

# EMI Teachers' Attitudes and Approaches towards Grammar Error and Professional Development Perspectives in Chinese Higher Education

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## ABSTRACT

In the context of Chinese higher education, there is still blank in the English Medium Instruction (EMI) system, particularly in terms of subject teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward teaching grammar in professional courses and their perspectives on the professional advancement of this competency. Based on the existing research, the current study mainly examined how subject teachers perceived their roles and responsibilities in language teaching especially grammar, what strategies they will take to solve students' grammatical problems, and their feelings and preferences with teacher professional development related to this aspect. Data were obtained from three semi-structured online interviews with three teachers from Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University United International College. The findings indicates that EMI lecturers declined to take on the role of language instructors. However, in pursuit of enhancing students' overall understanding of the subject, they did incorporate certain grammar adjustment techniques in their classes and while reviewing students' written work, which is the initial evidence of manifestation of the grammatical Language Related Episodes (LREs). Additionally, the participants recognized the utilization of AI tools to assist students in improving their grammar skills. Furthermore, regarding the professional growth of EMI teachers, they emphasized the importance for tertiary education to stay abreast with current trends that training programs should assist EMI teachers with AI usage for grammar correction, as well as guiding students on the appropriate application of AI in their language learning process.

## KEYWORDS

Grammar; EMI Teacher; Attitudes; Approach; Teacher Professional Development.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English Medium Instruction (EMI) has gained momentum globally, particularly in Asian countries like China, South Korea, Japan, and Malaysia, aiming to enhance universities' global competitiveness (Wilkinson, 2013; Rose, 2021; Lasagabaster, 2022). Previous studies has highlighted both the benefits and shortcomings of EMI implementation. On one hand, it fosters global competitiveness and enhances students' academic and communicative skills (Kim, 2011; Cho, 2012; Hu & Lei, 2014; William, 2015; Jiang et al., 2019). On the other hand, challenges such as inadequate language teaching and assessment methods hinder students' language development and academic success (Lei and Hu, 2014; Guo et al., 2018; Banegas & Busleimán, 2021). As indicated by Jiang et al. (2019), the lack of explicit language teaching in English Medium Instruction (EMI) is often attributed to teachers' beliefs about their roles. Despite reluctance to assume the role of language instructors, teachers raise the awareness of language-related episodes (Basturkmen & Shackelford, 2015) and employ preemptive strategies to facilitate language comprehension (Hong & Basturkmen, 2020; Lasagabaster, 2022), which primarily focused on discipline specific vocabulary and did not demonstrate substantial

improvement in their grammar skills (Zhang & Pladevall-Ballester, 2021). Besides, the absence of explicit language teaching in EMI classes has been proved to poses challenges, particularly for non-native students, in their overall language developments (Li and Ruan, 2015; An et al., 2019). This discrepancy between content-specific English and general language proficiency underscores the need to explore EMI teachers' attitudes towards grammar teaching and their preferences for professional development (; O'Dowd, 2018; Doiz, Lasagabaster & Pavón, 2019). Therefore, the current study aims to investigate EMI practitioners' attitudes and approaches towards explicit grammar instruction in subject-based teaching and their readiness for related professional development, providing insights for enhancing EMI practices in China's higher education system.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

The current research utilizes Spolsky's language policy framework (2004) to examine the implementation of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher education, focusing on language ideologies, management, and practices. This framework is applied to investigate EMI teachers' perspectives on grammar teaching, handling of students' grammatical errors, and expectations of language policy (Spolsky, 2004). Language education policy operates on macro and micro levels, with macro-level policies influencing national curricula and micro-level policies being evident in EMI practices at the school level (Wang, 2006; KARAKAŞ, 2021). Language management, as described by Shohamy (2006), involves policies and planning related to language use, particularly within classrooms, which in the EMI context, relates to language as the medium of instruction. Furthermore, language beliefs shape teachers' roles and approaches to grammar instruction, influencing EMI implementation (Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2007). Consequently, understanding language beliefs and practices at the micro level can inform strategies for enhancing language management at the macro level, particularly concerning teacher development.

