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Exploring Five Korean English Language Teachers' Identities in the Korean Teaching Contexts

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EXPLORING FIVE KOREAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' IDENTITIES
IN THE KOREAN TEACHING CONTEXTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Title: Exploring Five Korean English Language Teachers' Identities in the Korean Teaching Contexts

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The study explored five Korean English language teachers' (KELTs) perception of themselves as language teachers in the Korean higher education system. Specifically, it examined how KELTs in Korean EFL university settings perceive themselves and how their language teacher identities influenced their teaching and teaching philosophies. The purposes of this study were to (1) deepen and enrich the understanding of KELTs teaching in the Korean higher educational environment, (2) help my KELTs benefit from the opportunity to discover themselves as teachers, (3) provide English language teachers with an opportunity to challenge and be more critically reflective about their teaching, (4) design and develop a teacher education program which could promote the reflective and dialogic pedagogical practices given the educational contexts and mandates in Korea, and (5) contribute to the body of theoretical and methodological literature as a way to continue a dialogic inquiry in understanding NNESTs working all over the world.

I used grounded theory as a methodological approach to this study. For the substantial investigation of my KELTs' perception of themselves and their teaching, I employed three qualitative methods: (1) in-depth interviews, (2) class observations, and (3) teaching journals.

The analysis of five participants' perceptions revealed that my KELTs perceived themselves and their teaching within and beyond an individual teacher level, in a complex way. They had gone through dilemma, conflict, and struggle in the correlations between themselves as NNESTs and their students, colleges, NESTs, and Korean societal values and educational policies. On the other hand, they strived for professional development in terms of teaching methods and transmission of knowledge, and also desired to make the best use of their advantages as NNESTs.

The findings from five KELTs' perceptions of themselves could contribute to developing TESOL teacher education programs and English educational field in Korea that has rarely conducted the qualitative research including teacher identity.