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 DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER-BASED VIDEO LEARNING MEDIA TO ENHANCE ANECDOTE TEXT WRITING SKILLS AMONG MA STUDENTS

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FUNCTIONAL TEXT-BASED LEARNING FOR COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF INVITATION AND GREETING CARD TASKS

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Abstrak

Kurikulum Merdeka menekankan pendekatan pembelajaran autentik dan komunikatif dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris. Namun, kajian empiris yang menelaah bagaimana tugas teks fungsional diimplementasikan secara pedagogis di kelas EFL tingkat SMP masih terbatas, terutama dari perspektif kualitatif yang berorientasi pada proses. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pelaksanaan tugas undangan dan kartu ucapan serta mengkaji bagaimana praktik tersebut berkaitan dengan konstruksi kualitas pembelajaran di kelas. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif instrumental dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, serta analisis dokumen pembelajaran dan karya siswa selama delapan minggu. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa tugas teks fungsional yang dirancang secara autentik dan kontekstual berasosiasi dengan keterlibatan siswa yang lebih berkelanjutan, berkembangnya kesadaran pragmatik, serta interaksi kolaboratif yang dimediasi oleh teman sebaya dan guru. Peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran dalam konteks ini tidak dipahami sebagai hasil kausal dari jenis tugas semata, melainkan sebagai konstruksi yang dibentuk melalui interaksi antara desain tugas, mediasi pedagogis, dan dinamika sosial kelas. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi berupa deskripsi berbasis proses tentang bagaimana kompetensi komunikatif dimediasi dalam praktik pembelajaran teks fungsional pada jenjang SMP. Secara praktis, hasil penelitian memberikan implikasi bagi perancangan tugas autentik dan strategi scaffolding dalam implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka.

Kata Kunci: undangan dan kartu ucapan; pembelajaran komunikatif; pembelajaran kontekstual; studi kasus kualitatif; kurikulum merdeka

Abstract

The Merdeka Curriculum promotes authentic and communicative approaches in English language teaching. However, empirical research examining how functional text tasks are pedagogically enacted in junior secondary EFL classrooms remains limited, particularly from a qualitative, process-oriented perspective. This study analyzes the implementation of invitation and greeting card tasks and explores how these practices were associated with the construction of learning quality in the classroom. An instrumental qualitative case study design was employed, with data collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of instructional documents and student artifacts over an eight-week instructional unit. The findings indicate that authentically framed and contextually grounded functional text tasks were associated with sustained student engagement, emerging pragmatic awareness, and peer-mediated interaction. Learning quality in this case was not attributed to task type alone; rather, it was found to be constructed through the interplay of task design, pedagogical mediation, and classroom social dynamics. The study contributes a process-oriented account of how communicative competence was mediated through functional text pedagogy at the junior secondary level. Practically, the findings offer insights into authentic task design and scaffolding strategies within the Merdeka Curriculum framework.

Keywords: invitation and greeting card; communicative learning; contextual learning; qualitative case study; merdeka curriculum

1. INTRODUCTION

Empirical research examining how functional text tasks are enacted in junior secondary EFL classrooms under the Merdeka Curriculum remains limited, particularly from a qualitative and process-oriented perspective. Although curriculum reform in Indonesia emphasizes contextual, independent, and student-centered learning (Jahidi et al., 2024; Nurjanah et al., 2024), existing studies tend to focus either on policy discourse or general implementation challenges (Fajri & Andarwulan, 2023; Kumar K.C, 2024), leaving classroom-level pedagogical processes underexplored.

Within English language teaching, the Merdeka Curriculum aligns with principles of communicative and authentic learning, which position language as social action rather than structural knowledge (Gilmore, 2007; Graves, 2008). This orientation resonates with Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching, where meaning-making in context becomes central (East & Wang, 2025; Teng et al., 2025). However, research indicates that classroom practice at the junior secondary level often remains test-oriented and mechanistic, limiting opportunities for functional language use (Khan et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2021). This discrepancy signals a need for closer examination of pedagogical enactment rather than theoretical alignment.

