from the apology and explanation to the request for an extension and finally to the promise of improvement.

-temporal marker: the time by which the author intends to complete the homework (2.00 pm today) is clearly stated, helping to establish a specific timeframe.

-gratitude: though not explicitly mentioned, the polite closing phrase “thank you” at the end of the note expresses gratitude in advance for considering the request.

Attempt 3 I am very sorry to tell you that I did not complete my homework.

This conveys the speaker’s acknowledgment of not completing the homework.

-The reason is my cousin has been admitted to the hospital.

This provides the reason for not completing the homework, explaining the situation with the cousin’s hospitalisation.

-May I finish and send the work by 2.00 pm today?

-this is a request seeking permission to complete and submit the work by a specific time.

-I will make sure not to repeat this.

This statement expresses a promise to avoid
repeating the situation in the future.

-Thank you
This expression shows gratitude.

Interpersonal metafunction:
- the note is apologetic, seeking understanding, and making a request. The tone is polite and respectful.
- the student is acknowledging their responsibility and is trying to mitigate the impact of their failure by explaining the circumstances.

Textual metafunction
- opening: the student starts by expressing their apology and the reason for not completing the homework.
- explanation: the student explains the reason for the incomplete homework, the cousin’s hospitalisation.
- request: the student requests an extension and specifies a deadline.
- commitment: the writer promises not to repeat the situation.
- closure: the note ends with a polite expression of gratitude

In the culmination represented by Attempt 3, Student 1 adeptly achieves a harmonious synthesis of all three metafunctions. The note commences with a gracious apology for the incomplete assignment, proceeds to furnish the context of the cousin’s hospitalization, respectfully petitions for an extension, underscores an intention for enhanced performance, and ultimately expresses sincere appreciation. The Interpersonal metafunction within this iteration encapsulates attributes of politeness, respect, and a concerted effort to ameliorate the repercussions of their academic lapse. Textually, attempt 3 embodies a meticulously structured composition, wherein a sequential concatenation of apology, elucidation, solicitation, commitment, and gratitude results in a comprehensive and efficacious communication strategy.

Further, the trajectory of Student 1’s progression across these successive attempts vividly illustrates an evolutionary mastery of the Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual metafunctions. Consequently, their communication adeptly conveys not only the exigent circumstances but also their intentions and unwavering dedication to rectify the situation.

Notably, subtle divergences are discernible amongst the three attempts, chiefly within the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. Ideationally, a consistent depiction of the predicament surrounding the incomplete homework due to the cousin’s hospitalization is maintained across all iterations. Interpersonally, a uniformly polite demeanor prevails, accompanied by a request for an extension. It is noteworthy that the redundancy present in attempt 1, denoted by the phrase "because that," is rectified in both attempts 2 and 3. Additionally, attempt 2 introduces the modifier "again" subsequent to "repeat it," thereby accentuating the commitment to circumvent recurrence. In terms of textual structure, while adhering to a shared formal arrangement, enhancements in conciseness and lucidity are discernible, with attempt 3
refining expression by employing "not to repeat this" in lieu of "not to repeat it again." In essence, while the foundational message remains consistent, these nuanced deviations reflect the meticulous calibration undertaken to achieve optimal communication efficacy within the ambit of ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attempt</th>
<th>Ideational metafunction:</th>
<th>Interpersonal metafunction:</th>
<th>Textual metafunction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attempt 1</td>
<td>-attempts to convey the information that the student didn't complete the homework due to their grandmother being in the hospital.</td>
<td>-the student explains the reason for not completing the homework and mentions taking care of their grandmother.</td>
<td>-the content is organised in a coherent manner. -the student uses a straightforward and clear tone to explain the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempt 2</td>
<td>-similar to attempt 1, it explains the situation regarding the grandmother being in the hospital and the need to take care of her.</td>
<td>-like attempt 1, the student apologizes and expresses regret.</td>
<td>- the student assures the teacher of submitting the homework and express gratitude for the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student 2 demonstrates a consistent and judicious application of the three metafunctions within the systemic functional framework across their three communication attempts. In their initial endeavor, they adeptly employ the ideational metafunction to elucidate the rationale underpinning their incomplete homework, citing their grandmother’s hospitalization and concurrent caregiving responsibilities as mitigating factors. The interpersonal metafunction is manifest in their earnest expression of remorse and apology for their circumstances. Additionally, they evince a determination to fulfill their academic obligations while conveying appreciation for the teacher’s empathy. The textual metafunction is skillfully employed to orchestrate the content cohesively, preserving an unambiguous and sincere tone.

