

CONSTRUCTING COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTION IN AN ELEMENTARY EFL PROGRAM: A CASE STUDY OF 'A DAY WITH A NATIVE SPEAKER' IN INDONESIA

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: June 2026 Revised: August 2026 Accepted: September 2026 Published: October 2026	<i>English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning at the elementary school level requires authentic opportunities for interaction to support students' communicative competence. However, opportunities to use English in real-world communication remain relatively limited in EFL contexts. This study aims to explore how communicative interactions are constructed through the A Day with Native Speaker program at SDS Labschool UPI Purwakarta, Indonesia. This qualitative case study involved 362 bilingual students from Grades 1–6, aged 6–13 years, who participated in the two-day program conducted for approximately five hours per day, along with one native speaker and one bilingual program coordinator. Data were collected through observations of program activities, semi-structured interviews with two upper-grade students, one native speaker, and one bilingual program coordinator, and documentation, and were analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that communicative interactions were constructed through five interrelated components: active participation, comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning, interactional feedback, and confidence development. Students participated actively in authentic communication, while comprehensible input was supported through language adjustment, gestures, intonation, and contextual support. Negotiation of meaning occurred through clarification and confirmation, while interactional feedback supported continued communication without disrupting the interaction. These processes were dynamically interconnected and were associated with students' confidence in using English. Based on these findings, a context-specific cyclical conceptual model was developed to illustrate the dynamic relationships among the five components that support communicative interaction and students' communicative competence.</i>
Keywords Communicative interaction; EFL learning; Native speaker; Communicative competence; Elementary school students;	
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INTRODUCTION

English plays a crucial role as an international language used in global communication, education, science, and technology. Therefore, developing English language skills from an early age is a focus of formal education. At the elementary school level, English learning is considered crucial because children are at a developmental stage that allows them to more easily acquire new languages and naturally develop communication skills. (Lestari et al., 2024) As the need for English language competency increases, various educational

institutions have begun implementing bilingual programs as an effort to improve students' language skills. Bilingual programs allow the use of two languages in learning activities, giving students more opportunities to use English in academic contexts and everyday communication (Baker & Wright, 2021). However, the success of a bilingual program is determined not only by the use of two languages but also by the quality of interactions that occur during the learning process. In learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), interaction is a key component that enables students to use the language actively and meaningfully.

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach emphasizes that the goal of language learning should not only focus on mastering language structures, but also on developing communicative competence through the use of language in real-life situations (Ramadhani et al., 2024). In line with this view, Hymes (1972) explains that communicative competence includes the ability to use language appropriately according to social and cultural contexts, while Canale and Swain (1980) suggest that this competence involves grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic aspects. The importance of interaction in language acquisition is also explained through the Interaction Hypothesis proposed by Long (2015). This theory states that language acquisition occurs when learners engage in interactions that enable them to obtain comprehensible input, negotiate meaning, and receive feedback during the communication process (Long, 2015). Through this process, students not only understand the language used but also develop the ability to use language more effectively in real-life communication situations (Gass & Mackey, 2015).

One form of learning that provides opportunities for authentic interaction is the involvement of native speakers in learning activities. The presence of native speakers provides more natural exposure to the language, particularly in pronunciation, intonation, and everyday language use. Furthermore, direct interaction with native speakers can increase students' motivation, participation, and confidence in using English (Ciptaningrum et al., 2025). This authentic interaction is implemented through the bilingual program *A Day with Native Speaker*, which provides students with the opportunity to interact directly with native speakers in various learning activities. This program creates a learning environment that allows students to obtain authentic language input while constructing meaning through a natural communication process.

Although various studies have demonstrated the benefits of native-speaker involvement in English language learning, most have focused on evaluating learning outcomes at a macro level. For example, research by Ciptaningrum et al. (2025) predominantly examined how the presence of native speakers increased students' affective motivation and learning interest in language training programs. Although various studies have demonstrated the benefits of communicative approaches in English language learning, previous research has often focused on speaking achievement or performance outcomes. For example, Ilyas (2017) examined the effect of a communicative approach on students' speaking achievement, whereas the present study focuses on how communicative interactions are constructed at the micro level within an elementary bilingual program involving a native English-speaking guest.

