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EFL Teachers' Spatial Construction of Linguistic Identities for Sustainable Development in Globalization

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Abstract: Grounded in Gidden's space theory, this case study examines the construction of linguistic identity in Chinese English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers teaching in a major Chinese city with regard to their language-learning experiences and beliefs about the roles of English as a language within the context of globalization. The data were collected from semi-structured interviews with two Chinese EFL teachers and observations of their classrooms. The narrative and thematic analyses show how two Chinese EFL teachers came to have preferences for moving from the "periphery" to the "center" of a monolingual or multilingual foreign-language community in different ways. The findings not only reveal how English as a language relates to globalization, they also broaden our understanding of the complex formation of identity of the language teachers within a global context.

Keywords: language-teacher identity; space; globalization

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1. Introduction

English has become a key social marker of globalization, and it has taken a dominant role worldwide. Despite several research efforts showing the global trend toward multilingualism, globalization still elevates the English language to a higher level. This means that for other languages and cultures, English learners and teachers in globalization have brought the English language to the center of scholars' inquiry and critiques. With such an influence on society, English as a global language requires its learners to be more conscious of the importance of form and function in language acquisition [1]. English being such a dominant language tends to shape and reinforce language education in many countries toward monolingual ideology, such as native speakerism [2], instead of bi- or multilingualism. Scholars in language education, however, have pointed out that languages "intermingle" and "are always in contact" in globalization [3]. Promoting multilingualism can therefore be supportive of justice and balance among languages, as it "illuminates the human capacity for languages" [4] and aims for trans-disciplinarity between linguistic and cognitive inquiries in language education.

Ideologically, globalization involves human relations and the formation of identity and concepts of personhood within society [5]. The spread of global English affects languages, cultures, and identities around the globe [6]. Scholars have come to realize that globalization has begun to dominate contemporary educational theories [7]. One of the critical, yet overlooked, ways of understanding this disconnect in personal identity is to consider the pernicious effects that globalization has on education and on teachers' identities around the world. As globalization shapes students' ideologies of language learning, teachers' overall approaches to teaching languages and their perceptions of teaching can also be affected [8]. Compared with the experiences of students, those of language teachers have not yet been explored in depth. Existing studies (e.g., [9–11]) indicate that teachers' development of their identities has an impact on their values, teaching activities, behaviors, and interactions with students. While many studies on globalization and language teachers' identities have been

conducted in the Western context, that of Chinese EFL teachers have not been explored in depth. As Canagarajah [3] stated, scholars should undertake more "localized studies" in diverse geographical settings, such as China, to understand the influence of Westernism in language teaching and research around the world. Therefore, the process of how Chinese teachers shape their linguistic identities under the influence of globalization and global English is worth understanding and identifying.

A spatial perspective can facilitate a wide range of discussions about how and why individuals or groups claim to belong to particular language communities. It focuses on the relationship among space as a concept in language, actions, and the construction of a collective/individual identity, and it furthers our understanding about how language users find a balance between the dynamics of local language education issues and those of global influential factors. As globalization accelerates, communication with English speakers as well as non-native English speakers from various cultures belonging to the outer circle and the expanding circle [12] increases. Hawkins [13] noted that locations can mediate interactions "through which understandings are negotiated and constructed" in "global shifts and movements". In this study, "space" goes beyond the notion of geographical locations by referring to a linguistic area in which participants engage in academic and social contact. We apply the notion of "space" [14] to explicate the internal, practical, and theoretical negotiations that Chinese teachers engage in while using and teaching English as a global language, and creating their language identities. Instead of assigning a concept of teacher identity in the context of a local classroom, we contribute to the literature by providing an understanding of the multiple identities of Chinese English-language teachers, which have been continuously shaped by the shifting contexts in globalization. Based on this perspective, we developed the following two research questions:

(1) How are EFL teachers' linguistic identities spatially developed in globalization?
(2) How are these identities affected by global English?

2. Theoretical Framework

The formation of identity for a language teacher is viewed as a multifaceted [15], ever-changing [16,17], and ongoing [18] process. Norton [19,20] defined identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured over time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" [19]. We believe that language teachers develop images of their language worlds across time and space by reasoning beyond personal experiences.