Functional text-based learning provides a potential bridge between communicative theory and classroom practice. In this study, a functional text-based learning model is defined as a pedagogical framework that centers on short functional texts such as invitations and greeting cards as authentic communicative acts involving social purpose, audience awareness, and linguistic choice. Such texts inherently connect structure with communicative intention (Dai, 2023; Dominguez & Bobkina, 2025; Liu, 2020). Yet, in many classroom contexts, these texts are

treated procedurally, with emphasis placed on structural features rather than on interactional meaning-making (Deng et al., 2024; X. Zhang, 2024).

A growing body of research supports the pedagogical value of authentic and project-based tasks, linking them to student engagement and meaningful learning processes (Guo et al., 2020; Thomas, 2000). Task-based approaches are argued to promote integration of language skills through socially situated problem-solving (Ellis, 2018). Nevertheless, much of this literature concentrates on higher education or senior secondary contexts, and frequently privileges quantitative outcome measurement over qualitative process analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In the Indonesian context, recent studies have explored the integration of digital media in functional text instruction, reporting increased creativity and motivation (Aulanisa et al., 2025; Kessler, 2018). However, these studies often foreground product quality and student perception, offering limited insight into how classroom interaction, teacher facilitation, and task mediation construct learning experiences in situ (Worden, 2018). As a result, a processual understanding of functional text pedagogy in junior secondary classrooms remains insufficiently developed.

To address this gap, the present study adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine how invitation and greeting card tasks are implemented as lived pedagogical practices. Rather than measuring effectiveness statistically, the study investigates how interaction patterns, teacher strategies, and authentic task design shape what is conceptualized here as learning quality. Learning quality is defined as the extent to which classroom processes foster meaningful engagement, contextual comprehension, collaborative interaction, and functional language use.

This focus distinguishes the study from prior qualitative and task-based research. While earlier investigations confirm the benefits of authentic tasks, they rarely specify how communicative competence emerges through the interplay of task design, social interaction, and pedagogical scaffolding at the junior secondary level. By foregrounding these mediating processes, this research refines the conceptual linkage between functional text tasks and communicative learning within the Merdeka Curriculum framework.

The purpose of this study is therefore to analyze how invitation and greeting card tasks are enacted in an eighth grade EFL classroom and how such enactment shapes learning quality. Theoretically, the study contributes a process-oriented account of functional text pedagogy that integrates communicative theory with curriculum reform discourse. Practically, it offers insights into how authentic task design and teacher facilitation can operationalize communicative principles in everyday classroom practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Invitation and Greeting Card Learning Model in English Language Teaching

Modern English language learning emphasizes the use of language as a meaningful communication tool in real social contexts. This approach is rooted in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which places the social functions of language, interaction, and meaning at the core of language learning (Adem & Berkessa, 2022; Richards, 2017). Within the CLT framework, functional texts such as invitations and greeting cards are seen as pedagogically relevant media as they allow students to use English for authentic communicative purposes, such as inviting, congratulating, or expressing empathy in everyday situations (Lestari & Margana, 2024; Worden, 2018).

Invitation and greeting card texts belong to the category of short functional texts that emphasize the relationship between text structure, language

choice, and social context (Chaves & Gerosa, 2020). Functional text-based learning helps students understand that language use is always tied to specific purposes and communication situations, not just grammatical rules separated from meaning (Lim et al., 2022; Ryshina-pankova & Mcknight, 2022). Thus, learning models that focus on functional texts have the potential to develop students' communicative competence more fully, covering linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic aspects (Cocchetta, 2018; Nguyen, 2011).

