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Negotiation of Meaning Through Teacher Talk: A SETT-Based Analysis of EFL Classroom Interaction

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Abstract

Classroom interaction is essential for language development in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, particularly where learners have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. However, classroom discourse in Indonesian EFL settings is often dominated by teacher talk, restricting opportunities for meaningful student participation. Although negotiation of meaning is recognized as important for second language acquisition, little research has examined how teacher talk both initiates and constrains this process. This study investigated how negotiation of meaning was constructed through teacher talk and how interactional features influenced classroom interaction. A qualitative multiple case study was conducted with three English teachers and nine students from two junior high schools in Makassar, Indonesia. Data were collected through classroom observations, video recordings, and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Walsh's Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) framework and thematic analysis. The findings showed that negotiation of meaning was initiated through referential questions, clarification requests, and scaffolding. However, interaction rarely developed into sustained meaning-making because teachers frequently closed exchanges through immediate evaluation, teacher echo, and rapid turn transitions. Consequently, negotiation remained episodic and limited extended student participation. Effective negotiation therefore depends on teachers' ability to sustain interactional space through follow-up questioning and elaborative discourse moves.

Keywords: Negotiation of Meaning, Teacher Talk, SETT Framework, Classroom Interaction, EFL Classroom

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Introduction

Classroom interaction constitutes one of the primary mechanisms through which language learning occurs in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, particularly where learners have limited access to authentic English communication beyond the classroom. Rather than functioning merely as instructional exchange, classroom discourse provides opportunities for learners to engage with linguistic input, test communicative hypotheses, and develop meaning through social participation. Recent studies have increasingly emphasized that language development is closely associated with learners' interactional engagement and participation in collaborative communication (Chen et al., 2026; Zhang et al., 2022). From a sociocultural perspective, learning emerges through mediated activity in which learners construct knowledge collaboratively with more capable interlocutors (Jeong et al., 2022). In interaction-oriented language pedagogy, communicative development is therefore shaped not only by exposure to language, but also by the quality of discourse through which learners participate, negotiate, and respond during classroom exchanges (Zhou & Li, 2025). In many EFL settings, the classroom itself becomes the principal site where learners encounter meaningful opportunities to use English interactively. Consequently, the effectiveness of language learning is closely tied to how classroom discourse enables communicative engagement and interactional participation.

Within such interaction, negotiation of meaning occupies a central position because it enables participants to resolve comprehension difficulties and sustain communicative understanding during discourse. Negotiation-oriented interaction is typically characterized by conversational modifications such as clarification requests, confirmation checks, repetitions, and reformulations that facilitate mutual understanding while maintaining communicative flow (Loewen & Sato, 2018). These interactional adjustments are considered pedagogically significant because they encourage learners to notice linguistic gaps, process feedback, and modify their output during communication (Smala et al., 2021). In addition, negotiated exchanges support collaborative meaning construction by allowing learners to elaborate ideas, justify responses, and extend discourse beyond minimal participation. Amerstorfer and Freiin (2021), argued that interactional engagement becomes particularly beneficial when learners are given opportunities to sustain communication rather than merely respond to isolated prompts. Nevertheless, the occurrence of classroom interaction does not necessarily guarantee meaningful negotiation. In many EFL classrooms, communicative exchanges remain limited to brief Initiation–Response–Evaluation patterns in which students produce short responses that are immediately evaluated before interaction shifts to another topic. As a result, opportunities for elaboration and collaborative discourse development frequently remain constrained despite the apparent presence of participation. These patterns indicate that interactional frequency alone is insufficient to support meaningful negotiation; rather, negotiation depends on the extent to which discourse is interactionally sustained across communicative sequences.