The subsequent communication attempts diligently follow this established pattern, wherein the student consistently expounds upon the contextual elements (Ideational), communicates their contrition and commitment (Interpersonal), and maintains a logically structured discourse (Textual). Subtle variations in language usage and verb tense across successive iterations indicate a deliberate endeavor to refine the communication while preserving its core content. Ultimately, the student's unwavering dedication to clarity and authenticity, underpinned by the harmonious interplay of the three metafunctions, underscores their genuine intent to effectively convey their situation.

Throughout all iterations, the ideational metafunction remains resolute, consistently presenting the same rationale for the uncompleted assignment. Similarly, the interpersonal metafunction maintains a steadfast presence across the three attempts, featuring parallel expressions of apology, dedication, and gratitude. The textual metafunction exhibits notable uniformity as well, characterized by a largely unaltered
structure and tone. A comparative analysis of these endeavors reveals pronounced parallels in communicated information (Ideational) and overall structural organization (Textual). Subtle deviations predominantly manifest as inconspicuous adjustments in phrasing and tense. The interpersonal elements, encompassing apologies, commitments, and expressions of gratitude, consistently align across all three attempts.

The trio of communication endeavors undertaken by student 2 shares a thematic cohesion, addressing their failure to complete assignments due to their grandmother’s hospitalization and ensuing caregiving obligations. This thematic consistency aligns with the ideational metafunction, resonating consistently throughout all iterations.

With regard to the interpersonal metafunction, nuanced differentiations emerge. In the initial attempt, the student extends their apology for the incomplete assignment, pledges timely submission, and expresses gratitude for understanding, all while committing to improved diligence. In the subsequent try, these elements are reiterated with slight variations in tense and phrasing. The third attempt preserves the core expressions, albeit with minor reordering, while reaffirming their commitment and appreciation.

Concerning the textual metafunction, all three communication attempts adhere to a coherent content structure, maintaining a lucid and straightforward tone. Minor differentials arise in phrasing and tense, particularly noticeable between the initial two endeavors. To summarize, while the Ideational metafunction resonates uniformly, distinctions within the Interpersonal metafunction predominantly concern lexical choices and sequencing, whereas the Textual metafunction remains remarkably consistent, with variations being subtle and inconspicuous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attempt 1</th>
<th>Attempt 2</th>
<th>Attempt 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dear Teacher David, I am so sorry that I cannot complete your homework, because yesterday, I was ill. I will complete the homework before lunch time at 1.00 pm. Thank you very much for understanding my situation. I will not repeat this again. Thank you XXXX</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attempt 1  Ideational metafunction: This attempt clearly communicates the student’s reason for not completing the homework - they were ill. It also indicates their intention to complete the homework before a specific time, 1.00 pm. The clause structure is mainly used to convey information about the student’s situation.

Interpersonal The student uses a formal and apologetic tone
metatfunction: to address their teacher, expressing regret for not being able to complete the homework and appreciating the teacher's understanding. The student takes responsibility for their actions and assures that this won't happen again.

Textual metatfunction: The text is organized in a straightforward manner. The student's explanation is followed by their commitment to complete the homework by a specific time. The logical sequence helps convey the student's message clearly.

Attempt 2

Ideational metatfunction: Similar to the first attempt, this message communicates the reason for not completing the homework - being ill. The intention to complete the homework by 1.00 pm is also mentioned.

Interpersonal metatfunction: The tone remains apologetic and formal. The student acknowledges their inability to complete the homework and appreciates the teacher's understanding. The assurance of not repeating the situation is retained.