Consequently, the transactional mechanisms that occur in the classroom, such as how elementary school-aged children utilize comprehensible input or negotiate meaning naturally when faced with linguistic barriers, have not been explored in depth. This research addresses this scientific gap. Using a qualitative descriptive case study approach, this research not only evaluates whether the presence of native speakers has a positive impact but also explores in-depth how these interactions are constructed through five dynamic components (active participation, comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning, interactional feedback, and confidence development) that operate simultaneously during the *A Day with Native Speaker* program. This study addresses the following research questions:

How are communicative interactions constructed between elementary school students and the native speaker during the A Day with Native Speaker program?

How do comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning, and interactional feedback contribute to the construction of communicative interactions during the program?

How are students' participation and confidence manifested through their interaction with the native speaker during the program?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to examine the construction of communicative interaction in English language learning through the "A Day with Native Speaker" program. A qualitative approach was used to understand interaction processes occurring naturally within an authentic learning context. The case study design was selected because the research focuses on a single bounded case: the implementation of the "A Day with Native Speaker" program at SDS Labschool UPI Purwakarta (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The scope of the case is limited to the program's implementation over two days April 28–29, 2026 with a duration of approximately five hours per day (07:00 to 12:00 WIB). Although named "A Day with Native Speaker," the program spanned two days because each grade level (Grades 1 through 6) comprises multiple parallel classes (e.g., Classes A, B, and C); consequently, a single day was insufficient to cover all parallel classes at every level. The program involved students from bilingual classes across Grades 1 through 6, aged approximately 6 to 13 years.

Learning activities were tailored to the specific grade levels. Upper-grade students participated in activities involving the description of Indonesian foods and the description and playing of traditional Indonesian games, while lower-grade students engaged in a toy-buying and selling simulation. This contextual limitation allowed the study to focus on how communicative interaction was constructed through the engagement of students, the native speaker, and accompanying staff during the program activities. The study did not aim to quantitatively measure improvements in English proficiency but rather to understand the interaction processes and patterns emerging within this authentic learning context.

Research Participants

This study involved 362 students from bilingual classes across Grades 1–6, aged 6–13, who participated in the "A Day with Native Speaker" program. All 362 students were observed during the program to identify communicative interaction patterns emerging from various activities. To gain deeper insight into the students' experiences interacting with a native speaker, two students from the upper grades were purposively selected for interviews. In addition to the students, the study included a native speaker and a bilingual coordinator as interview informants to obtain perspectives on the interaction process and implementation during the program. Thus, research data were gathered through observations of the 362 students and interviews with two students, one native speaker, and one bilingual coordinator. Students from the lower grades did not participate in interviews but took part in the activities and were observed during the learning process; their involvement contributed to the study's observational data. Beyond the two selected students, interviews were conducted with a native speaker and a bilingual program coordinator to gain diverse perspectives on the communicative interaction process. Consequently, there were four interview participants: two upper-grade students, one native speaker, and one program coordinator.

Instruments

Research data were collected using three primary instruments: an observation guide, a semi-structured interview guide, and a documentation format. These instruments were

developed based on Long's (2015) Interaction Hypothesis and the concept of "negotiation of meaning" proposed by Gass and Mackey (2015). This framework guided data collection regarding the communicative interaction processes occurring during the "A Day with Native Speaker" program. The observation guide was used to identify and record forms of communicative interaction emerging during learning activities. Observed indicators included active participation, comprehensible input, language output, negotiation of meaning, interactional feedback, and confidence development. Language output was recorded as supporting evidence of English usage and student communicative engagement but was not treated as a separate component of analysis. Active participation encompasses student engagement in responding to questions, asking questions, taking turns speaking, and participating in communication activities. Comprehensible input is observed through the use of simplified language, repetition, gestures, demonstrations, and visual aids employed by native speakers to facilitate student understanding. Language output refers to the students' use of English during interactions. Negotiation of meaning includes requests for clarification, confirmation checks, and comprehension checks. Interactional feedback encompasses recasts, prompts, language modeling, and explicit correction when necessary. Meanwhile, confidence development is observed through student behaviors that demonstrate the courage to answer, ask questions, initiate interactions, and sustain conversations in English.