Such concerns are particularly relevant in Indonesian EFL classrooms, where instructional interaction has frequently been described as teacher-centered and procedurally controlled. Existing studies suggest that classroom discourse is commonly dominated by display questions, tightly managed turn allocation, and evaluative teacher feedback that position learners primarily as responders rather than active contributors to communication. Putri et al. (2025) found that teacher talk in Indonesian classrooms often prioritized instructional control and factual recall, limiting opportunities for exploratory

discussion and learner elaboration. Similar findings were reported by Woreta Haile et al. (2024), who observed that students frequently produced brief responses with minimal interactional expansion during classroom exchanges. In addition, Sebayang et al. (2024) noted that procedural classroom discourse often constrained learners' opportunities to negotiate ideas and collaboratively construct meaning through interaction. Valentika and Yulia (2020) further demonstrated that interaction in Indonesian EFL settings commonly followed rigid Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) structures in which teacher evaluation rapidly closed discourse sequences. Consequently, interaction tended to prioritize procedural efficiency rather than dialogic engagement, reducing learners' opportunities to clarify meaning, extend ideas, or sustain communication collaboratively. These discourse patterns suggest that although interaction may appear communicative at the surface level, opportunities for sustained negotiation of meaning remain relatively limited within classroom practice.

Given the influential role of classroom discourse in shaping learner participation, teacher talk has become an important focus within classroom interaction research. Teacher discourse not only determines what learners say, but also shapes how communication develops, how interactional space is distributed, and how opportunities for negotiation emerge during classroom exchanges. One widely adopted framework for examining such interactional processes is Walsh's (2011) Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) framework, which conceptualizes classroom discourse in relation to pedagogical goals and interactional management. The SETT framework highlights several interactional features that influence classroom communication, including questioning strategies, scaffolding, repair, feedback, wait time, and turn allocation. These features may either expand or restrict opportunities for learner contribution depending on how they are sequentially organized during interaction. For instance, referential questions may encourage elaboration and communicative exploration, whereas excessive teacher echo and evaluative feedback may constrain discourse development by prematurely signaling interactional closure. Previous SETT-based studies have largely concentrated on improving teachers' interactional awareness and reflective classroom practice (Chen, 2021; Suphasri & Chinokul, 2021). While such research has contributed substantially to understanding pedagogical interaction, considerably less attention has been paid to how interactional features shape the continuity of negotiation across classroom discourse sequences. Consequently, negotiation is often treated as present whenever interaction occurs, without examining whether communicative exchanges are genuinely sustained interactionally over time.

This limitation reveals an important gap in current classroom discourse research. Existing studies have generally focused on identifying interactional features, categorizing teacher questioning techniques, or measuring student participation without closely examining how negotiation develops dynamically during interaction. In many classrooms, negotiation may initially emerge through clarification requests, scaffolding, or referential questioning; however, these opportunities frequently remain interactionally underdeveloped. Teachers often close discourse prematurely through evaluative responses such as "good," "correct," or immediate topic transitions that restrict elaboration and communicative continuation. As a result, negotiation tends to occur episodically rather than cumulatively within classroom discourse. Walkova (2024) argued that pedagogical interaction is frequently shaped by institutional concerns for efficiency and instructional progression, which may unintentionally constrain opportunities for extended communicative engagement. Similarly, Sert (2019) emphasized that sustained discourse continuity is essential for collaborative meaning

construction and deeper language development. Building upon these perspectives, this study argues that negotiation in EFL classrooms is frequently initiated but not interactionally sustained. In other words, communicative exchanges may display interactional features associated with negotiation while simultaneously limiting opportunities for extended meaning-making. This phenomenon is conceptualized in the present study as episodic negotiation, referring to interactional episodes in which negotiation emerges briefly but fails to develop into sustained collaborative discourse.

Based on these concerns, this study investigates how negotiation of meaning is constructed and constrained through teacher talk in EFL classroom interaction. Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) How is negotiation of meaning constructed through teacher talk in EFL classroom interaction? and (2) How do interactional features sustain or constrain negotiation of meaning? By examining classroom discourse through the SETT framework, this study extends the application of SETT beyond reflective pedagogical practice toward a closer analysis of negotiation processes and interactional continuity. Furthermore, the study contributes to classroom discourse research by highlighting how teacher talk may simultaneously facilitate and restrict opportunities for collaborative meaning-making in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Through the concept of episodic negotiation, the study offers a more nuanced perspective on how interaction develops, fragments, and concludes within classroom discourse.