### **2.2. Teacher's Attitudes on Language Teaching**

Previous research reveals that EMI teachers often resist the role of language instructors, focusing instead on disciplinary knowledge (Lasagabaster, 2022; Rose, 2021). Kim et al. (2018) found that South Korean EMI teachers prioritize content due to specialization and lack of language training, possibly due to insecurities about English proficiency. Non-native English-speaking teachers also hesitate to teach language, concerned about efficiency and clarity (Thogersen & Airey, 2011; Bradford, 2019). This reluctance impacts students' language acquisition in EMI contexts (Jiang et al., 2019).

### **2.3. Attention to Language Teaching in EMI**

EMI's dual requirement for disciplinary expertise and language competence has increased interest in explicit language teaching (Jiang et al., 2019). Studies highlight classroom dynamics and language-related episodes (LREs), where teaching shifts from content to language. Costa (2012) noted proactive linguistic issue addressing in Italian higher education. Basturkmen and Shackleford (2015) found tertiary lecturers initiated LREs on academic language. However, Hong and Basturkmen (2020) noted limited grammar instruction, focusing on disciplinary registers. In Spanish EMI classrooms, Doiz and Lasagabaster (2021) found vocabulary-focused, teacher-initiated LREs. Aguilar and Muñoz (2014) report no significant grammar gains among EMI students, raising questions in grammar-focused education contexts like China.

## 2.4. Teacher Professional Development

EMI teacher development remains underexplored despite growing emphasis. Jiang et al. (2019) emphasize the need for EMI programs balancing subject knowledge and language competence. Costa (2012) stresses integrating language teaching into university training. Doiz and Lasagabaster (2021) highlight EMI teachers' roles in promoting accurate English without becoming traditional language teachers. Macaro and Han (2020) note that Chinese EMI teachers view professional development positively but face limited support. Yuan (2021) identifies challenges and proposes a teacher education framework, omitting language skill enhancement. This study explores EMI teachers' attitudes towards grammar teaching and their professional development needs (Jiang et al., 2019; Costa, 2012; Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2021; Macaro & Han, 2020; Yuan, 2021).

## 3. FINDINGS

### 3.1. The EMI Teachers Present Themselves as more Content Instructors than Language Teachers

All three EMI teachers reported refusing to assume responsibility as an English specialist. The reason behind their attitudes is classified into four codes as shown in the following.

#### 3.1.1. Content Over Grammar in EMI Context

##### *Interview excerpt 1*

*“[...] And in my own experience, I would separate the content learning from the language learning. And for me, EMI doesn't really have a strong goal of improving English proficiency as such, unless the content is also English language... I don't think it's necessary in other in other aspects of EMI, except in so far as people have to produce English documents that conform to generic expectations.” (Participant A).*

##### *Interview excerpt 2*

*“It's also discipline specific [...] as long as communication occurs, I would be happy. The only difference would be if somebody's being assessed for a presentation, for example in English. Then you pay attention to the grammar [...] clear grammar is important, but unless you're specifically assessing discourse for grammar proficiency is important, then it should not be something you should worry about for its own sake.” (Participant A).*

The provided excerpts shows the speaker highlighted the need to distinguish content learning from language learning. Firstly, he asserts that EMI might not necessarily have a strong focus on improving general English proficiency unless the content itself requires accuracy in the English language to meet expectations in disciplines and genres. This view highlights the contextual nature of grammar instruction within the EMI framework and the importance of tailoring language learning to suit the specific academic disciplines being taught. He emphasizes the discipline-specific nature of grammar instruction, acknowledging that language requirements may vary across different academic subjects. This means that grammar teaching in EMI classrooms should be selective. In subjects where the language function is not obvious, such as mathematics, grammar teaching seems to be less important. But for disciplines that require language-based academic output, skilled grammar teaching is needed (see Appendix A). What's more, the speaker prioritized successful interactions between teachers and students, which demonstrates participant A's perceptions wherein language serves as a tool for conveying knowledge and understanding, which highlights the significance of content over grammar. Participant A presents an example of grammar evaluation as one part of presentation assessment. He emphasized the importance of attending to grammar when evaluating a student's language proficiency in such instances. This echoes his previous statement that the grammar instruction should be context or discipline specific. Nevertheless, the speaker cautions against an

excessive focus on grammar proficiency in all situations. Unless the assessment specifically targets grammar proficiency in discourse, undue emphasis solely on grammar may not be necessary.