Several studies have shown that functional text-based writing tasks can increase student engagement as the learning materials are perceived to be closer to their life experiences (Rahimi & Zhang, 2021; Zenouzagh et al., 2023). Research on greeting card and invitation learning reveals that students are more motivated when they are asked to produce real products that can be shared or presented to others (Aulanisa et al., 2025). In addition, the integration of digital media in functional text writing has also been shown to encourage students' creativity and digital literacy, although it requires adequate pedagogical assistance so that the linguistic objectives are still achieved (Selfa-sastre, 2022).

In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, learning invitation and greeting cards is in line with the principles of contextual and student-centered learning. This curriculum encourages teachers to design learning that provides space for exploration, reflection, and the production of authentic work. Therefore, the invitation and greeting card learning model is not only understood as teaching language materials, but as a pedagogical strategy that allows students to build meaning, collaborate, and express themselves through English.

Authentic Task-based Learning and Qualitative Perspectives in Language Education Studies

Authentic task-based learning places activities that resemble real-world communication practices at the center of the learning process (Kim et al., 2023). In language education studies, this approach is believed to be able to bridge the gap between classroom learning and language use outside the classroom (Ellis, 2018). Authentic tasks encourage students to use language meaningfully, make linguistic decisions, and interact with others in specific social contexts, so that learning becomes more relevant and meaningful (Alamri, 2025).

Various studies confirm that project-based learning and authentic tasks have a positive impact on the quality of the learning process, such as increased student participation, collaboration, and reflective thinking skills (Guo et al., 2020). However, researchers also emphasize that the success of this approach depends heavily on how tasks are designed and facilitated by teachers. Without proper assistance, authentic tasks have the potential to become merely technical activities that do not fully achieve language learning goals.

In terms of research methods, a qualitative approach is seen as most suitable for studying authentic task-based learning because it can capture the complexity of the learning process that is not always measurable quantitatively (D. Zhang, 2025). Qualitative research allows researchers to understand students' learning experiences, teachers' pedagogical strategies and the dynamics of classroom interactions that shape the meaning of learning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Case studies provide an analytical framework for examining learning practices in depth within a specific context (Yin, 2018).

Therefore, the literature review shows that qualitative research on the implementation of invitation and greeting card learning models has strong theoretical and practical (Cook et al.,

2018). This approach enables a comprehensive analysis of how authentic tasks are implemented within the framework of Merdeka Curriculum, how students and teachers make meaning of the learning process, and the contextual factors that influence the quality of English language learning at the junior secondary school level (Mahashelly et al., 2024).

3. METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative instrumental case study design. The case was bounded to one eighth-grade English classroom implementing invitation and greeting card tasks within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. The instrumental case study approach was chosen because the classroom was used to illuminate broader pedagogical issues concerning functional text-based learning rather than to describe the uniqueness of the setting itself (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study was conducted over six weeks during one instructional unit on functional texts. Data collection included six non-participant classroom observations (each 80 minutes), three semi-structured interviews with the English teacher, and eight semi-structured interviews with selected students. This process-oriented qualitative design was appropriate because the study aimed to examine pedagogical enactment and classroom interaction rather than to test causal relationships or measure statistical effectiveness (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participants

The participants consisted of one English teacher and 28 eighth-grade students (aged 13–14) from a public junior secondary school. The class included 16 female and 12 male students with heterogeneous English proficiency levels based on prior semester assessment records.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research

focus (Patton, 2002). The teacher had more than five years of teaching experience and was actively implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Eight students were selected for interviews representing high, moderate, and lower achievement categories to capture diverse learning experiences. This sampling strategy enabled information-rich data aligned with the study's objectives.

Instruments

In qualitative inquiry, the researcher serves as the primary instrument of data collection and interpretation (Creswell, 2019). To enhance systematic data gathering, three supporting instruments were employed:

1. Classroom observation protocol, used to document interaction patterns, task implementation stages, student engagement, and teacher scaffolding practices. Observations were conducted in a non-participant role to preserve natural classroom dynamics.
2. Semi-structured interview guides, designed to explore participants' perceptions of task implementation, learning engagement, and communicative practices (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Interviews lasted between 30–45 minutes and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.
3. Document analysis framework, used to examine lesson plans, student worksheets, assessment rubrics, and 28 student-produced invitation and greeting card artifacts.