Research Methods

1. Research types

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using a multiple case study design to investigate how negotiation of meaning was constructed and constrained through teacher talk in EFL classroom interaction. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to examine naturally occurring classroom discourse and interpret how interactional features functioned within authentic pedagogical contexts. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is particularly suitable for exploring social phenomena through participants' experiences and contextual interpretation. The multiple case study design was selected because classroom interaction develops dynamically across discourse sequences and therefore requires contextual and interactional analysis rather than isolated measurement. As interaction unfolds through questioning, clarification, repair, feedback, and turn-taking, discourse-level investigation was necessary to understand how negotiation emerged and developed during classroom communication (Seedhouse, 2004).

2. Research Data Sources

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data consisted of classroom interaction data obtained through observations, video recordings, and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students. Classroom discourse served as the principal source of data because it provided direct evidence of how negotiation of meaning was constructed through teacher-student interaction. Interview data complemented the observational data by providing participants' perspectives on interactional practices and learner participation. Secondary data were obtained from relevant books, journal articles, theoretical frameworks, and previous studies concerning teacher talk, negotiation of meaning, and classroom discourse analysis. These sources were used to support the interpretation and contextualization of the findings.

3. Research Population and Sample

The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 6 Makassar and MTsN 1 Makassar. The population consisted of English teachers and students involved in EFL classroom

interaction at both schools. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, which enables researchers to identify information-rich cases that are directly relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015). The sample comprised three English teachers and nine students. The teachers were selected because they actively engaged students in classroom interaction and demonstrated variation in interactional practices, while the students were chosen to provide perspectives regarding classroom communication and participation opportunities. This sampling strategy ensured that the selected participants could contribute meaningful information regarding the role of teacher talk in shaping negotiation of meaning.

4. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through repeated classroom observations, video recordings, and semi-structured interviews. Classroom observations were conducted in natural instructional settings to capture authentic discourse practices and recurring interactional patterns during English lessons. The observations focused on teacher questioning, feedback practices, scaffolding strategies, repair sequences, and student participation. In addition, classroom interactions were video-recorded to document interactional features in detail, including questioning strategies, wait time, repair, feedback, scaffolding, and turn-taking management. Video recordings enabled repeated examination of interactional sequences and provided a reliable record of classroom discourse. As noted by Richards (2003), recording classroom interaction facilitates a more systematic analysis of discourse organization and teacher-student communication. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with teachers and students. Teacher interviews explored instructional decisions, interactional goals, and perceptions regarding learner participation, while student interviews focused on their experiences of classroom communication and opportunities for participation. The use of multiple data collection techniques allowed for data triangulation and strengthened the credibility of the findings.

5. Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using Walsh's (2011) Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) framework and thematic analysis. The analysis began with the verbatim transcription of classroom recordings to capture interactional features such as questioning, repair, feedback, pauses, and turn-taking. The transcripts were then coded using SETT categories, including display questions, referential questions, scaffolding, repair, teacher echo, and wait time. Following the coding process, each classroom was analyzed individually before cross-case comparisons were conducted to identify recurring interactional patterns across the three classrooms. This process enabled the researcher to examine how teacher talk shaped learner participation and the development of classroom discourse (Saldaña, 2021).

Subsequently, episodes of negotiation of meaning were identified and analyzed, focusing on clarification requests, confirmation checks, elaborative responses, and repair sequences. Particular attention was given to how negotiation was either sustained through interactional support or constrained through evaluative feedback and rapid topic closure. The identified patterns were then organized into broader themes representing the continuity and limitations of negotiation processes in classroom discourse. Finally, the findings were interpreted through the Interaction Hypothesis, sociocultural theory, and the SETT framework. These perspectives provided complementary explanations of how interactional features facilitated or restricted opportunities for negotiation, learner participation, and collaborative meaning-making in EFL classroom interaction (Lantolf et al., 2018).

Results and Discussion

Result

The analysis revealed that negotiation of meaning emerged across the observed classrooms but rarely developed into extended communicative discourse. Although teachers frequently initiated interaction through referential questions, clarification prompts, scaffolding, and repair strategies, these interactional opportunities were often terminated through evaluative feedback, teacher echo, and rapid instructional transitions. Consequently, interaction tended to develop as fragmented discourse episodes rather than sustained collaborative meaning-making sequences. Four major themes emerged from the analysis: (1) negotiation initiated through referential questions, (2) negotiation restricted by evaluative closure, (3) episodic rather than sustained negotiation, and (4) contextual constraints shaping negotiation.