Previous studies on spatial identity showed that a location represents a person's belonging and citizenship within a language [21]. This understanding is challenged by recent studies that viewed the concept of "space" as a zone of language and social culture. In this study, we extend the concept of "space" by placing it within a bigger global context and by not limiting the discussion to geographical space, and we view "space" as "a social milieu created during everyday interactions through the convergence of 'mental' and 'material' space" [22]. Gidden's [14] notions of "center" and "periphery" are applied to understand the discourse surrounding belonging and inside–outside circles regarding the formation and development of Chinese EFL teachers' linguistic identity. The "center" here refers to the status of inclusion that is owned or given by the people who determine the legitimate linguistic and nonlinguistic norms and who possess direct access to semiotic (e.g., material, social, and cultural) resources. The "periphery" represents the process that attributes to marginalize certain language values, beliefs, and decisions, and to relate individuals to an inferior social order. The notions of the "center" and the "periphery" are useful in understanding the ways that Chinese English teachers establish relationships with language(s) in major Chinese cities and develop their own global language identities.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Global English

Globalization accelerates the mobility of goods, services, and cultures [23]. The intensified sense of social relations across national boundaries results in English becoming a shared, global language around the world [24]. English has been widely used in many domains across the globe as part of globalization [25]. Pennycook [25] theorized "global English" as the use of English in globalization and moved beyond arguments about homogeneity or heterogeneity. He stated, "English is a translocal language of fluidity that moves across while becoming embedded in, the materiality of localities and social relations. English is bound up with transcultural flows, a language of imagined communities, and refashioning identities" [25]. Globalization increases the power of English as a language in international communications. As English has occupied a profound position in many educational systems, certain ideological values such as English superiority and related issues have been highly visible in language education. They have led to researchers' inquiry into linguistic imperialism in education and learners' and teachers' language ideology development within the global context (e.g., [26,27]).

Global English becomes a medium in communications among non-native speakers as well as between native and non-native speakers, and its influence on the perceived changes in education is apparent. China, for instance, is following this academic internationalization and applying teaching methods from the West in some universities within developed regions to prepare students for professional work with international relations [28]. Zha, Wu, and Hayhoe [29] investigated the internationalization of education in China and found that educational norms and knowledge from the "West" help legitimize some educational practices in higher education, such as standardized criteria for assessing the performance of faculty in terms of research (i.e., publications in English).

English as a dominant global language shapes the conceptualization of L2 motivation regarding identity and language learning [30]. English learning is regarded as valuable socioeconomic capital, as many parents believe that students who learn English have better career opportunities [31]. Chun [32] pointed out that the ongoing prevalence of English as valuable capital in society gives students hope that, by learning the language, they are guaranteeing themselves a better future and higher-class privilege. A few studies devoted their attention to the impacts that global English has on learners' motivation to learn non-English languages in relation to globalization. The review study by Dornyei and Al-Hoorie [33] discussed current studies on the topic of L2 motivation and language justice, aiming to explore whether learning global English motivated people to learn more languages other than English. One of the prominent findings was that language globalization reinforces the authoritative position of English and the monolingual paradigm to some extent. They found that a multilingual self is formed by learning global English first and then a language other than English. Duff [34] showed a more encompassing discussion on the relationship between global English and L2 motivation and on the different tendencies of learners to develop language identities associated with the English language.

English has been the dominant foreign language in China since the 1980s, when the new economic agenda—the Chinese "Open Door" policy—began to encourage new foreign businesses and international tourism [35]. Most research on language teachers in China examined how they deal with English-teaching strategies. How individual EFL teachers construct their self-identity as a teacher of foreign languages within a globalizing country such as China is underexplored. Mostly focusing on the contextually specific complexity of identity, this line of research explores how EFL teachers form professional identities inside classrooms [36] or school environments [37] and demonstrates how non-native EFL teachers from countries part of the expanding circle verify and create meaning of in their professional roles. Only a few studies explore teachers' personal construction of identities associated with their learning and socialization [38,39].

3.2. Space and Identity

Space is used by cultural theorists and sociolinguists as a zone where social communication and interaction occur and reoccur. Lefebvre [40] stated that space is conceived of a social relationship—it remains the space of society and of social life. Space refers to a sociocultural network that is socially produced and reproduced in human perceptions and lived experiences. Hua, Wei, and Lyons [41] further used the concept of "translingual space" to understand how people with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds communicated in a local store run by a Polish family who migrated to east London. They found that translingual practices involved different sense-making repertoires used in the social interactions during such encounters. Customers with different cultural backgrounds assembled various multimodal and multilingual semiotic resources (e.g., beliefs and ideologies, body movement, and social positioning) into a translingual space and portrayed their different social and cultural identities. Collectively, these studies showed how "space" is related to language variations and linguistic identities and how perceived space is used in multilingualism.

As globalization increases the amount of cross-border movements, recent studies have proposed the term "third space" to explore the challenges that language learners encounter in foreign countries. Bhabha [42] conceptualized third space as a tangible or intangible in-between area that individuals negotiate for themselves when more than one culture meets, contradicts, and appropriates each other. His concept of a "third space" encourages subsequent work to be conducted on space and language education regarding cross-border experiences in the context of globalization. For example, Darvin and Norton [43] studied how transnational students negotiated different sets of values, ideologies, and cultures between their "origins" and the host country and found that a "third space" emerges when students use storytelling to share their personal stories and cultures as migrants in learning the target culture. The students showed in-between identities when describing their relationships with their homelands and the host country. Liu [44] examined the identity concerns of cross-border migrants in Australia and found that all of the children encountered difficulties socially and psychologically when finding a sense of belonging in between national, social, and cultural boundaries. The third space has been studied in language users who recontextualize the meaning of cultures, languages, and ethnicity when self-constructing their identities.