Textual metatfunction: The structure is similar to the first attempt, maintaining a clear sequence of explanation, commitment, and appreciation. The message is still logically organised.

Attempt 3

Ideational metatfunction: This attempt, like the previous two, conveys the reason for not completing the homework - being ill. However, this time, the student emphasizes their intention to try their best to complete the homework before 1.00 pm.

Interpersonal metatfunction: The tone continues to be apologetic and respectful. The student expresses regret for not being able to complete the homework and emphasizes their commitment to making their best effort.

Textual metatfunction: The organisation follows a similar pattern as the first two attempts, with the explanation, commitment, and appreciation maintained in a logical sequence.

In the initial endeavour of student 3, the ideational metatfunction assumes prominence as it adeptly conveys the rationale behind their inability to fulfil the homework requirement, attributing this circumstance to their indisposition. Furthermore, the missive effectively conveys their unequivocal resolve to conclude the task before the prescribed time of 1.00 pm. The syntax employed primarily serves to disseminate information concerning the student's prevailing situation. Within the interpersonal metatfunction, a decorous and contrite tenor is deftly adopted as the student addresses their tutor. The explication of remorse for their inability to accomplish the assignment and the sincere acknowledgment of the teacher's empathy underscore this disposition. Crucially, the student takes ownership of their lapse in meeting the expectation and proffers assurances of non-recurrence. This sense of accountability distinctively characterizes this particular endeavor. Textually, the approach in this attempt is typified by a straightforward structural arrangement. The elucidation of the predicament takes precedence, seamlessly followed by the declaration of intent to execute the task within
the stipulated timeframe. This coherent sequence profoundly facilitates the lucid conveyance of the student's communication.

In parallel to the inaugural endeavour, the ideational metafunction in the second missive effectively conveys the rationale underpinning the student's incapacitation to complete the homework, attributed to their affliction. Moreover, the pledge to accomplish the assignment prior to 1.00 pm is reiterated. The interpersonal metafunction meticulously retains a formal and apologetic tonality, serving as a conduit for the student to acknowledge their deficiency in meeting the assignment's requirements while conveying genuine appreciation for the instructor's forbearance. The resolute commitment to avoid the recurrence of this circumstance remains intact, signifying the student's earnest intent to derive lessons from their lapse. The textual metafunction maintains a structure akin to the initial attempt, wherein a coherent sequence encompasses the elucidation of the situation, the commitment undertaken, and the expression of gratitude. This structural uniformity preserves the message's logical cohesion, rendering it amenable to comprehension.

Upon reflection of the third endeavour, the ideational metafunction accentuates, yet again, the cause behind the student's incomplete homework - their ailment. However, a salient differentiation emerges through the pronounced emphasis on their determination to exert their utmost endeavour to complete the assignment by the prescribed time of 1.00 pm. This attempt is distinguished by the heightened determination exhibited by the student to surmount the impediments imposed by their illness. Pertaining to the interpersonal metafunction, the established decorous and respectful tone persists, akin to prior efforts. The student avows regret for their inability to meet the assignment's requirements while amplifying the commitment to invest their highest effort. This emphasis on unwavering commitment differentiates this attempt. In a textual vein, this communication adheres to the pattern set forth in the preceding two instances, wherein a logically coherent sequence sustains the explication of the situation, the undertaking of commitment, and the articulation of gratitude.

In summation, the triad of student endeavors evince shared attributes concerning the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. These attempts consistently relay the rationale underpinning the uncompleted task (attributed to illness), embracing a formal and contrite tonality, and upholding an ordered compositional framework. The distinctiveness, however, emanates from the extent to which emphasis is accorded to the student's commitment and diligence in adhering to the assignment's completion timeline. Each exertion substantiates the student's embodiment of accountability, responsibility, and appreciation for the teacher's understanding. The nuanced fluctuations in expressions of commitment underscore the evolution in the student's approach across these successive endeavors.