Negotiation Initiated Through Referential Questions

Research results describe in detail the types of issues or phenomena found in the field or within the research data. The description includes characteristics, patterns, variations, or emerging trends, presented factually and systematically according to the research findings.

1. Factors that Influence

The findings demonstrated that referential questions played a significant role in creating interactional space and encouraging learners to contribute ideas during classroom communication. Unlike display questions that required predetermined answers, referential questions encouraged students to participate more actively by generating examples, explaining ideas, and extending classroom discourse beyond factual recall. In several observed classrooms, teachers attempted to initiate interaction through open-ended prompts that invited learners to elaborate responses rather than simply produce correct answers.

One interactional episode occurred during a discussion of procedural texts when the teacher asked, "*How to make tea?*" Instead of producing a single fixed answer, several students contributed sequentially by responding with expressions such as "*Boil water*" and "*Add sugar.*" The interaction continued when the teacher followed with the question "*Who can give another example?*" which encouraged another learner to contribute "*Make noodles.*" This interaction indicated that referential questioning temporarily expanded learner participation because multiple students became involved within the same discourse sequence. The teacher's follow-up question functioned as an interactional invitation that opened opportunities for additional contribution rather than immediately terminating communication after the first correct response.

The findings further showed that negotiation opportunities increased when teachers combined referential questions with scaffolding and clarification prompts. In another interactional sequence, a student explained that the purpose of procedural text was "*to tell steps.*" Instead of directly evaluating the answer, the teacher responded with the clarification prompt "*Steps for what?*" before the student elaborated the response into "*to make something.*" Through this interactional move, the teacher encouraged the learner to refine and extend the response rather than merely confirm correctness. The clarification prompt therefore functioned as temporary scaffolding that sustained interactional development and created opportunities for elaboration.

Similar patterns appeared throughout the observations. Teachers occasionally reformulated students' incomplete responses, repeated key lexical items, or prompted

further explanation in order to encourage communicative continuation. In one classroom exchange discussing descriptive texts, the teacher asked students to explain why a place was categorized as beautiful. When a learner responded only with *"many trees,"* the teacher followed with *"What makes it beautiful?"* which encouraged the learner to elaborate further. Such interactional sequences demonstrated that negotiation emerged when teachers temporarily shifted discourse from answer retrieval toward collaborative exploration of meaning.

Negotiation Restricted by Evaluative Closure

Although negotiation was occasionally initiated through questioning and clarification, classroom discourse was frequently constrained through evaluative closure. Teachers commonly responded to students' contributions with immediate confirmation such as "Yes, correct" or "Good, next" before rapidly shifting to another question or instructional activity. In one classroom exchange, after a student explained that the social function of descriptive text was "to describe something," the teacher immediately confirmed the response and redirected the lesson without inviting elaboration. Such interactional patterns limited opportunities for learners to justify ideas, clarify meanings, or sustain discussion beyond minimal participation.

Teacher echo also contributed to restricted interactional development. Across several classroom observations, teachers frequently repeated students' answers before concluding interaction, as when a student described a story character as angry and the teacher responded "Angry, yes angry. Good." Although repetition occasionally emphasized students' contributions, it more often functioned as evaluative closure that signaled the completion of discourse. Rather than extending communication through probing or clarification, interaction stopped immediately after teacher confirmation. Consequently, classroom exchanges became highly response-bound because participation focused primarily on producing correct answers rather than collaboratively constructing meaning.

Rapid instructional pacing further compressed negotiation opportunities. Teachers regularly moved quickly between questions in order to maintain lesson progression and classroom control. For example, after a student answered that a character went to the market "to buy vegetables," the teacher immediately stated "Correct, number two" before continuing to the next task. This pattern appeared consistently across classrooms and reflected an instructional orientation emphasizing efficiency over communicative exploration. As a result, learners had limited opportunities to elaborate responses or engage in extended discourse, and negotiation frequently ended before meaningful interaction could develop.