The notion of identity in a native-speaking teacher has been a benchmark persistently used to determine the legitimacy of teachers' language teaching. Such a monolingual ideological representation considers a teacher's origin as the prerequisite to assessing if they constitute an authentic member of a cultural and linguistic space [45,46]. For instance, examining the formation of linguistic identities in three Italian-born Canadian-language teachers, Giampapa [21] found that language teachers have a clear sense of which language(s) help them move to the "center" or "periphery" of a workplace and social interactions in both Canadian and Italian–Canadian communities. These studies showed that authenticity is important in issues of legitimacy regarding the identity of a language teacher.

However, another stream of research addressing cultural hybridity challenges the notion of "domination" and the binarity between native and nonnative speakers. While globalization facilitates advances in social mobility, cultural hybridity suggests that peripheral cultures and standardized universal cultures interact, either as conflicts or as contact [47]. Peripheral cultures find a way to negotiate with the dominant cultures' indoctrination to better empower and present themselves [48]. The discourse on hybridity has increasingly looked into the identity of language teachers who live within and between different ways of speaking and being [49]. Building on the literature on spatial studies and teacher identities, this study focuses on the development of attitudes and identities in language teachers and how it is connected to their language practices with time and among different contexts.

4. Methodology

A case study is employed to explore complex units of analysis and to gather rich and holistic information of each teacher's experiences with learning and teaching English by capturing the participants' oral narratives and social behaviors in the school setting. It focuses on answering the research questions about "how" or "why" a complex social phenomenon "within its real-life context and boundaries between phenomenon and its context is not clear" [50]. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, this study aims to explore the development of identities for two participants regarding their sense of belonging over time within groups that take ownership of certain foreign languages. With this focus, a case study is an appropriate tool for investigating how language teachers define themselves in different life contexts and the reasons behind these definitions.

4.1. Context and the Participants

This study was conducted in a private college in one of the most globalized cities of China: city G. Because of the immense economic market, a large number of foreign institutions set up subsidiaries in the city. This city ranks among the top five cities in China regarding the number of foreign residents. The flow of workers from different foreign countries enriches city G's linguistic diversity. The languages of expatriate communities in this city have different degrees of visibility. Among all foreign languages, English dominates. Mandarin and English are particularly visible in city G, especially in foreign brand shops, commercial signs and advertisements, local shops, restaurants, and schools. In these instances, English is featured in commerce and entertainment, which suggests its importance in globalization and as a priority among other languages. Although English privilege prevails compared with other non-Chinese languages, multiple languages can still be seen everywhere in daily life. This multilingualism emphasizes that the presence of other languages is influenced by globalization.

In this school, all non-English majors were required to take English and to pass CET-4 (CET stands for the College English Test and is a national English as a foreign language test in China. It examines the English proficiency of college students in China) such that they can become competitive candidates in a global market. The participants were two female English language teachers (Wendy and Lili) in their early 30s, working at the English department of the same college in city G. Both participants were born and raised in mainland China and spoke Mandarin as their first language. They were selected to compare their experiences in crossing spaces from local to global cities. Wendy received her BA degree from a local Chinese university and then crossed national borders for her master's degree in TESOL at University X in England. While Wendy had several experiences with international travel and visits, Lili did not have any overseas experiences. Lili graduated from a local university in her small hometown and moved to city G for her master's degree in translation. The participants' demographic information is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers' demographic information.

	Wendy	**Lili**
Age	28	28
Gender	Female	Female
Hometown	South China	North China
Job Title	Lecturer	Lecturer
Study-abroad Experience	Two Years	None
Teaching Experience	2 years	2 years
Academic Credential	Master's	Master's

4.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were primarily drawn from the two teachers' interviews, class observations, and informal conversations over one semester. After receiving IRB approval, we started recruiting participants for the data collection. Each participant was provided with and

signed written consent forms for the interviews and observations. Semi-structured interviews [51] were used to collect the data. Each teacher was interviewed three times before, during, and after the observations. Each interview took 1 to 1.5 h and was recorded and transcribed. The interview questions focused on the identity of language teachers from the perceptions, emotions, and reflections that they used to give meaning to their stories related to themself, language learning and teaching, and globalization. The first round of interviews was about the participants' understanding of their roles in different life stages (e.g., "Please describe a typical day as a language learner in your hometown.") and the purpose of language learning, language teaching, and language education. The second round of interview questions shifted the focus to proxies for globalization, such as asking the question, "Nowadays, an increasing number of companies ask for student applicants' language certificates; what kind of changes or challenges do you think it brings to students, teachers, and current language education?". The third interview involved a confirmation of the participants' perspectives regarding key questions that had been asked in the previous interviews.