4. Discussion

In the realm of situational writing, the ideational metafunction assumes a pivotal role as a conduit for conveying the essential core of a given situation. Demonstrating a commendable mastery of this metafunction, Students 1, 2, and 3 adeptly delve into the underlying reasons for their incomplete homework assignments. Throughout their efforts, they consistently clarify the crucial circumstances that hindered their ability to fulfill their academic duties. Whether recounting a cousin's hospitalization, personal
ailment, or caregiving responsibilities, these students skillfully employ language to provide the necessary contextual background that lends credibility to their explanations. Students 1, 2, and 3 exhibit a praiseworthy understanding of the ideational metafunction as they effectively communicate the central essence of their situations. Their proficiency aligns with findings from Chueasuai’s (2017) study that focused on power dynamics within textual content. Just as Chueasuai (2017) highlighted the strategic use of imperative and declarative clauses in portraying power, these students carefully shape their narratives to convey their predicaments with precision. This approach mirrors the power dynamics present in literary contexts, where linguistic choices play a crucial role in establishing context.

Furthermore, the correlation between these students’ narratives and Chueasuai’s (2017) findings underscores the universality of certain linguistic strategies across different contexts. The adeptness displayed by these students in providing contextual backgrounds corresponds with the emphasis on transitivity, participants, and circumstances within the Ideational metafunction (Bakuuro, 2017), showcasing their understanding of how language can effectively communicate intricate situations. Students 1, 2, and 3 demonstrate a profound grasp of the interpersonal metafunction, as evidenced by their respectful, responsible, and accountable tone in their communications. Their mastery in this aspect is reminiscent of Fadhillah and Rahmadina’s (2021) study on the Mood system and its role in conveying attitude and engagement. Much like the literary response in Fadhillah and Rahmadina’s (2021) research employed declarative Mood and modality to convey conviction, these students incorporate similar linguistic finesse to express their sincerity and remorse.

Furthermore, the inclusion of gratitude towards teachers’ understanding and empathy, akin to the use of appraisal systems highlighted in Fadhillah and Rahmadina’s (2021) study, mirrors the interpersonal dynamics at play. This not only showcases their adeptness in interpersonal communication but also underscores the significance of language in cultivating respectful and appreciative relationships.

In terms of the textual metafunction, Students 1, 2, and 3’s progression in structuring their communications with logical coherence and clarity aligns with Yolanda, Putri, and Sinar’s (2017) analysis of textual elements within a children’s picture book. Similar to the study’s emphasis on the interconnectedness between textual and visual components for effective meaning conveyance, these students seamlessly integrate various components, such as apology, explanation, commitment, and gratitude, to craft messages that are both understandable and compelling.

Furthermore, their evolution from a sequential approach to a more sophisticated structure that includes specific elements like deadlines and commitments (similar to Fadhillah and Rahmadina’s (2021) analysis of the Mood system), showcases their growth in employing the Textual metafunction. This growth reflects their awareness of the importance of logical structuring in facilitating smooth communication flow and reader comprehension.

In conclusion, the studies conducted by Chueasuai (2017), Fadhillah and Rahmadina (2021), Yolanda, Putri, and Sinar (2017), and Bakuuro (2017) resonate remarkably with the analyses of Students 1, 2, and 3 in the context of the Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual metafunctions. The alignment between these studies and the students’ writing
endeavors highlights the universal applicability of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in understanding language structure and usage across diverse contexts. The students' progression from providing context and rationale (ideational), to fostering respectful interpersonal dynamics (interpersonal), and ultimately constructing well-structured messages (textual), serves as evidence of their journey towards mastery in situational writing. This comprehensive grasp of the metafunctions underscores their development into effective communicators and emphasizes the importance of metafunction awareness in linguistic expression and utilization.

6. Implication of the Study

The study discussed above holds several significant implications, particularly for the domain of language education and the broader understanding of effective communication within situational contexts. Firstly, the analysis of students' evolving communication attempts highlights the potential for individuals to enhance and refine their writing skills. Through a conscious understanding and application of the Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual metafunctions, students progressed from providing basic explanations to crafting nuanced and well-structured expressions of commitment. This underscores the importance of guided practice and metafunction awareness in nurturing effective communication skills.