Data collection followed an iterative process in which preliminary observations informed subsequent interview probes.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

The analytic process involved open coding of observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents to identify initial categories, followed by axial coding to cluster related codes into broader conceptual categories. Themes were then developed through constant comparison across data sources, with cross-case verification conducted within the bounded classroom context to ensure the coherence and consistency of emerging patterns. Learning quality was analytically operationalized through inductively derived indicators, including student engagement, contextual understanding, collaborative interaction, and functional language use.

To ensure trustworthiness, this study applied the criteria of credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement over eight weeks, triangulation of data sources, and member checking with the teacher to verify interpretive accuracy. Dependability was supported by maintaining a detailed audit trail documenting coding decisions, analytic memos, and procedural steps. Confirmability was strengthened through reflexive journaling to monitor potential researcher bias and peer debriefing with colleagues experienced in qualitative research. These procedures ensured that the findings were systematically grounded in the data rather than in researcher assumptions.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the findings derived from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis conducted over six weeks of implementing invitation and greeting card tasks. The analysis followed a thematic procedure involving open and axial coding to identify patterns that consistently emerged across data sources. The findings are not intended to establish causal effectiveness; rather, they explicate how learning quality was

constructed through task design, social interaction, and pedagogical mediation within the classroom context.

To provide an analytical overview of the emergent themes and their evidentiary basis, Table 1 summarizes the main findings across data sources. The table serves as a structural map to guide the subsequent thematic elaboration in Sections 4.1–4.5.

Table 1. Summary of Findings, Data Sources, and Illustrative Evidence

Results Theme	Key Finding (1 sentence)	Data Sources	Illustrative Evidence (short excerpts)
4.1 Student Engagement	Engagement appeared more sustained during invitation and greeting card tasks, shown through verbal participation, task persistence, and peer interaction, with differentiated participation across proficiency levels.	Classroom observations; field notes; student interviews	Field note (Obs 3): “Students leaned toward their group members ... Fewer off-task behaviors ...”; Student: “When we make the card, I feel it is real...”; Student: “Because we will present it, I try to speak English...”
4.2 Contextual Understanding & Communicative Awareness	Most artifacts showed clear communicative purpose and audience orientation	Student artifacts (n=28); student interviews	Artifact excerpt: “I would like to invite you to celebrate ...”; Student: “I have attended

	n; however, some texts lacked pragmatic completeness (e.g., vague time/place details).		birthday parties... so I know what information...”; Student: “If it is farewell party, I can imagine...”
4.3 Creativity & Linguistic Expression	Artifacts demonstrated diverse visual design and expressive intent, but language structures remained mostly formulaic; creativity sometimes competed with linguistic refinement.	Student artifacts; observations on notes	Affective expression: “I’m proud of you and wish you...”; Observation note (Obs 5): theme choice led to more animated discussion; Pattern reliance: “I would like to invite...” / “Congratulations on...”
4.4 Collaborative Interaction & Peer Mediation	Peer scaffolding supported form-meaning coordination (e.g., vocabulary and preposition choices), yet interaction depth varied, and some groups focused	Classroom observations; recorded exchanges; field notes	Dialogue: “on Sunday?” → “No, on Sunday...”; Observation: lower-proficiency students sought peer lexical support; Note: three groups focused mainly on layout.

4.5 Contribution to Learning Quality	more on layout than language revision.	Student artifacts; assessment document; student interview	. Artifacts showed identifiable openings and event details; majority achieved moderate-high performance categories; Student: "Now I know when to use this expression."
	Functional text tasks were associated with clearer structural organization, improved alignment between communicative purpose and language choice, and emerging pragmatic awareness.		

Interview data reinforce this pattern. One student stated:

"When we make the card, I feel it is real. Not only exercise. So, I want it to be good."