Class observations were conducted three times per month. The observations aimed to help the researchers understand the teachers' identities through their instructional practices and interactions with students. Informal conversations with the teachers were conducted after the observations and during the breaks to confirm the researchers' understanding and interpretation.

The data analysis consisted of a combination of thematic and narrative analyses. A thematic analysis is used to see how people differ from one pattern to another [52]. Patterns in similarities and differences were examined to unify aspects in their interactions, cultures, and individual behaviors. A narrative analysis [53] is used to explain how the teachers give meaning to their life experiences in the macro context of globalization. Concurrently, it especially sought to explain how the participants constructed meanings for each category of their identity through storytelling of their experiences as an English user or as a multilingual teacher. We explored if any turning points, private experiences, or events made the two participants aware of the linguistic identity that they pursued as language teachers and the reasons behind such preferences. Besides these, a memo was also used when analyzing the data, especially when recording data on the parameters (i.e., when, where, how, and who).

5. A Tale of Two Chinese Teachers

The findings indicate that the two participants' academic and professional journeys in diverse spaces influenced their attitudes and understandings of being global language speakers. Based on their divergent language experiences across cities at home and abroad, the participants perceived English as a global language from either a monolingual or a multilingual perspective. Their identities as language teachers in a global community were shaped differently: Wendy viewed herself as a multilingual speaker, whereas Lili viewed herself as a native-like English speaker.

5.1. Wendy Becoming a Multilingual Teacher

Wendy sought to become a speaker of multiple languages instead of being an English-only speaker for academic and social purposes. Wendy was able to create a third space (her own space through exposure to different places) where being multilingual was allowed. While traveling to multiple countries and studying in a foreign country (the United Kingdom), her sense of an ideal linguistic identity began to form and continued to develop from the concept of an English reader and writer to the concept of a multilingual teacher.

During her primary and secondary education in China, Wendy developed an identity as an academic English reader and writer. Learning English superseded learning other foreign languages in her schools. Geared toward either the national college entrance exam or language certification, English language learning mainly focused on reading and writing. She used to memorize 40 words every two days, attend a six-hour English class daily, and participate in private Fudaoban (after-school English programs) on the weekends to

primarily obtain high scores on tests. She recalled that, "We didn't need them (speaking and listening) for the college entrance test. Of course, nobody used English to talk with each other (laugh). It's a *foreign* language in China (sighed). We spoke only Chinese after class." After Wendy became an English major in college, her only opportunity to speak English occurred in a weekly 2 h speaking class taught by a Canadian instructor. Her other professors always skipped the discussion section in the textbooks because "It will not be on the tests".

After Wendy was accepted into the MA TESOL program in England, she started reconsidering the purpose of English education. Moving to England forced her to use English for genuine purposes. She realized that English education policies should encompass the development of students' practical English communication abilities. Her conclusion was marked by our observations of her teachings. Wendy paid close attention to teaching spoken English at the discourse level. She left 30 min during each session for students to participate in group presentations. After the group presentations, Wendy gave comments, asked questions on the presented topics, and had a discussion with the rest of the students. Apart from this, Wendy sometimes organized a Model United Union during class to "prepare students to practice English, and learn cultures, leadership, and negotiation" for social communication.

> I learned English so many years in China, but the first time that I spoke English for social communication was when the airplane landed at London Heathrow International Airport to talk to the customs officer. After passing TEM 8 (Test for English Majors—Band 8) in China and IELTS (IELT refers to the International English Language Testing System, which is an international standardized test of English language proficiency for non-native English language speakers). I thought I had all the knowledge and a 'beautiful and complete' transcript to use in real situations. I *thought* that's enough for me.

After this turning point, she started using English in her social and academic life such as "to buy a hamburger, to withdraw money from a bank, to register classes, and to communicate with professors". In one of the most booming cities in the UK, she actively sought to use English socially and academically, such as working as a part-time assistant manager in a local jewelry shop and tutoring her Polish roommate. While helping a local customer pick jewelry, she realized, "I am chatting with someone in English without paying too much attention to grammar!". She learned that her use of English in meaning-making and conveying messages did not heavily rely on grammar.

Wendy's sense of linguistic identity expanded from being an English language user to that with multiple languages. Living in a multicultural environment and being surrounded by international students, she recognized that speaking English alone proved insufficient for multilingual interactions in a globalized place in the UK.

