

FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND VIETNAMESE

**INTERPERSONAL MEANING IN RESEARCH ARTICLE
INTRODUCTIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING
ACADEMIC WRITING TO EFL STUDENTS****DUONG THI THAO***

ABSTRACT: The study investigates the critical role of interpersonal meaning in crafting introductions for research articles, focusing on how authors strategically establish credibility, engage readers, and position their work within the broader academic discourse. Utilizing the framework of systemic functional linguistics, it meticulously analyzes linguistic strategies, including mood, modality, and personal pronouns employed by authors to foster and sustain meaningful relationships with their audience. The data were collected from 20 research articles on family-related topics published in the journal *Social Science Research* between 2016 and 2025. The findings demonstrate that effective use of interpersonal meaning significantly enhances the persuasiveness, clarity, and accessibility of research introductions, particularly in articulating a research gap and justifying the study's academic and practical significance. Drawing from this analysis, the study discusses vital implications for teaching academic writing to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, highlighting the necessity of integrating interpersonal strategies into writing curricula to enable students to craft compelling, discipline-appropriate introductions that adhere to academic conventions. Practical pedagogical approaches are proposed to empower EFL students in confidently navigating the complexities of academic discourse and producing impactful scholarly writing.

KEY WORDS: systemic functional linguistics; interpersonal meaning; mood; modality; personal pronouns; introduction; research article; academic writing; EFL students.

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1. Introduction

It's undeniable that doing research is crucially important to any student during the course of time they are at university. Researching not only helps students accumulate useful knowledge but it can also sharpen their academic skills, develop thinking patterns and lay a solid foundation for their future career.

After obtaining the expected results when doing research, students often have a tendency to announce the products of their research. Publishing research articles in prestigious journals is one of the best ways that students can do to bring their research to the public. In order to create an article, students have to spend a lot of their valuable time choosing the right style and language. An experimental research article typically follows a standardized structure designed to present scientific findings clearly and logically. The most widely accepted format is known as IMRaD, which stands for Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. It is said that writing the introduction is one of the biggest challenges for students. Here, besides announcing their new research results, students need to establish a relationship with the reader, position themselves in relation to the audience, and express attitudes or judgments about the topic. This involves careful choices of language use, such as the use of mood (declarative, interrogative, imperative), modality (expressing certainty, obligation, or possibility), and tone, all of which signal the writer's stance and the desired relationship with the reader.

Therefore, this study aims at providing EFL students with theoretical frameworks to identify means of interpersonal metafunction in scientific articles in general and the introductions in specific. From the results of the study, some pedagogical techniques can be suggested and applied to the process of academic writing, especially writing introductions.

*Thai Nguyen University of Sciences (TNUS); Email: thaodt@tnus.edu.vn

The research attempts to answer two questions: 1/How can Halliday's interpersonal meaning be conveyed in English scientific articles?; 2/How can educators apply these means of linguistics to teaching academic writing to English-major students, especially those studying at Thai Nguyen University?

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Systemic Functional Grammar

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG - also known as Systemic Functional Linguistics) is a grammatical model initially founded by John Rupert Firth (1890-1960) and later developed into a comprehensive theory by Michael Halliday in the 1960s. Firth posited that language, culture, and society are interdependent, and that language is a tool humans use to function within society. He asserted that language is an organic part of the situational context in which it is used. According to Halliday, the concept of "system" in this context regards language as "a set of interrelated choices for making meaning". SFG emphasizes the meaning of language, in contrast to traditional grammar, which focuses on the word classes of language; meaning is considered the most important object of linguistic study, rather than structural forms or patterns. In this theory, language is used to express three broad types of meaning, known as the three metafunctions of language. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) identified these as the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction, and the textual metafunction.