A semi-structured interview guide was used to explore the participants' experiences, perceptions, and communication strategies throughout the program. The interview guide consisted of 12 questions for students, 35 questions for native speakers, and 20 questions for the program coordinator. Questions for students focused on their experiences using English, their understanding of the language used by native speakers, difficulties in understanding or conveying messages, strategies employed when facing challenges, experiences receiving assistance or feedback, and their overall experience communicating with native speakers. Interviews with native speakers focused on communication adjustment strategies, the provision of assistance and feedback, and student responses during interactions. Meanwhile, interviews with the program coordinator were used to gather information regarding program implementation and the interaction processes that took place during the activities.

Interviews were conducted in both Indonesian and English, tailored to the communication needs and characteristics of each participant. The use of both languages allowed the researcher to obtain information more clearly without restricting participants in expressing their experiences and views. Documentation served as supporting data, including activity photographs, field notes, and activity recordings. Field notes were used to record observed interaction events, such as student participation and responses, requests for clarification, and communication strategies employed by native speakers. Activity recordings were used to review interactions relevant to the research focus. This documentation was subsequently used to cross-check observation notes and strengthen the interpretation of the observation and interview data.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which involves three interconnected processes: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data condensation stage, all collected data from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation were systematically organized, selected, and coded to identify meaningful patterns related to the construction of communicative interaction. The analysis focused on interactional processes emerging during the *A Day with Native Speaker* program, particularly students' active participation, comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning, interactional feedback, and confidence development. Observation notes, interview transcripts, field notes, and activity recordings were compared and categorized according to these analytical components to capture recurring

interactional patterns within the learning context. Documentation data, including photographs, recordings, and field notes, were used to support the interpretation process and cross-check evidence obtained from observations and interviews.

In the data display stage, the condensed information was organized into thematic categories and matrices to facilitate interpretation of relationships among the emerging components of communicative interaction. The researchers compared evidence across multiple data sources to ensure consistency and develop a comprehensive understanding of how communication was constructed between students and the native speaker. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions by interpreting the recurring patterns, interactional processes, and relationships among the identified themes. The credibility of interpretations was strengthened through data triangulation by integrating observation findings, interview accounts from students, the native speaker, and the bilingual program coordinator, as well as supporting documentation. Through this iterative analytical process, the study developed a contextual conceptual understanding of communicative interaction as a dynamic process involving active participation, comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning, interactional feedback, and confidence development.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Active Participation in Communicative Interaction

Observational results indicate that students' active participation in communicative interactions is demonstrated not only by responding to questions from native speakers but also by initiating and sustaining exchanges to achieve specific communicative goals. This pattern is evident in activities where students act as language users conveying information to native speakers for instance, in an activity involving the description of Indonesian dishes. In this activity, each student receives an image of a dish, which serves as the basis for describing it in English. Students convey information about the dish shown in the image, while native speakers listen to the descriptions and attempt to guess the dish in question. Consequently, students do more than simply answer questions; they become the providers of information, sustaining the exchange by offering the descriptions necessary for the native speaker to understand and identify the dish.

If a description lacks clarity or the native speaker fails to guess the dish, students have the opportunity to add information or clarify their descriptions. This interaction pattern demonstrates that tasks with communicative goals encourage students to use English actively to convey meaning, rather than merely generating responses to posed questions. These observational findings are supported by interviews with the program coordinator and native speakers, which reveal that students had opportunities to use English directly through various activities throughout the program. However, this study did not quantitatively measure the frequency of initiations or the proportion of students who initiated interactions. Therefore, the findings regarding active participation are understood as interaction patterns identified through observation and interviews, rather than as a quantitative measure of the overall student participation level.