*Interview excerpt 3*

*“I do not deal with students’ grammatical errors most of the time, and I do not have any problems with students’ so called incorrect grammar because that does not really harm the communication between students.” (Participant B).*

*Interview excerpt 4*

*“I will never teach grammar to students in my own course...I expect my role as an EMI teacher not about their grammatical knowledge or grammatical skills. I think the most important thing is the content learning. As long as students can express their correct understanding of content learning regardless of their use of accurate, the standard norms of English, I am happy.” (Participant B).*

*Interview excerpt 5*

*“For classroom interaction, basically, I seldom correct any mistakes that I spotted [...] I will not make explicit correction [...] I will not pay attention to the grammatical part... encourage them to share more and talk more in front of the whole class... All this interaction basically focusses on content rather than anything teaching the grammar.” (Participant C).*

The interview excerpts present a consistent theme among the participants, emphasizing a hands-off approach towards correcting students' grammatical errors during classroom interactions. Participants B and C both expressed a similar sentiment of not extensively dealing with grammar issues unless they face challenges in understanding the students' communication. Participant B indicated that they rarely address students' grammatical errors, as it does not significantly affect communication between students (see excerpt 3). They only consider providing feedback on grammar when comprehension issues arise. Similarly, Participant C highlighted their reluctance to correct mistakes during classroom interactions and expressed a focus on encouraging students to participate and engage with the subject matter (see excerpt 5). These collectively underscore the common consensus among the participants which is prioritizing effective communication and content-focused interactions over extensive grammar correction.

### 3.1.2. Time Consuming and Hard Work

*Interview excerpt 6*

*“[...] I just found it very difficult to teach students to use the most common feature of English grammar [...] the rules of article usage are so complicated you could spend an entire semester just teaching the article system. And you don't usually have that kind of time. So, I've never actually figured out how to teach this very small piece of English grammar effectively so that I can actually see improvements in the students.” (Participant A).*

*Interview excerpt 7*

*“There was so much to do. Students had so many assignments that getting them to concentrate on one particular part of their learning was difficult because they have a lot of pressures come. And this is true of many students in EMI, they're trying to learn the content. The language is secondary.” (Participant A).*

*Interview excerpt 8*

*“I mean in the classroom or for the grading is too demanding for the course instructor to provide language feedback. As I mentioned that if I grade the papers, also providing feedback to the language issues, it's very time consuming for grinding. I think that same thing in the classroom.” (Participant C).*

The excerpts from the interview reveals the challenges faced by the EMI teacher in effectively teaching a specific aspect of English grammar which is that content learning interspersed with grammar teaching takes too much time and energy, but cannot achieve the desired learning effect. Participant A raised the example of the difficulty in teaching the rules of article usage, which are considered one of the most common features of English grammar (see excerpt 6). The complexity of grammar led them to believe that dedicating an entire semester solely to teaching articles was not feasible due to time constraints. This reveals that EMI can pose a dilemma for educators who have to deciding what to prioritize within a limited timeframe. Participant A claimed that covering the entire grammar system in depth within a single semester is impractical (see excerpt 7). The challenges extend beyond time constraints to encompass students' academic pressures and multiple assignments. The speaker observes that students' busy schedules make it difficult for them to focus on a particular aspect of language learning. These pressures may impede their ability to concentrate on improving specific grammar skills. In addition to EMI students' academic pressure, participant C pointed out that providing grammar guidance in content teaching also brings a heavy burden to teachers (see excerpt 8). Consequently, they do not give grammar instruction in class unless necessary.