2.2. Interpersonal metafunction

Among the three metafunctions of language, the interpersonal metafunction focuses on the interactive relationship between the writer and the reader, creating a two-way communicative world. Linguist J.R. Firth once emphasized that language is not merely a medium for the transmission of information, but also a means whereby we construct and maintain social relationships. There have been various studies by prestigious scholars around the world on the role of interpersonal meaning in establishing the relationship between speakers and hearers, such as Halliday (1985), Halliday & Hasan (1989), Matthiessen (1995), Lock (1996), Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), ...

According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), the interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the interaction between speaker and addressee(s): the grammatical resources for enacting social roles and relationships in the exchange of meanings. Language is used to enable speakers and writers to adopt a stance, to take up a position in relation to others, and to construe their own persona and that of their interlocutors. This includes resources for exchanging information (e.g. questioning and stating), for exchanging goods-and-services (e.g. offering and commanding), and for expressing attitudes and evaluations. Hence, the interpersonal metafunction is about how we use language to interact with others, perform social roles, express our attitudes, and build relationships – making language a powerful tool for social action, not just for conveying facts. Whenever we use language to interact, one of the things we are doing with it is establishing a relationship between us: between the person speaking now and the person who will probably speak next. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) identifies the realization of interpersonal meaning through the systems of MOOD and MODALITY within the clause. Besides, the use of PERSONAL PRONOUNS also contributes to the expression of interpersonal meaning.

MOOD is the organization of participants in speech roles, setting up the exchange structure of dialogue. It is central to the interpersonal metafunction as it organizes the clause for social exchange, encodes speech roles, and enables speakers to express attitudes, judgments, and relationships with others. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) claims that the most fundamental types of speech role are just two: (i) giving and (ii) demanding. Either the speaker is giving something to the listener (a piece of information) or he is demanding something from him. Another equally fundamental distinction relates to the nature of commodity being exchanged. This may be (a) good-&-services or (b) information. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Table 1. *Giving and demanding, goods-&-services or information*
(Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:136)

	Commodity exchanged	
role in exchange	(a) goods-&-services	(b) information
(i) giving	'offer' would you like this teapot	'statement' he's giving her the teapot
(ii) demanding	'command' give me that teapot!	'question' what is he giving her?

MOOD is realized by the combination of the *Subject* (a nominal group) and the *Finite* operator (part of a verbal group). The arrangement of Subject and Finite signals different speech roles and determines whether the clause is *indicative* (declarative or interrogative – giving facts, expressing opinions or asking questions) or *imperative* (giving commands, instructions or requests).

E.g.: *The man has left the house.* (declarative)
Have you fed the cat? (interrogative)
Open the door! (imperative)

For MODALITY, Halliday (1994) claims that “*Modality is the speaker's judgment of the probabilities, or the obligations, involved in what he is saying*”. Therefore, MODALITY can be understood as “evaluation” or “the expression of attitude”, either explicitly or implicitly, within a text. Halliday (1994) suggests that MODALITY can be used as a tool to guide and control the behavior or thinking of the reader, reflecting the social relationships present in the text. MODALITY helps to express the speaker's assessments of probability, usuality, obligation, inclination and so on.

According to functional grammar, modality refers to the area of meaning that lies between yes and no – the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity. What this implies more specifically will depend on the underlying speech function of the clause. (1) If the clause is an ‘information’ clause (a proposition, congruently realized as indicative), this means either (i) ‘either yes or no’, i.e. ‘maybe’; or (ii) ‘both yes and no’, i.e. ‘sometimes’; in other words, some degree of probability or of usuality. (2) If the clause is a ‘goods-&-services’ clause (a proposal, which has no real congruent form in the grammar, but by default we can characterize it as imperative), it means either (i) ‘is wanted to’, related to a command, or (ii) ‘wants to’, related to an offer; in other words, some degree of obligation or of inclination. We refer to type (1) as MODALIZATION and to type (2) as MODULATION; this gives a system as in Figure 2.