Secondly, the study emphasizes the critical role of metafunction awareness. The students' intentional manipulation and integration of the Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual metafunctions led to more comprehensive and impactful communication. This awareness can serve as a valuable tool for learners, enabling them to strategically construct messages tailored to specific communicative purposes, thus elevating the depth and sophistication of their written expressions.

Furthermore, the study showcases the students' ability to adapt their writing according to situational demands. Beyond simple event narration, they learned to construct narratives that not only explained their circumstances but also conveyed respect, accountability, and commitment. This adaptability is a highly desirable skill in diverse real-world scenarios where effective communication often requires a delicate balance of various communication dimensions.

The research findings also highlight the journey toward holistic communication mastery. The growth from providing context (Ideational) to fostering respectful interpersonal dynamics (Interpersonal) and culminating in well-structured communication (Textual) demonstrates the students' progression. These insights could influence the design of language curricula, promoting a comprehensive approach to teaching communication skills that encompass these metafunctions.

Educators can draw inspiration from the study's findings to develop teaching methodologies that explicitly address the three metafunctions. By guiding students through the process of integrating these dimensions, educators can facilitate the development of more proficient communicators who are well-equipped to navigate diverse communication scenarios with clarity and effectiveness.

Furthermore, the skills developed through mastering the Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual metafunctions extend beyond writing. These skills, such as context setting, respectful communication, and logical structuring, are transferable to verbal
communication, presentations, and various professional contexts where the ability to convey information clearly and persuasively is of paramount importance.

Lastly, the study's insights have implications for communication assessment. It underscores the multifaceted nature of effective communication, prompting educators and assessors to consider not only the content but also the nuanced ways in which students convey information, exhibit interpersonal skills, and structure their messages. This can lead to the design of more comprehensive evaluation criteria that better capture the complexities of effective communication.

In summary, the study's implications underscore the value of metafunction awareness and its deliberate application in fostering effective communication within situational contexts. It sheds light on the potential for learners to evolve from basic communicators to skillful conveyors of information, accountability, and respect. These implications can influence educational approaches, curriculum design, and assessments, ultimately contributing to the cultivation of more adept and versatile communicators.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the in-depth analysis of the communication endeavors of Students 1, 2, and 3 has provided valuable insights into the complex interplay of the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions within the realm of situational writing. Through their progressive refinement of communication attempts, these students have demonstrated a remarkable evolution in their ability to convey context, accountability, and commitment effectively. Their journey from mere explanation to nuanced and well-structured expressions of commitment highlights the dynamic nature of language utilization and its potential for growth.

This study holds significant implications for both the field of language education and the broader understanding of effective communication within situational contexts. The findings underscore the transformative power of guided practice and metafunction awareness in enhancing writing skills. The intentional manipulation and integration of these metafunctions not only led to more sophisticated communication but also emphasized the importance of adaptable communication strategies tailored to specific contexts.

Metafunction awareness emerges as a key takeaway from this study. By explicitly addressing the ideational, interpersonal, and textual dimensions in teaching methodologies, educators can cultivate learners who possess a comprehensive approach to communication. This approach extends beyond writing skills, offering learners tools for effective verbal communication and professional interactions.

Recommendations for further research in this domain are twofold. Firstly, investigating the applicability of these metafunctions in different languages and cultural contexts could provide valuable cross-cultural insights into communication dynamics. Secondly, exploring the impact of integrating technology and digital platforms in communication scenarios could shed light on how these metafunctions manifest in virtual interactions.

To conclude, this study highlights the transformative journey of students' communication development as they adeptly merged the Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual metafunctions. It underscores the importance of intentional metafunction awareness in education and its broader implications for effective communication in
diverse situations. By recognising the pivotal role these metafunctions play, educators can guide learners towards becoming more proficient, adaptable, and versatile communicators, equipping them to excel in a world where effective communication is paramount.

**Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate**

Ethical clearances were obtained from all parties involved in the present study, with their verbal consent given.

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**Conflict of Interest**

The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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