### 3.1.3. Students' Motivation

#### *Interview excerpt 9*

*“My students have already felt negative about English proficiency, they are shy, they don't want to talk. So, if you keep correcting their grammar, I think they are going to prevent themselves from participated in my class. Because I am not English teacher, they do not expect me to correct their English, so I try to be more open and even on when I don't understand them or sometimes, they use incorrect grammar, I pretend I understand [...]” (Participant B).*

#### *Interview excerpt 10*

*“For classroom interaction, basically, I seldom correct any mistakes that I spotted...because I want to encourage students to interact with verbally in the classroom...some students, their language proficiency is lower than sometimes it may not be productive. If you point out all the mistakes, it sounds like you rewrite everything for that person.” (Participant C).*

Excerpt 9 shows how participant B, being a non-native speaker, can empathize with students due to shared experiences. They expressed a considerate approach, understanding that their students might feel negatively about their English proficiency and be hesitant to speak. They believe that excessive grammar correction could deter student participation. As a non-English teacher, they adopt an open and understanding stance, even when encountering language errors, choosing to create a comfortable learning environment by pretending to understand.

Similarly, as shown in Excerpt 10, participant C adopted a comparable approach in the classroom, refraining from frequent error correction to encourage verbal interaction. Participant C prioritized creating a conducive environment for classroom participation, especially for students with lower language proficiency levels. They believe that excessive correction might hinder productive communication and discourage students from actively engaging in verbal interactions.

## 3.2. Reaction to Students' Grammatical Errors

In general, the participants' responses from the interview reflects that they put less emphasis on directly correcting students' grammar errors or mistakes within the formal discipline modules. Instead, they would like to integrate language development seamlessly into the subject matter, with purposes for promoting the comprehensibility of the course content and enhancing students' language skills without disrupting the overall learning experience. This demonstrated the participants' teacher belief that although grammar correction does play a role, it may not be the primary focus within their formal discipline teaching. As a result, they tended to implement subtle pedagogical strategies in the

classroom, provide corrective feedback on students' academic production such as reports and journals, and utilize the generative artificial intelligence.

### 3.2.1. Pedagogical Techniques in the Classroom

#### *Interview excerpt 11*

*"[...] began to use something called consciousness raising activities. CR activities. which were described by a theorist called William Rutherford in a book called Second Language Grammar when I was being trained. And they said that you teach grammar in context, so you teach the grammar that is appropriate to the particular genres that the discipline expects. So, if you're an engineer, you're looking at the grammar of engineering reports. If you're a chemist, you're looking at the grammar of chemical reports. You're looking at the grammar of research articles in English. The different sections of the research are articles in English and you're saying what kind of grammar is necessary to achieve the purpose of this text." (Participant A).*

Excerpt 11 demonstrated that Participant A uses a strategy known as "Consciousness Raising " to teach students grammar. This approach involves engaging students in activities that raise their awareness of grammatical structures and rules in an explicit and learner-centered manner. According to Ostovar-Namaghi et al, 2022, this strategy integrates form and meaning by integrating structure into content-based learning, thereby deepening students' understanding of how to use these forms to convey meaning in real communication. Although this approach is relatively explicit, Participant A emphasized his situational and disciplinary specificities, with the achievement of communicative objectives as the primary goal in the EMI context.

#### *Interview excerpt 12*

*"I will not make explicit correction. I may repeat their answer and then elaborate or whatever." (Participant C).*

While Participant B did not apply any grammar treatment to students' errors, participant C used a pedagogical approach known as "Recasting" to address students' language issues during classroom interactions. Instead of making explicit corrections, participant C repeats the student's answer and then elaborates on it or provides additional information (see excerpt 12). This approach subtly models the correct language structure or expression without directly pointing out the error. By recasting the student's response, C offered a more accurate form of the language, helping students internalize the correct usage and gradually improve their language skills in a natural and non-intrusive manner

### 3.2.2. Preliminary Corrective Feedback for Written Assignment

As per the participants' views, EMI classes can be divided into two components: classroom interactions and students' writing assignments. The evidence presented indicates that despite EMI teachers distancing themselves from the role of language teachers, they still prioritize some focus on students' grammar, particularly in their writing tasks. This attention to grammar is primarily aimed at ensuring high-quality written output within the subject matter.