This system is illustrated specifically in the following diagram:

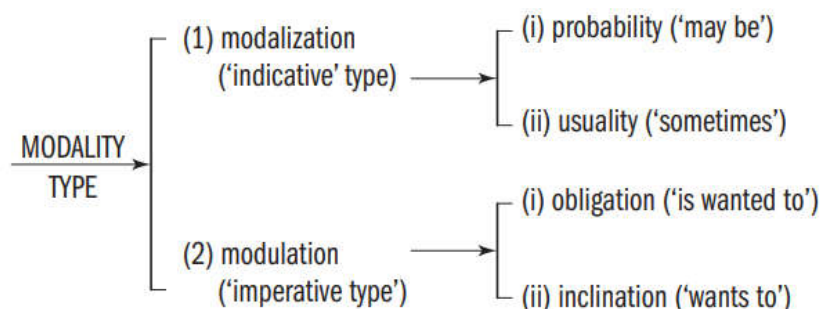


Fig.1. System types of modality
(Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004:618)

According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), probability is referred to as ‘*epistemic*’ modality and obligation as ‘*deontic*’ modality.

Overall, MODALITY is realized through:

- modal verbs: *can* (probability + inclination), *could* (probability), *might* (probability), *won’t* (probability + inclination), *wouldn’t* (probability + inclination), *shouldn’t* (obligation), *isn’t to* (obligation), *wasn’t to* (obligation); *must* (obligation), *ought to* (obligation), *need to* (obligation), *has/had to* (obligation), ...
- modal adjuncts: *probably*, *possibly*, *certainly*, *perhaps*, *maybe* ... (probability); *usually*, *sometimes*, *always*, *(n)ever*, *often*, *seldom* ... (usuality); *necessarily*, *compulsorily*, *obligatorily* ... (obligation); *willingly*, *gladly*, *readily* ... (inclination)
- other grammatical resources that express degrees of certainty, obligation, probability, or willingness: *be able to* (probability), *have got to* (obligation), *it’s necessary that* (obligation) ...

PERSONAL PRONOUNS play a crucial role in expressing interpersonal meaning within communication as well. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), the key distinction between pronouns and nouns lies in how reference is established: “*With pronouns, the referent is defined interpersonally, by the speech situation.*” In the framework of SFG, personal pronouns are not merely grammatical substitutes for nouns; rather, they function as important tools for constructing and negotiating social relationships. By choosing specific pronouns such as “I,” “we,” “you,” or “they,” speakers can indicate their relationship to the audience, express attitudes, and manage the flow of interaction. The deliberate selection and use of pronouns thus enable speakers to position themselves and their listeners, actively shaping the interpersonal dynamics and overall tone of any discourse. This highlights the interpersonal metafunction of language, where pronouns serve as key resources for enacting roles, expressing social distance or closeness, and guiding the interaction between participants.

Using systemic functional grammar as an analytical framework, this study examines how interpersonal meaning is constructed in the introductions of selected research articles. Clauses are used as the primary units of analysis, as the functional approach interprets grammatical structures in terms of their meaning. The investigation specifically explores how MOOD, MODALITY, and PERSONAL PRONOUNS are utilized within the opening sections of these articles. By focusing on these linguistic features, the study seeks to uncover the strategies writers use to engage readers, establish authority, and convey attitudes or stances. In addition, the research considers how these elements work together to create a particular tone and foster a connection between the writer and the audience. Ultimately, the findings seek to illuminate how different linguistic choices help establish interpersonal connections between writers and readers, which in turn strengthens academic

communication. By closely examining the construction of interpersonal meaning in selected research article introductions, this study offers valuable guidance for teaching EFL students to write more compelling and effective opening sections. Gaining insight into the roles of MOOD, MODALITY, and PERSONAL PRONOUNS enables learners to better engage their audience and convey a clear authorial stance – essential skills for achieving success in academic writing in English.

3. Methodology

- *Data*: To investigate interpersonal meaning in research article introductions, this study analyzes 20 introductions from articles published in the online journal *Social Science Research*. This journal was chosen because its publications consistently adhere to the IMRaD format, facilitating quick and easy access to relevant information. Each article has undergone a rigorous peer review process, ensuring that the research is evaluated by field experts for originality, validity, and significance prior to publication. All selected articles focus on family issues within the social sciences and were published within the past ten years (from 2016 to 2025), thereby ensuring the consistency and reliability of the data collected.