Formation of Comprehensible Input

Observational data indicate that native speakers adjust their language use when interacting with students to facilitate comprehension of the message being conveyed. These adjustments are evident in the use of simpler vocabulary, the modulation of speaking pace, the repetition of information, the use of gestures and facial expressions, and the provision of visual and contextual support. When students appear to struggle with understanding instructions or explanations, native speakers repeat the information or rephrase the message.

In certain activities, student comprehension is further supported by the use of surrounding objects, demonstrations, gestures, and the context of the activity itself.

These observational findings are corroborated by interview data. Students reported that explanations from native speakers were easier to understand when information was repeated or rephrased more simply. Seth also explained that he adjusts his speaking pace and vocabulary choice when communicating with students, particularly when he observes difficulties in understanding the message. Thus, the data demonstrate that comprehensible input is achieved through a combination of adjusted language use, repetition, and visual and contextual support. These strategies help students understand the message while remaining engaged in the ongoing interaction.

Negotiation of Meaning

Observational findings indicate that the negotiation of meaning occurs when students encounter difficulties understanding instructions, questions, or information conveyed by native speakers. When facing such difficulties, students ask questions, request repetitions or explanations, and seek assistance as needed. In some situations, students also display signs of confusion, prompting native speakers to provide further explanations. These findings are corroborated by interview data. Keira explained that when she did not understand an explanation, she would ask the native speaker or the accompanying teacher for clarification.

Seth also noted that while some students directly requested re-explanations, others signaled confusion through their responses or expressions, alerting him to the need to explain the message again in a different way. Illustrating this pattern, Alastair explained that when students asked Seth questions, he would provide explanations. Together, the observational and interview findings demonstrate that the negotiation of meaning is an integral part of the communication process; students do not merely receive information from native speakers but actively strive to achieve understanding when faced with difficulties by asking questions and requesting clarifications and re-explanations.

Interactional Feedback and Language Correction

Observations indicate that feedback is provided naturally during communication activities. When students encounter difficulties with pronunciation, vocabulary, or sentence construction, native speakers respond by repeating, reformulating, modeling correct usage, and offering guidance. Such feedback typically forms part of the ongoing interaction rather than being delivered as a separate correction exercise. This pattern is evident when students attempt to convey an idea but struggle to use specific linguistic forms. Native speakers provide alternatives or restate the utterance more accurately, allowing the interaction to continue uninterrupted; thus, the process of linguistic refinement occurs concurrently with communication.

These observational findings are corroborated by student interviews, in which students explained that they seek assistance from native speakers when facing challenges with specific pronunciation or vocabulary. Seth also noted that he provides explanations and feedback in a manner that enables students to maintain the flow of communication without feeling undue pressure when making mistakes. These findings demonstrate that interactive feedback is an integral part of the natural communication process, provided in response to students' communicative needs and seamlessly woven into the activity at hand.

Developing Self-Confidence in Communication

Observations revealed an increase in students' willingness to use English as the activities progressed. Initially, some students appeared hesitant or lacked the confidence to speak. However, as the activities continued, students began to demonstrate greater engagement by showing the confidence to answer and ask questions, respond to native speakers, and participate in conversations using English. This development became evident as

students grew accustomed to the interaction patterns and activities involved. Students who initially seemed hesitant gradually became more involved in communication; this increased engagement was reflected in their willingness to respond to and sustain interactions with native speakers.

These observational findings were corroborated by interview results. Alastair noted that participating in the program boosted his confidence in using English, as it provided opportunities for direct communication with native speakers. Seth also highlighted increased confidence as a noticeable change in the students throughout the program. These findings indicate that the development of confidence is linked to students' experiences engaging in sustained communicative interactions. When students received comprehensible input, engaged in the negotiation of meaning, and received support through feedback, they became more willing to use English during the activities.