> One day I went to an Italian restaurant. Many people in that restaurant were not speaking English. The waiter came to me and said hello in Italian. The menu had two languages: Italian and English. I could read English but didn't know what they (Italians) usually ate and how to say properly in that context . . . It was somewhat embarrassing.

The incident led Wendy to realize that English was not sufficient for her to be a member of globalized places. She concluded that "my two languages are not enough there". Academic life in England strengthened her beliefs about multilingualism. She stated, "I felt so natural that people who sat next to me had different hair and skin colors talking in different languages". Her goal became to develop better intercultural communication and to further integrate into the various linguistic communities. She began to develop a multilingual belief that people should not assign simply positive or negative values to being native or non-native language teachers. She explained, "I'm not a native speaker of English, but all my professors and classmates could understand me in England. As long as we could understand each other, it shouldn't be a problem". Commonly, in her class,

if any student mispronounced words or slurred their speech, she usually let them finish talking at first and then corrected their mistakes. She rarely provided detailed grammar instructions to her students. When a student asked about a grammar question, she briefly responded to it or redirected the question to other students and then said to students that grammar was not her strong point.

By living in one of China's most urbanized and globalized cities, Wendy strengthened her understanding and pursuit of a multilingual identity. She surmised, "It's just so common to see foreigners in the streets. I know there are a lot of foreign companies. Some are French, while others are Japanese or Korean. They have their own communities". In city G, she often visited popular bars and restaurants on the weekends with her Chinese colleagues, "There are a lot of foreigners in bars and restaurants. When you come in, you can hear different languages. My friends and I usually use English to talk there". This choice revealed her desire to self-identify as a Chinese and English speaker, a different linguistic group from other people who only communicated in Chinese in daily life. She came to realize that this city has an ethnically and linguistically diverse urban center with heterogeneous language-speaking groups and needs. Wendy frequently reminded her students that: "A lot of companies come from non-English-speaking countries. You guys probably need to use multiple non-English languages for future jobs".

She found that being someone "who can speak and use English" was not sufficient either socially or professionally in a language teacher's life. Wendy wanted more. She registered for and attended a Japanese class. Wendy recalled, "One of my colleagues could speak English, Japanese, and French very fluently. You have to push yourself to be competitive since only knowing English is not enough". While teaching, she occasionally switched among English, Chinese, and Japanese although her students were all Chinese. She spoke in Japanese to greet her students, "おはよう" ("Good morning") (O ha yō); to remind students about lunchtime, "ご飯(はん)ですよ" ("It is lunchtime") (Go han desu yo); or to respond "どういたしまして" ("You're welcome") (Dō itashi mashite) when students said, "Thank you". Even when her students started responded in English, she continued this throughout the semester.

5.2. Lili's Pursuit of Being a Native-like English Teacher

Lili desired to obtain a native-like English-speaking proficiency such that she could be a member of the inner circle [12]. Her educational background in her hometown and city G shaped her monolingual ideology and affected her sense of belonging in a linguistic community. Lili preferred to construct a linguistic space where standard English should be used without any regional variations.

Lili recalled that her English learning experiences from her junior to high school were grammar- and test-oriented: "A lot of grammar, vocabulary, no listening and speaking, because we needed to prepare for the college entrance test, grammar was the emphasis". Lili majored in English at a university in her small hometown that did not provide any inner circle-like space for her learning.

> It was not good. Most instructors taught English in Chinese. In the whole English department, there was only one foreign teacher, and he was part-time. As an English major, I expected to be taught in English.

Grammar quickly became an important aspect of her educational background. She described that "I thought if we could avoid grammar mistakes, we must be successful English learners". She related that mastery of linguistic knowledge was important because it helped her pass the Graduate Record Examination of China with high grades and enabled her to enter a top graduate program. To her, it was a sort of power that allowed her to be a non-native English teacher.

Lili's long-term wish had been to obtain residency in city G. To her, moving from her small town to the globalized city G meant "better salaries and more opportunities". Lili was excited when she was accepted to a highly ranked graduate program in city G and learned English from native English-speaking teachers. She said in a cheerful voice,

> All the courses were taught in English. And there are so many native speakers of English in my school and this city … I never found this anywhere in my hometown. That kind of atmosphere made me feel that this *is* where English majors should study.

Lili tried to learn how to translate in a more native-like way, not using "Chinglish". She appreciated that the program taught oral–written translational skills and strategies in English.

> During my master's program, I learned that how much we express our thoughts native-like is very important, like our choices of words, phrases, sentence patterns, sentence level, and so on. I looked at my previous works and felt that they were so *Chinglish* (Chinglish (Chinese–English) refers to spoken or written English language that is influenced by the Chinese language, e.g., in Chinglish, English phrases are appropriated with Chinese meanings). Now, my writing looks more like a native speaker's one (laugh).