Another student commented:

"Because we will present it, I try to speak English even if it is simple."

However, engagement varied by proficiency level. Higher-achieving students-initiated discussions more frequently, while lower-achieving students participated through design tasks and vocabulary selection. Rather than indicating uniform improvement, the data suggest differentiated forms of engagement shaped by peer scaffolding and task structure. A summary of the qualitative findings related to student engagement and other aspects of learning is presented in Table 1, which shows that student engagement is one of the main patterns that emerged from the observation, interview, and documentation data.

Student Engagement in Functional Text Tasks

Across six classroom observations, student engagement appeared more sustained during invitation and greeting card tasks compared to prior teacher-centered grammar sessions documented in preliminary field notes. Engagement was visible in three dimensions: verbal participation, task persistence, and peer interaction.

During the drafting phase, 19 of 28 students voluntarily contributed ideas during group discussions, and 14 students read parts of their drafts aloud without direct prompting. Field notes from Observation 3 recorded:

"Students leaned toward their group members, negotiating wording and checking spelling collaboratively. Fewer off-task behaviors were observed compared to previous lessons."

Contextual Understanding and Communicative Awareness

Document analysis of 28 student artifacts revealed that 21 students clearly articulated the communicative purpose of their texts. For instance, in a birthday invitation draft, one student wrote:

"I would like to invite you to celebrate my birthday party on Saturday at my house. I hope you can come."

Although minor grammatical inaccuracies appeared (e.g., tense consistency), the communicative intent, audience orientation, and event specificity were evident.

Interview data suggest that contextual familiarity supported meaning-making. A student explained:

“I have attended birthday parties before, so I know what information must be written.”

Another noted:

“If it is farewell party, I can imagine the situation and choose the right words.”

Nevertheless, seven student texts demonstrated limited contextual awareness, including vague time references (“this day”) or missing event details. This indicates that contextual tasks were associated with improved functional awareness but did not automatically ensure pragmatic completeness.

Development of Creativity and Language Expression

Student artifacts showed diversity in visual design, lexical choice, and tone. Twelve students incorporated decorative digital templates, while others used hand-drawn illustrations. Several greeting cards included affective expressions such as:

“I’m proud of you and wish you more success in the future.”

While these texts demonstrated expressive intent, syntactic structures remained relatively simple. Most students relied on formulaic patterns (“I would like to invite...”, “Congratulations on...”) drawn from teacher models.

Observation notes suggest that creative freedom was associated with increased motivation. During Observation 5, the teacher allowed students to select themes independently, resulting in more animated discussion. However, some groups prioritized visual design over linguistic refinement, suggesting a trade-off

between aesthetic creativity and language complexity.

Social Interaction and Collaborative Learning

Collaborative interaction was a consistent feature across sessions. Peer scaffolding occurred frequently during vocabulary selection and preposition usage. A recorded exchange illustrates this process:

Student A: “Should we say ‘on Sunday’?”

Student B: “No, ‘on Sunday’. Teacher explained before.”

Such exchanges indicate peer regulation of form within communicative tasks. Lower-proficiency students were observed seeking lexical support from peers rather than relying solely on the teacher.

However, interaction quality varied. In three groups, discussion focused primarily on layout rather than linguistic revision. This suggests that collaboration alone does not guarantee depth of language processing, task framing and teacher monitoring influence interaction focus.

Contribution of the Model to Learning Quality

The analysis of student artifacts, assessment documentation, and interview data indicates that the Invitation and Greeting Card model was associated with qualitative shifts in how students organized meaning and aligned language with communicative purpose. Rather than suggesting measurable effectiveness, the findings point to patterned improvements in coherence, audience awareness, and functional expression within the produced texts.

Most student artifacts demonstrated clearer structural organization, including appropriate openings, specification of event details, and closing expressions that reflected intended social relations. While grammatical inaccuracies remained, these were generally localized at the level of spelling or simple sentence formation and

did not obscure communicative intent. This pattern suggests that students were able to prioritize meaning construction and audience orientation, even when linguistic control was still developing.