To provide a concise overview of the research findings, Table 1 summarizes the five components of communicative interaction identified during the "A Day with Native Speaker" program. The table presents the operational definition for each component alongside evidence of interaction derived from observations and interviews. This summary serves as the basis for further discussion regarding the relationships between these components within the communicative interaction process

Table 1
Summary of Findings on Communicative Interaction

Component	Indicators	Key Evidence	Interview Evidence	Limitation
Active Participation	Responding, asking, taking turns	Students participated and responded during activities.	Students reported willingness to ask and interact.	Not measured quantitatively.
Comprehensible Input	Simplification, repetition, gestures, visuals.	Native speaker adjusted language and used gestures/visuals.	Participants reported simplification and repetition.	Support types not measured separately.
Negotiation of Meaning	Clarification, questions, repetition	Students asked for clarification or repetition.	Participants reported clarification and additional explanation.	Frequency not measured quantitatively.
Interactional Feedback	Reformulation, modeling, prompts	Native speaker provided reformulation and language models.	Participants described feedback during interaction.	Feedback types not measured separately.
Confidence Development	Reduced hesitation, willingness to respond	Students showed greater willingness to respond and interact.	Participants perceived increased confidence.	No standardized confidence measure.

Table 1 demonstrates that the five components of communicative interaction do not occur in isolation but are interconnected throughout the "A Day with a Native Speaker" program. Active participation serves as the starting point, enabling students to engage in English language use and acquire comprehensible input through direct interaction. When students encounter difficulties in understanding or conveying messages, the interaction process continues through the negotiation of meaning such as asking questions, seeking clarification, and requesting repetitions. This process is further supported by interactive

feedback from the native speaker in the form of responses, reformulations, language modeling, and restatements. Repeated interactive experiences within a supportive environment are subsequently linked to the growth of students' confidence in using English.

Thus, the research findings reveal a dynamic and mutually reinforcing pattern of interaction. Participation facilitates language exposure and meaningful language use, while communication challenges prompt students to negotiate meaning and receive feedback. Together, these three processes provide a continuous communicative experience that contributes to the development of student confidence. This growing confidence, in turn, encourages students to participate in future interactions. The interrelationships among these components form the basis for the study's conceptual model, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Patterns of Communicative Interaction

Overall, these five components demonstrate an interconnected and dynamic relationship in shaping communicative interaction. Active participation affords students opportunities to engage in communication and acquire comprehensible input, while comprehension of that input supports them in sustaining the interaction. When students encounter difficulties in understanding or conveying a message, they can negotiate meaning through questioning, seeking clarification, requesting repetition, or offering explanations. This process may be accompanied by interactive feedback that helps students understand and develop their language use without halting the flow of communication. Repeated and supportive interaction experiences are also linked to the growth of students' confidence in using English. This growing confidence, in turn, encourages students to participate again in future interactions. Thus, these five components should not be viewed as stages that must occur in a fixed sequence, but rather as mutually influencing processes that recur throughout the communicative interaction. This pattern of relationships forms the basis for the development of this study's conceptual model.

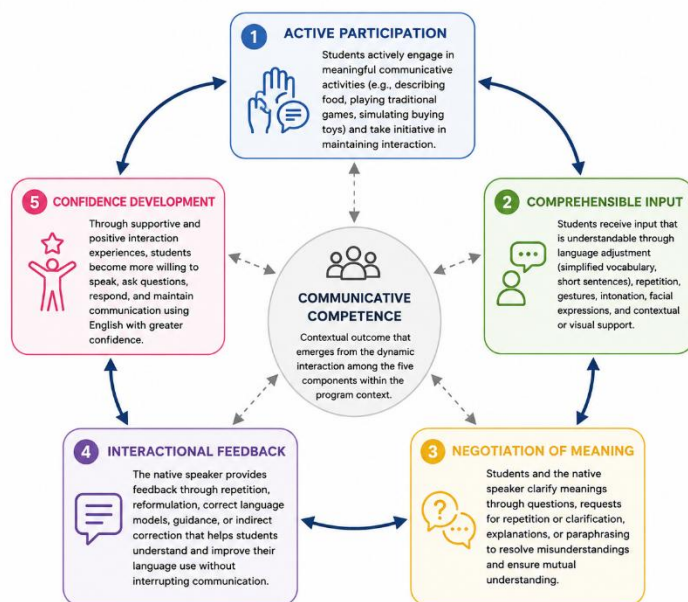


Figure 1. Cyclical Model of Communicative Interaction Construction in the A Day with Native Speaker Program

