

Report

Interpreting Chinese Students’ Motives in a Weekly English Discussion Group: A Case Study

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This paper explores the motives of two Chinese research students who joined a regular English discussion organized by Mainland Chinese students on a university campus in Hong Kong. I analyze the two learners’ shifting motivations for learning English before they came to Hong Kong and complex motives in attending the event. Although the research reveals that both participants considered learning English as a means to expand their career opportunities, the data also indicate that the weekly discussion is equally important in satisfying the learners’ needs for socialization, meaning-making, and life alternatives in addition to providing a learning site for them to practice oral English. The paper ends with a tentative conclusion that such discussion groups give a sense of ownership of the English language to participants, which can be utilized in organizing pedagogic activities of similar nature.