#### *Interview excerpt 13*

*"I'm very much interested in what is called process writing....I think that is a good strategy and actually trying to get students to pay attention when they are reading to those features that they are getting wrong so that they get more of a feel for the way that the grammar works in very complicated but frequently used examples like the article system that I think is the only way of trying to get them to improve." (Participant A).*

#### *Interview excerpt 14*

*"For written assignment, particularly term paper essay, then I would break the grammar in addition to content, however, grading the whole paper for grammatical mistakes is very time consuming. So*

*generally, I will grade for the first and half page of each assignment that I received. Hopefully, they will learn from the feedback.” (Participant C).*

As described in excerpt 13, Participant A's strategy centered around the use of "process writing" as a way to enhance students' grammar proficiency. Process writing was an approach that emphasized multiple drafts and revisions, encouraging students to actively engage with their writing and improve their language skills over time. The participant believed that process writing was a valuable strategy for helping students recognize and correct their language errors. By encouraging students to pay close attention to the specific features they were getting wrong while reading their own work, they could gain a deeper understanding of how grammar functions, especially in complex and commonly used examples, where content is primary. At the same time, participant C (see excerpt 14) described her approach to selectively grading students' writing assignments for grammar. She exhibits a laid-back attitude, and the extent of improvement from this feedback relies on the learners' autonomy.

### 3.2.3. Self-assessment with Generative Artificial Intelligence

*Interview excerpt 15*

*“We're seeing the mushrooming of artificial intelligence now [...] So the students won't need to be grammatically proficient, because AI will do that for them. So that's a big challenge, but I think it's a positive thing. I think we will help students to perform above their own level of competence, and that's a good thing. If they use it well, and if they use it ethically, it's a good thing. Uh, we're seeing things like Grammarly, and translation software being used [...]” (Participant A).*

*Interview excerpt 16*

*“They could use Grammarly to correct their mistakes... my students use Chat GPT to proofread their articles.” (Participant B).*

*Interview excerpt 17*

*“So, it may be or more on explicit instructions about using in these tools rather than just copy and paste... But Grammarly is not perfect, so I tell them don't accept all the recommendations.” (Participant B).*

*Interview excerpt 18*

*“I told students that it's okay to use those generative AI... You can ask them to help you to modify the paper, but at the end and you need to declare I use what kind of tools to improve my language at language aspects of my assignment.” (Participant C).*

As seen in the above excerpts, all three participants discussed the use of beneficial AI tools to aid students' grammar improvement. While they do not see themselves as language experts, they are motivated to enhance students' grammar skills within their respective disciplines. They suggest students utilize artificial intelligence as a tool of self-assessment in the EMI context. AI is a double-edged sword, however, and the three teachers also expressed their concerns over students relying too much on the language generated by AI. They suggest that students need to declare their use of language tools and use them skillfully instead of pasting and copying.

### 3.3. Variations in Expectations of Professional Development Workshops on Grammar

Finally, regarding the teacher career development project, EMI teachers' attitudes are complicated. When participant A talked about AI as an external aid to facilitate some grammar learning, I asked whether they would attend a teacher career development seminar in this area if it existed. Their response, they expressed a very positive attitude and said they would seize the opportunity.

*Interview excerpt 19*

*“In fact, we're going to because this is new. We're going to organize a series of professional development workshops for staff and students in the coming semester...there will be a compulsory one for all staff in the faculty and basically this is a very basic one that says this is how AI affects you and this is what you must do. And I'm trying to create possibilities for them to talk to other people who are interested. We also need to talk to the students to make sure that the students understand how we are treating AI. That for some assignments they will not be allowed to use it, but for other assignments they will be encouraged to use it.” (Participant A).*

Participant A has already started systematically using AI for the correction of students' grammar (see excerpt 19). They feel the need to keep up with the trend of the times and that teacher professional development projects should be a compulsory course for EMI teachers. The purpose of these professional development programs is to train teachers in the effective use of AI, and to teach students the skills to use AI properly. However, participants B and C were more negative for various reasons. They are more inclined to slack off, that is, they are not willing to participate in similar projects.