Lili's focus on her English learning changed to acquiring a native-like accent. She noticed that her classmates with "native-like" pronunciations frequently served as interpreters for national and local conferences and were praised by professors. To gain these perceived benefits [54], Lili invested more efforts into oral interpretation and imitated her native English-speaking teachers' speech. She thought that the teachers' level of "native-like" ability indicated their teaching competence and strongly influenced a student's language performance.

> It's very important to see if a language teacher is native-like or not. Being more and more native should be required. Whether or not they (students) speak *correct* English depends on whether or not teachers speak correctly. If we speak English with a heavy or weird accent or get stuck frequently when talking, our students will speak in that way as well.

Lili's construction of linguistic identity targeted only the standard English used in the inner circle. She noted that "We are English teachers. English should be the focus. This (English) is really a representative global language". In her class, she said to her students, that "All kinds of English tests are emerging. If you apply for a job, all HRs will ask you to show them your English certificates. Please consider my advice: attend some English training programs and get more English certificates". Lili shared that, in city G, it became trendy for parents to hire expensive private English tutors for their children to ensure enrollment in international schools and study-abroad programs. English became a valuable capital for a member of a globalized city. For her, English occupied an important position as a means to achieve individual success and economic benefits. Lili felt stressed, as she stated, "It's very competitive especially in this city. Students have more learning needs. Teachers have to be more than good enough". Her concern was reaffirmed by an incident she experienced.

> I heard students comparing my Chinese colleagues in the hallway. They were like … "This teacher is better. He sounds *so* native speaker of English". "That teacher graduated from America". I was like … wow … our English must be good enough to teach them … So, I listen to the English radio every day, no matter how tired I am after schoolwork. I made an American friend when I did a part-time job. I purposefully got close to her because, you know, she was such a good resource for me to practice my English speaking.

Lili was shocked at the fact that students judged their teachers' teaching competence based on their pronunciation. She did not, however, regard it as accent prejudice but rather as a "reality reflected in hiring practices" that privileged "foreigners or native-like teachers". Lili perceived being "native-like" as taking ownership of the English language and as a critical aspect of an English teacher's qualification. She invested more time and effort in improving her language skills to form an ideal, "native-like" English teacher identity.

The belief about the legitimacy granted by speaking native-like English made Lili critical of her own English accuracy. She often asked the researcher, "If I pronounce or spell any word wrong in class, please let me know". During her teaching, if a student pronounced any word incorrectly when answering her questions, she quickly interrupted and corrected the pronunciation first before addressing the answer. When one student pronounced "bite" as /bit/, she quickly commented, "No. It's a long vowel instead. Don't forget the Silent "E" Rules. As I said before when a vowel and consonant are followed by an "e", the "e" is silent, but it causes the preceding vowel to be long". Lili then pronounced the word "bite" twice and wrote several words on the blackboard such as "ate", "plane", and "cube" as further examples such that her students could correct their pronunciation. Meanwhile, her focus on accuracy conceptualized grammar as an aspect of English that was "right or wrong". It was observed that Lili focused on test-oriented grammar skills and on making grammar concepts accessible during her teaching. She viewed learning grammar as a process that also aimed for speaking English "correctly" and "accurately". She stated, "We need to teach them (students) *correct* English. Learning the correct grammar rules can help them speak the right sentences and effective vocabulary".

6. Discussion

A close investigation of the two teachers' experiences with language learning and teaching provides insights into the unique development of their linguistic identities. For learners, languages function as potential mediums for the expression of their intrinsic "aspirations, awareness and conflicts" [55]. Although Wendy and Lili shared the same cultural background and languages, they constructed their linguistic identities differently due to their perceptions of global English, globalization, and the spaces in which they developed their language ideologies.

6.1. Identity Formulation and Global English

The two language teachers conceptualized the status of global English differently: (Wendy's) English as an international language (EIL) [56] and (Lili's) English as a foreign language (EFL) [57]. Wendy's EIL paradigm did not suggest a specific variety of English being selected as a lingua franca. Rather, her paradigm problematizes the clear-cut division between native- and non-native English-speaking groups and emphasizes the "transcultural flows" [58] of English used communicatively and interculturally with foreseeable complexity and plurality. Lili's EFL paradigm traditionally viewed English as a foreign language and possessed little functional use outside the classroom in some countries within the expanding circle. Lili's and Wendy's conceptualizations of global English distinctly impacted themselves and motivated them to pursue different linguistic identities.