- *Methodology*: The study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to explore the interpersonal meaning in the introductions of social science articles. Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze interpersonal meaning in the introductions of social science articles allows researchers to leverage the advantages of both approaches.

Quantitative method: involves systematically coding and counting specific linguistic features (mood types, modality and personal pronouns) across the introductions. The collected data are then analyzed statistically to identify patterns and trends in how these features are distributed. By quantifying such elements, the method reveals objective patterns in the ways writers construct relationships with readers, express stance, and position their work within the academic community.

Qualitative method: focuses on interpreting the underlying reasons and contextual factors behind the authors' language choices. Through detailed analysis of the text, it explores how and why writers use particular linguistic strategies to establish relationships with readers and convey their attitudes, judgments, or engagement.

This mixed-method approach ultimately leads to a richer and more reliable understanding of how interpersonal meaning is constructed in academic writing.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Findings

4.1.1. Mood system

Table 2. The mood system

Introductions	Declarative	Interrogative	Imperative	Total
1.	44	0	0	44
2.	79	0	0	79
3.	32	0	0	32
4.	43	0	0	43
5.	44	0	0	44
6.	52	0	0	52
7.	46	0	0	46
8.	49	0	0	49
9.	38	0	0	38
10.	55	0	0	55
11.	46	0	0	46
12.	66	0	0	66
13.	66	0	0	66
14.	74	0	0	74

15.	52	0	0	52
16.	76	0	0	76
17.	85	0	0	85
18.	63	0	0	63
19.	58	0	0	58
20.	64	0	0	64
Total	1132	0	0	1132
Percentage	100%	0%	0%	100%

The above table shows the overwhelming dominance of declarative mood in the introduction of the surveyed research articles. It can be explained that in the surveyed introductions of a research article (on family, gender, work, education, etc.) or in other parts of every research article, most clauses are statements to introduce research aims, describe prior findings, state results, or present arguments on a certain topic. No instances of interrogative or imperative mood can be found here.

E.g.: 1. *Although knowledge about the children of immigrants has accumulated rapidly in recent years, much less is known about the roughly 5.5 million children with undocumented parents.* (introduction 1)

2. *This is the first study to measure gender differences in prescriptive gender norms towards the division of total workload (paid and unpaid work) by means of a multifactorial survey experiment.* (introduction 10).

The first example is of the declarative mood used to state and contrast known information versus gaps in current knowledge. The sentence is stating factual information, presenting what is currently understood (*knowledge ... has accumulated ... recent years*) and what remains less understood (*... much less is known ...*). The second example also employs declarative mood to confidently claim the originality and significance of the study. It presents a clear, unambiguous statement about the study's contribution, asserting that this is the *first* such investigation – an important academic positioning.

However, it should be noted that there exist 42 clauses with “*whether*”. The use of “*whether*” introduces an indirect question or a condition under investigation, but it still functions within the declarative mood, reporting the purpose of the study objectively.

E.g.: 1. *A key issue for understanding the life chances of Mexican children of immigrants is whether having unauthorized parents negatively affects early development.* (introduction 1)

2. *This paper reports the results of a novel experiment which investigates whether men and women have different preferences over the allocation of housework within couples, and asks whether such differences may provide an explanation for the fact that women do more housework than men.* (introduction 2)

It can be figured out that the existence of “*whether*” clauses is a prominent feature in the introductions of research articles because they help to clearly state the research questions, signal the investigation of alternatives or unresolved issues and maintain clarity and professionalism in academic prose.

4.1.2. Modality

The distribution and frequency of modality in the research article introductions can be seen in the table below.