*Interview excerpt 20*

*“[...] my students use Grammarly all the time, my students use ChatGPT to proofread their articles so may be or more on explicit instructions about using in these tools rather than just copy and paste... I think professional development is required, but I do not think EMI teachers, including myself, we do not see our goal is to take the responsibility in improving students English.” (Participant B).*

*Interview excerpt 21*

*“Let's say, supposing you also colleagues or teaching staff in my department, you are coming here and I'm not very close to you. But when I see you and then say that this workshop is good. And please consider going that. Would that imply that I know you didn't handle the teaching or other language issues...When I talk to you about that, then I may feel like you lack the skills...” (Participant C).*

Still, participant B would never participate in any EMI teacher career development program as she maintains that grammar teaching has nothing to do with her EMI teaching (see excerpt 20). Instead, she considers that grammar correction should be the responsibility of students, and with the rise of AI, EMI teachers' career development should focus on training teachers how to use AI and thus pass it on to students. However, participant C's attitude was wavering. She mentioned some issues EMI teachers face. She pointed out that if EMI teachers go to these workshops or seminars, the public may see that they are inadequate in language ability as EMI teachers, and this may discourage them from attending (see excerpt 21).

## **4. DISCUSSION**

Research question 1 reveals that none of the three EMI teachers see themselves as English language experts responsible for grammar instruction within their subject teaching, a stance supported by existing literature (Airey, 2011; Kim et al., 2018; Bradford, 2019; Rose, 2021; Lasagabaster, 2022). Participant A highlighted the complexity of combining content and language teaching, advocating for clear distinctions between the two, and stressing the importance of tailoring language to specific disciplines. This view aligns with Dafouz, Hüttner, and Smit (2016), who argue that content learning and language proficiency enhancement are intertwined, helping students understand disciplinary language nuances. Participants B and C echoed similar sentiments, prioritizing smooth communication over grammar accuracy. Participant B focused on comprehensibility, while Participant C emphasized promoting student interaction. This perspective is consistent with findings from Bradford (2019) and Tejada-Sánchez and Molina-Naar (2020), indicating that EMI teachers prioritize meaning conveyance over linguistic precision. Besides, EMI teachers face challenges in language instruction. Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Pavón (2019) highlight time constraints as a significant factor, with teachers concerned about balancing content teaching and grammar correction within a

limited timeframe. For non-native EMI teachers, language switching adds to this workload (Kang & Park, 2004; Bradford, 2019). Participants B and C, as non-native speakers, empathized with their students' struggles, avoiding direct grammar correction to prevent discouragement and promote productivity, aligning with Tejada-Sánchez and Molina-Naar's (2020) emphasis on effective communication in English. Encouraging a relaxed and positive classroom atmosphere without fear of mistakes (Morton, 2016), the findings underscore EMI teachers' belief in prioritizing content teaching. This approach suggests that a comprehensive understanding of subject matter should take precedence, with explicit grammar instruction tailored to specific disciplines, avoiding simultaneous focus on content and language that could be counterproductive. This perspective aligns with the existing literature and supports the study's findings.

For research question 2, The participants generally hesitated to incorporate grammar teaching explicitly but acknowledged subtle efforts to address grammar for high-quality academic output. Participant A utilized consciousness-raising tasks within subject limits, while participants B and C employed strategies like recasting to encourage self-correction. Participant B viewed pre-grammar as an adjustment of language affecting expression rather than revision, emphasizing language competence in academic requirements. This aligns with findings by Doiz and Lasagabaster (2021), who observed that Language-Related Episodes (LREs) in EMI contexts were predominantly vocabulary-focused, with grammar-related LREs being rare and primarily teacher-initiated in non-native English-speaking countries. The study's results differ from previous research, suggesting further classroom observations are needed to verify these preliminary findings. Participants provided selective and targeted feedback on grammar in written assignments, expecting students to conduct self-assessments. Participant A highlighted process writing, where students notice grammatical features through iterative feedback. Participant B, although not correcting grammar, noted its impact on grading. Participant C used selective grammar correction strategies and reflected grammar feedback in grading guidelines, encouraging students to address errors, aligning with Doiz and Lasagabaster's (2021) suggestion for EMI students to initiate LREs. Moreover, all three EMI teachers mentioned using artificial intelligence for grammar learning in academic writing, expressing encouragement but also caution about extensive use, emphasizing limits. Their concerns centered on writing, not grammar related LREs. The teachers preferred students to initiate grammar discussions, fostering self-assessment of grammar learning progress. This outcome reflects their reluctance to act as language instructors. The diverse strategies adopted by EMI teachers highlight their adaptability and sensitivity to students' needs, balancing content delivery with varying grammar teaching approaches. This flexibility underscores their commitment to fostering effective language communication and subject comprehension in the EMI classroom, emphasizing content over explicit grammar teaching tailored to specific language demands (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2021).