While aspiring toward a "multilingual" identity, Wendy resisted affiliating herself exclusively with a specific lingua–cultural identity such as a non-native speaker in the periphery or as a member of the expanding circle. She self-identified within a multilingual community, such as city G, and within a third space where multilingualism was the norm. Wendy perceived linguistic and cultural hybridity as more valuable than monolingual linguistic authentication, which are designated as the center and periphery, respectively. Her linguistic and cultural hybridity showed "new structures and political initiatives" in the authority and authenticity of languages and cultures [42] and emphasized the heteroglossia and the "possibility of challenging, appropriating, and (resignifying) the meanings" of cultures and languages [59]. Her accepting attitude toward various accents articulates the third space [42], rejects Kachru's [12] three circles, and empowered her to re-contextualize the local meaning of authenticity, ethnicity, and language use. Wendy's alternative worlds and virtual selves align with what Kramsch [55] describes as language learners' imagined communities of present or future "self". Mixing more than one language in Wendy's social and daily life capitalized on her reflexivity and sensibility in experiencing different languages and cultures.

Lili viewed "global" as involving the use of standard pronunciation, which remained stripped of regionally specific features of the English accent. The native speakerism discourse [2], which promotes that "native" speakers represent the ideals of English-language acquisition, makes Lili regard her "Chinglish" writing as being deficient and inferior. Lili aimed to identify herself as a legitimate English speaker who belongs in the "center" or the inner circle that was authorized by the idealized norm of native-speakers' accent and pronunciation [60,61]. Despite her investments, her Chinese students defined her as a locally trained non-native speaker and identified her as an illegitimate foreign language user who remained in the periphery of the English-speaking world.

Both participants' views on global English distinctly impacted their pursued and imagined identities. Global English motivated Wendy to learn additional languages. She saw that English had not been the only commonly spoken language worldwide. Wendy did not prioritize English usage but stressed the importance of connecting her multilingual self to the richly diverse language environment and needs in England and city G. Wendy's case shows how a Chinese English-language teacher may develop a sense of connectedness with a global, multilingual community while foregrounding her local Chinese membership. Conversely, Lili saw how English had become mandatory in both the education and labor markets, thereby legitimatizing its potentiality for future career advancement. She believed that its superior status offered career opportunities for those who mastered it and emphasized its linguistic capital in affecting and shaping learners' knowledge of, beliefs about, and practice of language learning [62]. The pervasive discourses around global English made Lili regard English as a must-know language and focused only on forming her native-like English speaker identity.

6.2. Negotiating Identities: Languages and Spaces

Wendy's and Lili's senses of belonging and membership in linguistic communities have continually developed over time. Claiming a particular linguistic background reflects the identity positioning and negotiation in particular spaces [54,63]. Wendy and Lili positioned themselves as speakers of the language(s) representing not only the locations where their previous and present identification resides but also the spaces of the imagined and real language environments in which they wish to live.

Wendy initially positioned herself as an "English reader and writer". Not only an articulation of identity, Wendy's initial self-positioning highlights her Chinese ethnicity and shifts her non-Chinese linguistic identity to the "margin" in her early language learning. Part of her English skills, including speaking and listening, function as a marginalized peripheric linguistic repertoire. In the British context, Wendy's English-language learning targeted a wide range of symbolic resources, such as communicative competence, educational credentials, and socialization, which increased her capital in life abroad. These social gains in turn enhanced the range of linguistic identities that language learners claim in a multicultural and multilingual community [43].

While Wendy positioned herself as an "English speaker" who used English in social interactions, she noticed the complexity of the transnational context she experienced. She started realizing that different languages were used in her daily life, such as when dining at an Italian restaurant. Her sense of belonging within a language community remained fluid and kept developing while teaching and living in city G, where she saw many foreigners, foreign stores, and international schools making up diverse ethnic and linguistic groups. As she engaged in teaching and socializing, the context of city G confirmed her imagined community of the ideal linguistic identity. As a result, Wendy took action (i.e., registering for a Japanese language class to learn a third language and incorporating Japanese words into class) to create a new space for her—thus attempting to become a multilingual speaker during and after her overseas life.

In comparison with Wendy, Lili pursued an English-speaker identity that centered on the dichotomic frame of native and non-native speakers, reflecting her monolingual perspective. A non-native teachers' perception of their own status may show their desire

to express their native-like identity as a qualified L2 English user rather than as a linguacultural speaker with a local accent [64]. As the particular methodology of language teaching influences the formation of certain linguistic identities [65], grammar-focused instruction learned from her hometown kept Lili at the "center" of her academic world as she built up her grammar knowledge.

Migrating from her hometown to city G, Lili's sense of linguistic identity continued to change as the city's developing economy heavily relied on English as the primary communicative medium. Lili remained in the periphery and was marginalized in the social and professional English-speaking world because of her perceived lack of native-speaking proficiency at the beginning. For Lili, a native-like English ability became a symbolic resource [62] that opened up more employment possibilities, including jobs in higher education. Linguistic knowledge in English and fluent oral proficiency function as marketable assets that gradually led her to position her identity as a native-like English speaker and made her believe that she moved closer to the "center" of the native-speaking English world. Lili resisted being indexed by her Chinese identity through a Chinese accent when speaking English. Her desire to be a native-like English speaker was deeply rooted in her perceived proof of teaching competence.