Table 3. *The distribution and frequency of modality*

		Manifestation	Distribution	Percentage
Modal verbs	probability	<i>can</i>	22	16.9
		<i>may</i>	34	26.2
		<i>could</i>	9	6.9
		<i>might</i>	9	6.9

	inclination	<i>will/ won't</i>	8	6.2
		<i>would</i>	14	10.8
		<i>should</i>	7	5.4
		<i>must</i>	3	2.3
		<i>ought to</i>	1	0.8
	Total 1			82.3%
Modal adjuncts	probability	<i>perhaps</i>	1	0.8
		<i>able</i>	3	2.3
		<i>usually</i>	2	1.5
	usuality	<i>sometimes</i>	1	0.8
		<i>always</i>	1	0.8
		<i>ever</i>	1	0.8
		<i>often</i>	10	7.7
	obligation	<i>necessarily</i>	2	1.5
	inclination	<i>readily</i>	1	0.8
	Total 2			16.9%
Other grammatical resources	inclination	<i>is necessary to</i>	1	0.8
	Total 3		1	0.8%
Total			130	100%

From the above table, it can be clearly seen that modality in the surveyed introductions is mostly conveyed by modal verbs (82.3%), while other grammatical resources account for the least (0.8%). Within modal verbs, probability is the most heavily used type, especially *may* (26.2%) and *can* (16.9%). Other high-frequency probability modal verbs include *would* (10.8%), with *could*, *might*, and *will/won't* account for 7%. Inclination modals (*should*, *must*, *ought to*) appear less frequently, together accounting for less than 9% of all resources.

E.g:

1. *This paper reports the results of a novel experiment which investigates whether men and women have different preferences over the allocation of housework within couples, and asks whether such differences may provide an explanation for the fact that women do more housework than men.* (modulation - probability – introduction 2)

2. *These studies emphasize the material, social, and informational support that college-educated children can provide their aging parents.* (modulation - probability – introduction 5)

3. *However, the difficulties in carrying out a real-world randomized experiment in this context are obvious and insurmountable: it would not be possible to randomly allocate paid work, earnings or housework among a sample of couples.* (modulation - probability – introduction 2)

It should also be noted that the dominance of probability modals in the surveyed introductions suggests the reporting of research studies places a strong emphasis on expressing degrees of certainty or possibility rather than giving obligations or inclinations. Besides, adjuncts are used sparingly and mostly to mark repetition or frequency (*usuality*) rather than probability or necessity. The percentage of modality expressed by other grammatical resources is very low (0.8%), which indicates that modality is overwhelmingly expressed through verbs rather than nominal or adjectival forms. In short, in social science research articles, writers often express their stance, attitudes, and degrees of certainty or possibility about their claims, which is crucial for presenting research findings cautiously and credibly. This is an essential feature of scientific texts, especially those on social sciences.

4.1.3. Personal pronouns

A number of personal pronouns are used in 15 selected introductions. They can be shown below:

Table 4. *The distribution and personal pronouns*

	Personal pronouns	Number	Percent
1st person	I/ me/ my	10	5%
	We/ us/ our	62	31,5%
2nd person	You/ your	0	0
3rd person	He/ him/ his	0	0
	She/ her	0	0
	They/ them/ their	125	63,5%
Total		197	100%

Table 4 shows that personal pronouns are present in the introductions of research articles chosen, but their distribution is uneven. The majority of pronouns used are 3rd person singular, making up 63,5% of all the pronouns found. This predominance occurs because academic writing, especially in fields like family studies, typically centers on discussing groups, populations, or research subjects rather than the authors themselves.

E.g.: 1. *They (younger adults) did not find similar associations between parenthood status and emotional closeness among either between daughters and their fathers or between sons and their mothers or fathers. (introduction 3)*

2. *Decades of social science research has confirmed that, across diverse regions of the world, educated individuals are healthier and live longer, and they (educated individuals) have healthier children who are more likely to survive to older ages. (introduction 5)*

Besides, there exist both 1st person singular and plural pronouns in some introductions. However, the personal pronouns we/us/our outnumber the pronouns I/me/ my, which can be explained by the collaborative authorship, which means that most research articles, especially in academic and scientific fields, are written by teams rather than by individuals. This may also show a sense of objectivity in the writing, which can help to reduce the perception of subjectivity.