For research questions 3 and 4, the responses given by the three participants were quite different from each other, and the differences in their beliefs and cognition as EMI teachers led to their different choices and expectations of their professional development plans from multiple perspectives within Spolsky's framework. Participant A was very interested in the relevant career development project and mentioned that he has played an active and leading role in a related program, participant B refused to attend related program, but she still did not deny its necessity, and participant C also refused to participate and explained the factors causing EMI teachers to withdraw from the professional development programs related to grammar teaching. But they all end up in the same place, which is that the responsibility of grammar assessment should be undertaken by the students while the EMI teachers act as the facilitators, aligning with the learner-centered nature rooted in EMI implementation. Previous research has highlighted the importance of providing specific training or support mechanisms to address the language needs of EMI teachers and students (O'Dowd, 2018; Doiz, Lasagabaster & Pavón, 2019), and the findings of the current study provide a valuable insight into the future direction of teacher training programs in higher education, particularly regarding the teaching of grammar. This is not only because their cognition of EMI teaching purpose is that content is the main teaching task, but also their beliefs in rejecting the role of language teachers. Overall, it

can be concluded that the direction of teacher professional development is now more inclined towards the concept of "teaching how to fish" rather than "giving fish." This means that teachers are shifting their focus from improving their own grammar proficiency to imparting methods of grammar assessment to the students from the aspects of future direction for EMI teacher professionalism.

Referring to Spolsky's theory again, the understanding and manifestation of the essence of EMI policy shapes the teaching beliefs of EMI stakeholders, which further influences their classroom practice and their choice and planning for their professional development. Specifically, EMI teachers believe that in the current situation, the content and comprehensive understanding of the field are prioritized over everything else, and the assessment of language, including grammar, is to serve the content. Their dismissive attitude towards grammar teaching leads them not to take the initiative to carry out systematic grammar teaching in subject teaching. However, since English must be used in EMI teaching, they still choose to give selective and reactive grammar feedback. In addition, they point to a new direction in grammar assessment, which can be summed up as a shift from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach, as well as an opportunity to take advantage of artificial intelligence.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that all three participants emphasized the primacy of content teaching in EMI classrooms and expressed reluctance to assume the role of English language instructors. They believed that grammar instruction should be integrated into subject teaching through effective pedagogical strategies, and systematic grammar teaching was considered time-consuming and burdensome for both students and teachers. As for their subtle attempts to deal with students' grammar errors in the incidental teaching, from the aspect of classroom teaching, the techniques included recasting and touch on consciousness raising tasks. From the aspect of written assignments, process writing, and selective feedback was mentioned. In these cases, participants' primary focus was centered around discipline-specific content delivery.

Furthermore, the discussion of AI emerged as a prominent topic. The focus of teachers' prospects mainly revolved around leveraging AI to enhance their roles as facilitators in assisting students to develop self-diagnostic skills in grammar and writing skills. However, they also express concerns about over-reliance on AI, emphasizing the importance of balanced use. Therefore, teacher training programs should include modules that equip educators to effectively integrate AI tools into language instruction while promoting learner autonomy and critical thinking. Moreover, the implications of this research go beyond the classroom setting. Policymakers should recognize the evolving role of EMI teachers and design tailored professional development programs. These programs should focus on content-based language teaching, AI integration, and student-centered pedagogies. Continuously updating and adapting teacher training programs and instructional approaches will foster a positive and supportive learning environment for students.

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