Episodic Rather than Sustained Negotiation

One of the most significant findings was that negotiation of meaning occurred episodically rather than cumulatively throughout classroom interaction. Interactional features associated with negotiation, including clarification requests, repair, and referential questioning, appeared intermittently but rarely developed into sustained communicative sequences. In one interaction, when a student defined "traditional food" as "food from our place," the teacher briefly prompted clarification by repeating "from our place?" The student then reformulated the response into "from our culture," after which the teacher concluded the interaction with "Yes, good." Although clarification and reformulation occurred, the interaction ended immediately after the revised answer was produced, preventing further elaboration or collaborative discussion.

Similar patterns appeared repeatedly across the observed classrooms. Teachers occasionally opened opportunities for clarification and elaboration, yet interactional continuation was rarely maintained across multiple turns. Negotiation therefore emerged only in brief fragments before discourse was redirected toward procedural instruction or answer completion. This pattern reflected what the study conceptualized as episodic negotiation, referring to interactional situations in which negotiation was initiated but not interactionally sustained throughout discourse sequences.

The findings also revealed the presence of interactional compression, in which potentially meaningful exchanges were condensed into short instructional episodes due to rapid evaluative closure and tightly controlled discourse management. Although learners sometimes demonstrated willingness to elaborate responses, opportunities for collaborative meaning-making remained restricted because interaction prioritized efficiency and lesson progression. Consequently, negotiation remained fragmented rather than cumulative within classroom discourse.

Contextual Constraints Shaping Negotiation

The findings further indicated that constrained negotiation was influenced by contextual and institutional factors shaping classroom interaction. Teachers frequently prioritized lesson completion, instructional efficiency, and classroom control, which affected how interaction developed during classroom communication. During interviews, one teacher explained that "if discussion is too long, the material cannot finish," while another stated that prolonged interaction sometimes caused students to become noisy and difficult to manage. These responses suggested that teachers viewed tightly controlled interaction as necessary for maintaining instructional pacing and classroom discipline. Classroom size and interactional hierarchy also influenced learner participation. In many observed interactions, students rarely extended responses voluntarily and typically waited for teacher nomination before speaking.

This interactional structure reinforced teacher authority within discourse and reduced opportunities for spontaneous communicative participation. Consequently, classroom interaction remained strongly teacher-directed, with learners functioning primarily as responders rather than active discourse contributors. Overall, the findings demonstrated that negotiation of meaning was not entirely absent from the observed classrooms; rather, it was interactionally constrained by evaluative discourse practices, compressed instructional pacing, and contextual classroom pressures. Although teachers occasionally created opportunities for negotiation through referential questions and clarification prompts, interactional continuity was rarely sustained across discourse sequences.

Discussion (Font Book Antiqua, 12pt, Bold)

The findings indicate that teacher talk functioned as a central interactional resource shaping opportunities for negotiation of meaning in EFL classroom discourse. Referential questions emerged as particularly important in opening communicative space because they encouraged learners to contribute ideas, provide examples, and elaborate meanings beyond factual recall. Unlike display questions, which typically elicited predetermined responses, referential questions promoted greater learner involvement and temporarily shifted classroom interaction toward more dialogic participation. This finding is consistent with interactionist perspectives that emphasize the role of conversational modification in facilitating language development. Long (2015) argues that interaction creates opportunities for learners to notice communication difficulties and negotiate meaning through modified input and output. Similarly, VanPatten (2015) highlights that meaningful communication encourages learners to process language while focusing on meaning