Assessment documentation further shows that the majority of students achieved moderate to high performance categories on the invitation and greeting card unit. However, these results are interpreted descriptively rather than inferentially. The distribution of scores serves to contextualize the qualitative findings, indicating that functional text learning coincided with broadly satisfactory performance levels, while also revealing that a minority of students required additional scaffolding to achieve communicative completeness.

Interview responses reinforce this interpretation. Students described increased clarity regarding when and how specific expressions should be used in everyday communication. Importantly, their reflections emphasize situational appropriateness rather than memorization of structural patterns. This suggests that the learning experience supported emerging pragmatic awareness, though within the limits of a short instructional cycle.

25 Taken together, these findings indicate that learning quality in this case was not reducible to product scores alone. It was constructed through the interaction between authentic task framing, peer mediation, and teacher facilitation. The model did not eliminate linguistic limitations; rather, it appeared to create conditions under which communicative intent, contextual awareness, and collaborative meaning-making became more visible in classroom practice.

DISCUSSION

36 Across the six observed meetings, functional text tasks (invitation and greeting cards) were associated with more sustained student participation, task persistence, and peer interaction than the teacher-centered grammar

routines noted in preliminary field notes. This pattern is consistent with core principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which posit that communicative competence develops through purposeful language use and interaction rather than through isolated form practice (Adem & Berkessa, 2022; Bowen et al., 2017; Teng et al., 2025)

Importantly, the engagement documented in this study appears to be shaped not only by “group work” as a technique but also by authenticity cues and public accountability producing a socially meaningful artifact and, in some cases, presenting it which may strengthen learner investment when classroom tasks approximate real communicative purposes (Ellis, 2018; Gilmore, 2007).

However, the findings caution against interpreting engagement as uniform improvement. Participation patterns varied by proficiency level: higher-proficiency students more often initiated discussion and contributed longer utterances, whereas lower-proficiency students tended to participate through design decisions, vocabulary selection, and shorter contributions. Such differentiated participation can be interpreted as legitimate engagement within collaborative tasks, yet it also suggests unequal access to extended language production unless roles and scaffolding are deliberately structured. Thus, the observed “activeness” is best understood as mediated participation shaped by task design and peer support rather than as a direct outcome of task type alone.

The use of real-life contexts in English learning supports the theory of contextual learning which emphasizes the importance of linking learning materials with students' concrete experiences so that learning becomes more meaningful (Kumar K.C, 2024). When students learn through familiar contexts, such as invitations or congratulations, they more easily understand the purpose and function of the language being learned.

However, the presence of several artifacts with incomplete event details (e.g., vague time/place references) suggests that contextual familiarity does not automatically ensure pragmatic completeness. One plausible alternative interpretation is that some students relied on formulaic templates that satisfy surface genre expectations while failing to meet communicative conventions (e.g., specifying required information for an invitation). This implies that authenticity works best when paired with explicit success criteria (audience–purpose–tone and “must-have information”) and guided revision cycles to strengthen pragmatic precision (Ryshina-pankova & Mcknight, 2022).

The diversity of designs and affective expressions in students’ products indicates that the tasks created space for personal voice and expressive meaning. Creative language learning scholarship suggests that opportunities for imagination and self-expression can increase motivational investment and deepen engagement (Selfa-sastre, 2022). Genre-based approaches further conceptualize text production as social practice in which writers construct stance and identity while aligning language choices with purpose and audience (Ryshina-pankova et al., 2022).

The observations also point to a practical tension: some groups prioritized aesthetic design over linguistic refinement. This tension can be interpreted in two ways. First, creative choice may function as an entry point that sustains participation, especially for learners with limited linguistic confidence. Second, without explicit guidance, design-oriented work can displace attention to language choices needed for communicative adequacy. Therefore, creativity appears most productive when accompanied by language-focused checkpoints (e.g., required expressions, audience-appropriate tone, clarity, and completeness criteria) that keep the task oriented toward communicative goals.