The model in Figure 1 illustrates the cyclical and dynamic relationships among active participation, comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning, interactional feedback, and confidence development. These relationships demonstrate that each component can influence and reinforce the others during the course of an interaction. For instance, active participation

can create opportunities for students to receive comprehensible input, while difficulties in understanding or conveying messages can trigger negotiation of meaning and interactional feedback. Supportive interaction experiences can foster the development of student confidence, which in turn encourages further engagement in interactions. Developed based on patterns identified through observation and corroborated by interviews and documentation, this model depicts the contextual nature of communicative interactions within the "A Day with Native Speaker" program.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that communicative interaction within the "A Day with Native Speaker" program is shaped by five interrelated components: active participation, comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning, interactional feedback, and confidence development. These five components do not exhibit a strictly linear relationship; instead, they can emerge simultaneously, influence one another, and recur throughout the interaction. This pattern demonstrates that the mere presence of a native speaker does not automatically result in meaningful interaction. Interaction becomes communicative when students have the opportunity to use English, comprehend messages, respond, overcome communication difficulties, and receive support that enables them to sustain the exchange. Consequently, the construction of interaction in this program is best understood as a dynamic interactional process rather than a series of stages that must occur in a specific sequence.

A significant insight from the research findings is the role of task-based activities in establishing concrete communicative goals. Activities such as describing and demonstrating Indonesian foods, playing traditional games, and simulating buying-and-selling scenarios not only place students in situations requiring the use of English but also provide them with a reason to speak. For instance, during food-description activities, students must convey information so that the native speaker can guess the specific food being described. If the information provided is insufficiently clear, students have a reason to add to or clarify their details. Thus, the use of English emerges as an integral part of completing the task, rather than merely serving as an exercise in linguistic forms. This pattern reveals that "active participation" in this study is linked to the existence of communicative goals that compel students to sustain the exchange. These findings align with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, which position language use in meaningful contexts as a crucial element of language learning (Richards, 2006; Asrul & Suratman, 2022).

Findings regarding comprehensible input indicate that language exposure from native speakers becomes more meaningful when accompanied by adjustments tailored to students' comprehension needs. Native speakers employ simpler vocabulary, modulate their speaking pace, repeat information, and utilize gestures, facial expressions, objects, and activity contexts to facilitate message comprehension. This is crucial because mere exposure to language does not guarantee that students will understand or respond to the message. In the context of this study, input becomes comprehensible through an interactional process wherein native speakers respond to signs of student difficulty and adjust their delivery. Thus, comprehensible input is not merely a characteristic of the language received by students but also the outcome of communicative adjustments made during interaction (Krashen, 2017).

These findings share similarities with, yet also differ from, the studies conducted by Azkarai and Imaz Agirre (2016) and García Mayo and Imaz Agirre (2016). Those studies involved 72 EFL students aged 9–12 interacting in pairs through guessing games and picture-placement tasks, focusing on oral production and strategies for negotiating meaning. The present study operates within a broader context, involving 362 students in grades 1–6 (aged 6–13) in a program spanning two days, with approximately five hours of activity per day. Furthermore, interactions were not limited to student-to-student exchanges but involved students, native speakers, and facilitators in activities tailored to specific grade levels.

Additionally, this study employed observation, interviews, and documentation to understand the interaction process from multiple data sources. These contextual differences demonstrate that the process of negotiating meaning observed in this study unfolded as part of a more diverse range of program activities, rather than emerging solely as a strategy within paired interaction tasks.