rather than isolated linguistic forms. The present findings support these perspectives because referential questions encouraged learners to participate more actively and extend their contributions beyond brief responses. This interpretation is further supported by Philp et al. (2013), who contend that interaction becomes pedagogically meaningful when learners are encouraged to sustain participation and collaboratively develop discourse. In the observed classrooms, such opportunities became more evident when referential questions were accompanied by scaffolding and clarification prompts. From a sociocultural perspective, Kits and Meristo (2025) emphasize that scaffolded interaction enables learners to co-construct understanding through guided participation, while Hasibuan et al. (2025) demonstrate that teacher mediation can encourage learners to clarify and elaborate their ideas during classroom communication. Similar patterns were identified in this study when teachers reformulated learner responses or provided prompts that encouraged elaboration. However, the findings also revealed that the interactional value of referential questioning depended not only on the initiation of communication but also on the extent to which interaction was sustained after learners responded. Dellafiore et al. (2025) argue that participation becomes educationally meaningful when interaction develops through follow-up moves that encourage deeper exploration of ideas. Likewise, Gilligan et al. (2021) found that learning opportunities are enhanced when classroom dialogue develops cumulatively across multiple turns rather than remaining limited to isolated exchanges. In the observed classrooms, such continuity was often absent, suggesting that the effectiveness of referential questioning depended not merely on question type but on teachers' ability to sustain discourse development over time.

Despite the presence of interactional features commonly associated with negotiation of meaning, the findings showed that negotiation rarely developed into sustained discourse sequences. Instead, interaction was frequently compressed through evaluative closure, whereby teachers responded to learners' contributions with immediate confirmation before redirecting attention toward lesson progression. Similar tendencies have been identified in classroom discourse research. Susanto et al. (2026) found that evaluative feedback often functions as a mechanism for closing interaction rather than extending learner contributions, thereby limiting opportunities for collaborative meaning-making. In a similar way, the teachers in the present study frequently treated correct responses as endpoints rather than starting points for further exploration. This interactional tendency also reflects the continued dominance of Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) structures in classroom discourse. Nasution and Ratmanida (2023) argue that IRF sequences position teachers as controllers of interaction while learners primarily act as providers of expected responses. Such structures tend to prioritize lesson management and instructional efficiency over communicative exploration. The observed classrooms demonstrated similar patterns, with teachers maintaining substantial control over topic development, turn allocation, and discourse pacing. Comparable findings were reported by Haile et al. (2024), who observed that teacher-dominated discourse limited opportunities for learners to elaborate ideas and engage in extended interaction. Likewise, Rhamadina et al. (2023) found that excessive teacher control often constrains students' participation in collaborative classroom dialogue. These studies support the present finding that learner participation frequently remained response-oriented rather than interactionally expansive. Consequently, although clarification requests, referential questions, and scaffolding occasionally created openings for negotiation, such opportunities often remained underdeveloped because interaction was rapidly closed through evaluative feedback. This observation aligns with Lazovic's (2025) argument that interactional effectiveness depends not simply on the frequency of participation but on how discourse is sequentially sustained across multiple turns. Therefore, the limited development of negotiation observed in this study appears to stem not from the absence of interactional opportunities but from the restricted continuity through which those opportunities were managed.

A particularly significant finding of this study is the emergence of what may be termed episodic negotiation, referring to situations in which negotiation is initiated but not interactionally sustained. Clarification requests, repair practices, learner reformulation, and referential questioning appeared regularly throughout classroom discourse; however, these interactional moments rarely developed into cumulative meaning-making processes. Instead, negotiation

typically emerged only briefly before being curtailed through evaluative feedback or procedural instructional management. This finding extends previous research that conceptualizes negotiation as a dynamic discourse process rather than merely the occurrence of isolated communicative features. Hartono et al. (2021) argue that negotiation should be understood through the development of interactional sequences rather than through individual discourse moves. Similarly, Nguyen and Doan (2025) emphasize that meaningful negotiation requires sustained opportunities for learners to collaboratively construct and refine understanding during communication. The present findings support these arguments because negotiation opportunities frequently appeared but rarely evolved into extended interactional sequences. Although classroom exchanges occasionally appeared communicative on the surface, discourse continuity was often absent once learners had produced acceptable responses. This pattern is consistent with Duran and Sert's (2019) observation that institutional classroom interaction frequently prioritizes pedagogical efficiency over communicative development. Likewise, Muñoz-Basols et al. (2025) argue that interactional opportunities remain pedagogically limited when discourse prioritizes procedural progression rather than collaborative engagement. The study additionally identified a process of interactional compression, whereby potentially productive exchanges were condensed into brief instructional episodes due to rapid pacing and tightly controlled discourse management. Similar concerns have been raised by Indriyani et al. (2025), who highlight the importance of maintaining interactional continuity to support learner participation, and by Liu et al. (2025), who emphasize that meaningful communication depends on opportunities for extended discourse development. Consequently, negotiation in the observed classrooms functioned as isolated interactional fragments rather than sustained meaning-making processes, highlighting the importance of discourse continuity in understanding how negotiation operates within EFL classroom communication.