7. Conclusions

The formation of language identities for the two participants shows both similarities and differences. Globalization and the power of global English have clear impacts on the formation of both participants' self-identities; nevertheless, the participants viewed globalization and "global English" differently and preferred to move to the "centers" of their language groups. The participants' linguistic histories and language trajectories being complementary to their self-identities contribute to our understanding of how language teachers gradually formulate and develop their varied language identities across multiple contexts. In this study, we confirmed and—more importantly—went beyond previous research into teacher identity. The following three conclusions were drawn from the findings of the data.

First, the notions of the "center" and "periphery" [14], and "space" [22] are critical to understanding the development of identity in the two Chinese teachers across contexts in terms of globalization. In contrast with other studies (e.g., [66–68]) primarily about teachers' professional identities in school, the research foci of this study looked at the identity of the Chinese English-language teachers inside and outside of schools using interviews and observations. The findings showed that the participants' prior learning and socialization based on language use, along with some changing contexts, directly affected the ways in which they conceived their linguistic and professional identities as a global language speaker in the "center" or "periphery" of a foreign-language-speaking community.

Second, along with the worldwide spread of English, each teacher had a different understanding of the dynamics between globalization, and language learning and teaching. The global flow of people and cultures results in interactions and changes, which lead to the spread of educational ideas and practices [69]. Market influences and symbolic concerns with identity and nationhood reshape the lives of students [70]. Ball and Freedman [71] reminded us that the goal of education is "ideological becoming", which calls for the cultivation of a sense of authority and agency within people' internal discourse. The ideological change in language teachers when folding or unfolding these messages into their self-image is worth exploring in such a macro context but has not been clear in previous research (e.g., [72–74]). In this study, language teachers came to believe that the role that English plays either empowers local languages or reinforces the marginalization against other languages based on different learning and teaching experiences. The two participants showed distinctive preferences when formulating their identities either with or without indexing their local Chinese-speaking identity. Language teachers can view "global" and "local" as being either opposite or compatible concepts.

Much research has shown that authenticity is the focus of issues regarding the legitimacy of a language teacher in applied linguistics (e.g., [75,76]). The native versus non-native dichotomy has become the dominant paradigm in research on the identities of foreign language teachers [77]. Such an ideological representation considers a teacher's origin as the prerequisite for assessing whether they constitute an authentic member of a cultural and linguistic community [45,59]. The cases of the two teachers in this study il-lustrate a different phenomenon. Language teachers can impose their own form of authenticity by taking ownership of English differently. The two teachers reacted differently to the question of legitimacy that arose during their pursuit of linguistic identities. Lili's case demonstrated that language teachers might still view native-speaker linguistic norms as the prime authority. Since the ideology of English as a global language has "become a top priority in (the) educational initiative" [78], for Lili, being able to speak English in a native manner is an asset that commands legitimacy and status. Holliday [2] argued that the label of "native" versus "non-native" speakers functions as an "everyday currency for talking about language teachers' professional differences" and further indicates the significant influence of linguistic purism on language teachers, which could "generate a sense of otherness that can create barriers to social integration" and implicitly impact on whether they view and apply language with an appropriate attitude [79]. A noteworthy finding in Wendy's case is that language teachers can establish a new notion of authority over a language as serving more than one linguistic group. As Costa [80] claimed, one who "has various types of interests in establishing authority as to what the legitimate norm should be" becomes a newly legitimized speaker under globalization. In Wendy's case, the construction of her identity as a legitimate global language speaker consists of resisting the simplistic binary categories of "native" and "non-native" and extends the perception of legitimacy to the ability to communicate in multiple languages and various possible forms of English. Therefore, teachers can view language as a "right and resource" and can "promote social equity through recognition and support" for those who come from multiple language backgrounds [81].

This study has two limitations. First, the study rested on data from interviewing and observing only two participants who were both born and raised in China. In addition, both teacher participants came from one Chinese college. Possibly reflecting the sample size, this might restrict the generalization of the findings to a larger population of language teachers across settings worldwide. Second, this study showed that language teachers with different education credentials developed their linguistic identities differently. It may overlook the possibility that language teachers with similar educational credentials form contrastive teacher identities due to more complex contextual factors than that in this study.

Based on the findings of this study, we suggest two future directions for research: First, research on language teachers with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds from multiple settings is recommended to expand the diversity of the participant population. Second, research comparing teachers with similar credentials needs to investigate if and how different diversities take place in identity-development processes and in teaching practices.

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