The relationship between input and the negotiation of meaning becomes evident when students encounter difficulties in understanding or conveying a message. Students do not simply stop when facing such challenges; instead, they employ strategies such as asking questions, requesting clarification or repetition, or seeking assistance from native speakers or accompanying teachers. Concurrently, native speakers respond to these signs of difficulty by providing additional explanations or rephrasing the message. This process demonstrates that communication difficulties are not merely obstacles but can be integral to the interaction, enabling students and their interlocutors to construct a shared understanding. From the perspective of the Interaction Hypothesis, such interactions provide learners with opportunities to access more comprehensible input and process meaning through communication (Long, 1996, 2015; Gass & Mackey, 2015; Swain & Lapkin, 2017). These findings align with research (Le et al., 2025; Lyster et al., 2023; Roothoof & Breeze, 2016) regarding the role of interactional feedback in supporting language use. The findings also concur with Ellis (2019) regarding the importance of task-based interaction in creating opportunities for the negotiation of meaning.

The interactional feedback observed in this study further demonstrates that support for language use occurs within the flow of communication rather than as a separate corrective activity. When students struggle with pronunciation, vocabulary, or message delivery, native speakers provide repetitions, reformulations, language models, or additional explanations. These forms of response allow students to receive language support without disrupting the communicative goals of the ongoing activity. Thus, the function of feedback in this context relates not only to linguistic accuracy but also to the continuity of the interaction. These findings add a significant nuance to research on corrective feedback: for primary school-aged learners, responses that do not unduly interrupt the flow of communication can help sustain opportunities for continued student participation. These findings are consistent with the research of Le et al. (2025) and Lyster et al. (2023) regarding the role of interactional feedback in supporting language use, but this study emphasizes the function of feedback as part of the continuity of interaction within the context of primary school EFL activities.

The "confidence development" component in this study should be understood as an indication of self-confidence manifested during interactions, rather than an increase measured via quantitative instruments or pre- and post-program comparisons. Observations revealed that some students exhibited changes in interactional behavior such as an increased willingness to answer questions, offer responses, use English, and sustain interactions after initially appearing hesitant to speak. These findings were reinforced by interviews with students and native speakers, indicating a perception that the experience of interacting was directly linked to the students' courage in using English. Thus, "confidence development" in this study refers to behavioral patterns and perceptions that emerged throughout the program. This interpretation aligns with the work of Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021), Alqarni (2021), and Yashima et al. (2004), all of whom identify communication experiences and opportunities to use the target language as factors associated with the willingness to communicate. However, as this study did not employ confidence scales or longitudinal measurements, the findings are not intended to demonstrate a causal increase in confidence.

When these five components are viewed collectively, the resulting relationships are dynamic and reciprocal. Active participation can create opportunities for students to receive and respond to comprehensible input, while such input, in turn, helps sustain their

participation. When difficulties arise, students can engage in the negotiation of meaning, while responses and interactional feedback from native speakers help them comprehend messages and continue communicating. Such comprehensible and supportive interaction experiences can subsequently foster the courage to engage in future interactions. Consequently, no single component necessarily acts as the cause or a prerequisite stage for another; rather, these components can trigger or reinforce one another, or be influenced by the ongoing interaction process.

This pattern forms the basis of the conceptual model presented in Figure 1.

The conceptual model is contextual in nature; it was developed based on patterns identified through observations and substantiated by interviews and documentation. The model is not intended as a universal sequence for EFL learning but rather as a representation of how the five components emerge and interconnect within the studied "A Day with a Native Speaker" program. The model's cyclical nature illustrates the possibility that an interactional experience in one phase can open up opportunities for engagement in another. Thus, the model emphasizes that the construction of communicative interaction relies not merely on language exposure but on the interactional work performed by students and their interlocutors through responses, negotiation, input adjustment, and feedback.