The findings also contribute to the ongoing development of Walsh's (2011) SETT framework by suggesting that classroom interaction should be examined not only through the occurrence of interactional features but also through their capacity to sustain communicative continuity. Previous SETT-based studies have primarily focused on identifying interactional practices such as questioning, repair, scaffolding, and feedback in relation to pedagogical goals and teacher awareness. For example, Turan and Yiğitoğlu (2023) demonstrate how SETT can be used to enhance teachers' awareness of interactional practices and their pedagogical functions. Similarly, Huang et al. (2025) show that reflective engagement with SETT can help teachers better align classroom interaction with instructional objectives. While such studies have contributed substantially to understanding instructional communication, the present findings indicate that identifying interactional features alone is insufficient for explaining how negotiation develops during classroom discourse. In the observed classrooms, referential questions and clarification prompts occasionally opened opportunities for negotiation, yet these opportunities frequently disappeared when interaction was terminated through teacher echo, evaluative feedback, or instructional transitions. This suggests that the pedagogical value of interactional features depended less on their occurrence and more on how they functioned sequentially within discourse development. Similar concerns have been raised by Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), who emphasize the importance of sustained interaction in promoting deeper learning, and by Nouwen et al. (2026), who argue that interaction should be evaluated through its continuity and developmental potential rather than through isolated communicative events. From this perspective, the present study proposes the concept of interactional sustainability, referring to the extent to which classroom discourse enables communicative continuation and collaborative meaning-making across multiple interactional turns. This perspective extends the analytical scope of SETT beyond the identification of interactional features and positions it as a framework for examining how teacher talk sustains, compresses, or constrains negotiation of meaning within EFL classroom discourse.

Conclusion (Font Book Antiqua, 13pt, Bold)

This study examined how negotiation of meaning was constructed through teacher talk in Indonesian EFL classroom interaction using the SETT framework. The findings showed that negotiation was initially facilitated through referential questions, clarification prompts, scaffolding, and repair practices that encouraged learners to contribute ideas and elaborate responses. However, these interactional opportunities were frequently constrained through evaluative closure, teacher echo, and rapid instructional transitions that prematurely terminated discourse sequences. Consequently, negotiation tended to emerge only briefly and failed to develop into sustained collaborative interaction. The study therefore identified a pattern of episodic negotiation, in which communicative exchanges appeared interactive at the surface level but lacked continuity across interactional turns.

The findings contribute theoretically by suggesting that negotiation of meaning depends not merely on the presence of interactional features, but on the extent to which discourse continuity is maintained during classroom communication. Meaningful negotiation occurred when teachers sustained interaction through probing questions, clarification prompts, elaborative follow-up, and extended interactional space. Conversely, negotiation became restricted when classroom discourse prioritized procedural efficiency and answer completion over communicative exploration. Methodologically, the study extends the application of the SETT framework beyond identifying interactional features toward examining how teacher talk sustains or constrains negotiation continuity. This perspective provides a more dynamic understanding of classroom discourse by emphasizing interactional development rather than isolated communicative moves.

Pedagogically, the findings suggest that teachers should create greater opportunities for learners to elaborate ideas, justify responses, and participate in extended discourse rather than limiting interaction to short evaluative exchanges. Practical strategies may include using probing questions, increasing wait time, encouraging peer responses, and delaying immediate evaluative feedback to allow interaction to develop more naturally. Nevertheless, this study was limited to two junior high school contexts with a relatively small number of participants and a limited observation period, which may restrict the broader transferability of the findings. Future research may therefore explore negotiation of meaning across different educational levels, institutional settings, and sociocultural contexts. Longitudinal classroom studies are also recommended to examine how interactional practices and negotiation patterns develop over time within EFL classroom discourse.

Author Contribution Statement

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Statement of Interest

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, professional, or other competing interests that could have influenced the design, implementation, analysis, or

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