E.g.:3. *We first examine whether and how emergent reading and mathematics skills vary by ethnicity, maternal nativity, and maternal legal status. This involves contrasts between Mexican children with undocumented, documented (permanent resident and naturalized), and U.S.-born mothers. (introduction 1)*

4. *However, to best of our knowledge, no experimental research has yet been conducted to assess gender differences in preferences over housework arrangements. (introduction 2)*

4.2. Discussion

The findings from the analysis reveal clear linguistic tendencies in the way research article introductions are constructed in the selected corpus.

Firstly, in terms of mood, the results show that all introductions (100%) are written in the declarative mood, with no instances of interrogative or imperative forms. This dominant use of declaratives highlights the preference for presenting information, stating research purposes, and situating the study within existing knowledge rather than directly questioning the reader or giving commands. Declaratives enable authors to convey information in a formal, assertive, and academically appropriate tone, ensuring clarity and objectivity. The occasional use of *whether*-clauses further reinforces this by framing research questions indirectly, aligning with conventions of academic writing that favor stating aims over explicitly interrogating the reader.

Secondly, the analysis of modality shows a strong reliance on modal verbs (82.3%), particularly those expressing probability such as *may* (26.2%), *can* (16.9%), and *would* (10.8%). Less frequent but still notable are *could*, *might*, and *will/won't* (each around 7%). Inclination modal verbs

(e.g., *should, must, ought to*) appear far less often, signaling that authors tend to avoid overly strong prescriptive statements in introductions. The predominance of probability markers suggests that academic writers aim to express caution, avoid overgeneralization, and acknowledge complexity or uncertainty in research contexts. Modal adjuncts (16.9%) and other grammatical resources of modality (0.8%) are rare, underscoring that modal meaning is mostly carried by core modal verbs. This strategic use of modality aligns with academic discourse norms of hedging claims, indicating possibilities rather than certainties.

Lastly, the distribution of personal pronouns demonstrates a clear preference for third-person references (*they/them/their*, 63.5%), reflecting the focus on external subjects such as participants, populations, or phenomena, rather than on the authors. This enhances objectivity and depersonalizes the discussion, maintaining a scholarly tone. First-person plural pronouns (*we/us/our*, 31.5%) are used more than first-person singular (*I/me/my*, 5%), likely due to the collaborative nature of most academic research and the tendency for co-authors to present a unified research voice. The near absence of direct address to the reader (second-person pronouns) is consistent with formal academic style. The limited use of first-person pronouns – especially singular – also reflects an effort to reduce perceived subjectivity and emphasize collective research effort over individual perspective.

5. Pedagogical

5.1. The significance of the study on improving students' academic writing skill

It can be seen that students in general and ESL students in particular need to produce articles in English and publish their research result in a prestigious journal. The importance of conveying interpersonal meaning in academic writing shouldn't be ignored. This study emphasizes the application of interpersonal meaning by providing learners with authentic examples and guided analysis, unraveling the subtle rules that shape academic English. Through this study, learners develop the ability to craft introductions that are not only grammatically accurate but also rhetorically compelling, fostering their confidence and effectiveness in academic communication. Furthermore, this approach offers crucial insights and strategies that enable ESL writers to produce introductions that are linguistically advanced and socially meaningful, aligning with the expectations and conventions of the academic community.

5.2. Suggested teaching-learning activities

In order for ESP students to improve their academic writing skill, especially in the field of interpersonal meaning, there exist some activities that can help to boost students' academic writing skill, including sentence transformation, identifying modality and paragraph writing.

(i) Activity 1:

Change the direct research questions into indirect ones using the guided phrases.

E.g.: "Does regular exercise improve cognitive performance in older adults?" (*We examine whether ...*)

-> *We examine whether regular exercise improves cognitive performance in older adults.*

- Is social media usage associated with increased anxiety among teenagers? (*The research aims to determine whether*).