The study's findings also indicate that the presence of a native speaker should be understood as a condition that facilitates interaction, rather than the sole factor driving learning (Ghane & Razmi, 2023). Without opportunities for students to respond, ask questions, seek clarification, and sustain exchanges, language exposure may remain at the level of passive reception. In this program, the communicative value of a native speaker's presence emerges when such exposure is integrated with activities involving communicative goals, input adjustment, negotiation of meaning, and feedback. This contributes significantly to the understanding of native speaker programs in primary school EFL contexts by demonstrating that interactional processes rather than the speaker's identity alone are crucial in shaping students' communicative experiences.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that activities involving native speakers are more meaningful when designed with clear communicative goals (Ding, 2021). Teachers and program coordinators can provide activities that require students to use English to achieve specific objectives, while also preparing native speakers or competent English users to adjust their speaking pace, vocabulary, and use of multimodal support. Activities should also allow space for students to seek clarification, correct or clarify messages, and receive feedback without halting communication. In this way, the program can create interactional conditions that foster student engagement and meaningful English use within the primary school EFL context.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that communicative interaction within the "A Day with Native Speaker" program is constructed through five interrelated components: active participation, comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning, interactional feedback, and confidence development. These components do not unfold in a linear sequence; rather, they emerge dynamically and influence one another throughout the interaction process. Active participation affords students opportunities to engage in communication, while comprehensible input aids their understanding of the messages conveyed. When difficulties arise in comprehending or conveying messages, students and their interlocutors engage in the negotiation of meaning and utilize interactional feedback to sustain the exchange. A supportive interactive experience is also linked to the emergence of behaviors demonstrating student confidence in using English. Thus, the construction of communicative interaction in this program can be understood as an interactional process that is dynamic, iterative, and mutually reinforcing.

Theoretically, this study provides a contextual understanding of the application of Communicative Language Teaching principles and the Interaction Hypothesis within authentic interactions in an elementary school EFL setting. The study's primary contribution lies in the development of a conceptual model illustrating the cyclical relationship among the five components of communicative interaction. The model asserts that the mere presence of a native speaker does not automatically generate meaningful communicative interaction. The program's communicative value emerges when language exposure is accompanied by opportunities for students to participate, respond, negotiate meaning, receive feedback, and sustain interaction. This model is contextual in nature and is not intended to represent a universal sequence for EFL learning. In practical terms, the research findings indicate that programs involving native speakers should be designed with activities that have clear communicative goals and are appropriate for the students' developmental levels. Teachers and program organizers can facilitate activities that encourage students to use English to achieve specific objectives, provide opportunities for seeking clarification and clarifying messages, and offer feedback that sustains communication.

This study has several limitations. It was conducted at a single school and involved a program implementation that lasted only two days; therefore, the findings must be interpreted within that specific context. Although all students from the bilingual classes (Grades 1 through 6) participated in the program and were included in observations, student interviews involved only two students from the upper grades. Consequently, the experiences of lower-grade students are not directly represented in the interview data. The study also involved only one native speaker and one program coordinator. Furthermore, confidence development was identified based on behavioral patterns and perceptions during interactions, rather than through quantitative instruments or longitudinal measurements. These limitations should be taken into account when interpreting and applying the research findings.

Future research could involve a larger number of students across various grade levels and more diverse school contexts. Subsequent studies might also utilize longitudinal data to examine the evolution of students' interactions and confidence over time. Additionally, future research could combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships among interactions with native speakers, English language use, willingness to communicate, and students' communicative competence.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they had no personal, professional, financial, or organizational conflict of interest related to the implementation of the A Day with Native Speaker program or the conduct of this study. None of the authors was involved in organizing or coordinating the program.

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Consent was obtained from all participants involved in this study. Prior to the study, participants were provided with information regarding the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature. Participants' identities were kept confidential, and all data collected was

used solely for research purposes. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available because the dataset contains research materials involving student participants and is subject to confidentiality considerations. Relevant information may be made available by the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to applicable ethical and confidentiality requirements.

DECLARATION OF AI-ASSISTED TOOLS

ChatGPT, Google Translate, and Grammarly were used during the preparation and revision of this manuscript to assist with language editing, translation, and grammar checking. All AI-assisted outputs were reviewed, verified, and revised by the authors, who retained full responsibility for the accuracy, interpretation, originality, and integrity of the manuscript.

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