The collaborative interaction documented in this study supports sociocultural and cooperative learning accounts of learning as a socially mediated process, where peers regulate performance and negotiate meaning together (Gillies, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). Peer assistance during vocabulary selection and form-related decisions embedded in meaning-making suggests that students used classmates as resources rather than relying solely on teacher correction, consistent with research emphasizing the role of peer mediation in language development (Guo et al., 2020).

That said, interactional quality varied across groups, and some discussions focused primarily on layout rather than revising meaning and language. This indicates that collaboration is a potential mechanism for learning, not a guarantee. The extent to which collaboration becomes linguistically productive depends on how tasks structure interaction (roles, prompts, revision routines) and how teachers monitor and redirect group work toward communicative adequacy.

Teacher facilitation emerged as a key factor linking task authenticity and collaboration to learning process quality. The teacher’s use of prompting questions before correction aligns with CLT/TBLT informed scaffolding practices that preserve learner agency and promote reflective decision-making, and it resonates with the Merdeka Curriculum’s student centered orientation (Ellis, 2018; Nurjana et al., 2024). By directing attention to audience, purpose, and tone, such mediation supports functional text learning beyond procedural teaching of text structure.

Despite this, time constraints sometimes prompted more direct correction near task completion, reflecting an implementation tension commonly reported in curriculum reform: dialogic facilitation requires time, while classroom pacing and product deadlines demand efficiency (Fajri & Andarwulan, 2023) (Kumar K.C, 2024). This tension underscores the

importance of prioritizing feedback. A practical implication is to sequence feedback from communicative completeness and pragmatic appropriacy (audience/purpose/tone, required details) to linguistic accuracy, while leveraging structured peer feedback to distribute scaffolding and maintain student agency within limited instructional time.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined how invitation and greeting card tasks were enacted in a Grade VIII EFL classroom within the Merdeka Curriculum framework and how such enactment related to the construction of learning quality. The findings indicate that functional text tasks, when implemented as authentic and contextually grounded activities, were associated with sustained student engagement, emerging pragmatic awareness, and peer-mediated interaction. Rather than demonstrating causal effectiveness, the study shows that learning quality in this case was shaped by the interaction between task design, collaborative processes, and teacher facilitation.

The specific scholarly contribution of this study lies in offering a process-oriented account of functional text pedagogy at the junior secondary level. While prior research has often emphasized outcomes or general communicative principles, this study details how communicative learning was mediated through authenticity-driven accountability, structured peer interaction, and dialogic scaffolding within a bounded classroom context. By foregrounding mediation and interaction, the study refines the conceptual linkage between functional text tasks and communicative competence development under curriculum reform conditions.

This study is subject to several limitations. It was conducted as a bounded instrumental case study in a single classroom over an eight-week instructional unit, involving one teacher and a limited number of student interviews. The

findings therefore cannot be generalized beyond comparable contexts. In addition, the study focused on process-oriented qualitative evidence and did not include longitudinal measurement of communicative development, which may limit claims regarding sustained learning impact.

Theoretical implications suggest that communicative development in functional text learning emerges through mediated classroom interaction rather than through exposure to task types alone. Authenticity appears to function as a structuring condition that shapes participation and meaning making, but its pedagogical value depends on how scaffolding and revision cycles are enacted.

Pedagogically, the findings highlight the importance of making audience, purpose, tone, and required information criteria explicit; structuring peer-feedback routines to deepen interactional focus; and sequencing feedback from communicative adequacy to linguistic accuracy. These practices may help balance creative expression with pragmatic precision within limited instructional time.

Future research may extend this inquiry through multi-site comparative studies, longer observation periods, or mixed method designs that integrate qualitative process analysis with longitudinal assessment data. Further investigation into the role of digital tools in supporting revision, audience awareness, and collaborative scaffolding in functional text learning would also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of communicative pedagogy under the Merdeka Curriculum.

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