- Does implementing green roofs in urban areas lead to measurable improvements in air quality? (*This paper tests whether ...*).

- Does bilingual education impact language proficiency in immigrant children? (*Our analysis tests whether*).

- Do early interventions reduce the incidence of reading difficulties? (*The purpose of this investigation is to assess whether*).

- Does public-private partnership enhance infrastructure development outcomes? (*This article explores whether ...?*).

- Do remote work arrangements affect employee productivity during the pandemic? (*We sought to verify whether ...*).
- Does exposure to violent video games increase aggression in adolescents? (*The research was conducted to determine whether ...*).
- Does early exposure to music education enhance mathematical skills in elementary students? (*This study seeks to determine whether ...*)

(ii) Activity 2:

Read the sentences below carefully. Underline or highlight all the modal verbs or expressions that show modality (e.g., *can*, *must*, etc.). Then, write down what type of modality each one expresses: modalization (probability, usuality) or modulation (obligation, inclination)

E.g.: "Students must submit their assignments by Friday to avoid penalties. They can ask for an extension if they have a valid reason, but they should try to complete the work on time. The teacher might offer extra help sessions if enough students request it."

-> *must*: obligation (modulation) *can*: permission (modulation)
should: obligation (modulation) *might*: probability (modalization)

- Researchers must adhere to ethical guidelines when conducting studies, as deviations could compromise the validity of the results. Ethical standards might also help ensure the safety and well-being of study participants. If these rules are not followed, future researchers may not be allowed to replicate the study.

- Participants may withdraw from the experiment at any time, although this might impact the overall statistical power of the study. Researchers should inform participants of their right to leave before the experiment begins. The study's results could become less reliable if too many people leave early. To reduce this risk, the team might offer incentives to encourage participants to stay until the end.

- Institutions should implement evidence-based policies to improve student outcomes, given that such measures are likely to enhance academic performance. Administrators must regularly review these policies to ensure they remain effective. Teachers might also need training to apply new strategies correctly. If these steps are followed, the overall quality of education could significantly improve.

- Analysts can apply various models to interpret the data, but the reliability of conclusions may depend on the quality of the input variables. Analysts should carefully select and verify the variables before using them in any model. Poor-quality data might lead to incorrect or misleading results. To ensure accuracy, the team could use multiple models for comparison and validation.

- Scholars must critically evaluate existing literature, recognizing that some findings might be influenced by methodological biases. They should carefully assess the research methods used in each study. Some results could be questionable if the methods are flawed. To strengthen their analysis, scholars might compare multiple sources and perspectives.

(iii) Activity 3

Using the given frame, write an introduction to the research article.

a. study on family matters (sharing housework, taking care of children, ...)

Introduction

Background: explain why family matters are important to study in society.

Current understanding: summarize key findings or common views about families (e.g., family roles, dynamics, challenges).

Research gap: identify what is missing or unclear in current knowledge about family matters.

Research aim/question: state the specific focus of your study (e.g., parenting styles and child outcomes, effects of family structure on well-being).

Significance: explain why your research will add value or help solve a problem related to families.

b. study on students' choice of social science subjects

Introduction

Background: explain why understanding students' subject choices, particularly in the social sciences, is important to education or society.

Current understanding: summarize what is already known about factors influencing subject selection (e.g., personal interest, career aspirations, parental influence, perceived value of social sciences).

Research gap: identify what is not fully understood or what questions remain about students' choices in this area.

Research aim/question: state the specific focus of your study (e.g., "This study aims to identify the key factors that influence secondary school students' decision to choose social science subjects.")

Significance: explain why this research matters (e.g., its potential impact on curriculum planning or career guidance).

6. Conclusion

The study aims to gain deeper insights into M.A.K. Halliday's systemic functional grammar, with a particular focus on interpersonal metafunction and its application on improving ESL students.

