

Family Background and Extracurricular English Learning: Ethnography of Language Ideologies and Language Management in China

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Abstract : Parents in China now are of great enthusiasm to outsource extracurricular lessons and activities to ensure their children's English learning. This study draws on one year of ethnographic observations and interviews with parents and children in 6 families in Shaoxing, a small city in East China, to explore how parents in different social classes differ in their ideology and investment practice towards their children's English education. Through comparative analysis, the study reveals though all the families acknowledge the importance of English and there are great similarities among families in the same social class, differences are distinct among those in different social classes with regard to how they perceived the importance and what measures they take. The results also reflect China's sociocultural and socioeconomic factors that underlined the heated wave of English learning as well as the social, cultural and economic conditions of different families that exert a decisive influence on their children's learning experience.

Keywords : family background, extracurricular English learning, language ideologies, language management

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