It should be born in mind that interpersonal metafunction is central to understanding how language is used not only to convey information but also to establish social relationships and express attitudes. By analysing interpersonal meaning in research article introductions, specifically focusing on the linguistic resources of mood, modality, and personal pronouns, the study serves multiple significant academic and pedagogical purposes, especially in the context of improving ESL students' academic writing skills. In examining the use of different mood types, the study investigates how writers structure their propositions, ask questions, and sometimes issue commands or suggestions, all of which contribute to how they engage and interact with readers. Similarly, the analysis of modality looks at how degrees of certainty, obligation, probability, and willingness are communicated, revealing the subtle ways authors express commitment to their claims and negotiate stance. The role of personal pronouns is explored to understand how writers represent themselves and their relationship to the audience and the academic community.

The detailed scrutiny offers ESL students a richer awareness of the dynamic ways writers position themselves and manage interpersonal meaning to fulfill specific rhetorical and social functions. Such knowledge helps learners recognize the varied linguistic choices available to convey authority, invite dialogue, project humility, or assert claims, all of which are crucial to effective academic discourse.

The pedagogical implications of this analysis are substantial. ESL students, who often struggle with the implicit and culturally nuanced norms of academic English, benefit greatly from explicit instruction in mood, modality, and pronoun usage as rhetorical tools. By making these aspects visible and teachable, educators facilitate students' ability to craft introductions that present them as credible and confident scholars, engage appropriately with their disciplinary audience, and situate their research within ongoing scholarly conversations. Ultimately, this approach can empower ESL learners to enhance the persuasiveness and clarity of their writing, improving both their academic performance and their integration into the global academic community.

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**Nghĩa liên nhân trong phần mở đầu của các bài báo nghiên cứu:
những gợi ý cho việc dạy viết học thuật cho sinh viên ngành ngôn ngữ Anh**

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này khảo sát vai trò then chốt của nghĩa liên nhân trong việc xây dựng phần giới thiệu cho các bài báo khoa học, tập trung vào cách mà tác giả thiết lập độ tin cậy theo chiến lược, thu hút người đọc và định vị công trình của mình trong diễn ngôn học thuật rộng lớn hơn. Sử dụng khung lý thuyết Ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống, nghiên cứu phân tích tỉ mỉ các chiến lược ngôn ngữ, bao gồm hệ thống thức, tình thái, và đại từ nhân xưng mà các tác giả sử dụng nhằm kiến tạo và duy trì mối quan hệ ý nghĩa với người đọc. Dữ liệu được thu thập từ 20 bài báo nghiên cứu về chủ đề gia đình được xuất bản trên tạp chí Social Science Research trong giai đoạn 2016-2025. Kết quả cho thấy, việc sử dụng hiệu quả nghĩa liên nhân góp phần nâng cao đáng kể tính thuyết phục, sự rõ ràng và mức độ tiếp cận của phần giới thiệu bài nghiên cứu, đặc biệt là trong việc nêu ra khoảng trống nghiên cứu và lí giải ý nghĩa học thuật cũng như thực tiễn của nghiên cứu. Dựa trên phân tích này, nghiên cứu thảo luận những hàm ý quan trọng đối với việc giảng dạy viết học thuật cho sinh viên tiếng Anh như ngoại ngữ (EFL), nhấn mạnh sự cần thiết phải tích hợp các chiến lược liên nhân vào chương trình giảng dạy viết nhằm giúp sinh viên có thể xây dựng phần giới thiệu hấp dẫn, phù hợp với ngành và tuân thủ chuẩn mực học thuật. Các phương pháp sư phạm thực tiễn cũng được đề xuất nhằm hỗ trợ sinh viên chuyên ngành tự tin vận dụng các chiến lược này để điều hướng sự phức tạp của diễn ngôn học thuật và tạo ra các công trình nghiên cứu có giá trị.

Từ khóa: Ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống; nghĩa liên nhân; thức; tình thái; đại từ nhân xưng; phần giới thiệu; bài báo nghiên cứu; viết học thuật; sinh viên EFL.