A Study on Teaching Chinese Vocabulary using a Multimodal Approach at a Western Sydney Primary School

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Declaration

I declare that except where due acknowledgement has been made, this research thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree at any university or other institute of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text, and a list of references is given.

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<tr>
<td>CSL/CFL</td>
<td>Chinese as a Second Language/Chinese as a Foreign Language</td>
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<td>NALSAS</td>
<td>National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
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<td>ROSETE</td>
<td>Research Oriented School/Industry Engaged Teacher-researcher Education</td>
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<td>SFL</td>
<td>Systematic-functional linguistics</td>
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<td>TCFL</td>
<td>Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language</td>
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<td>VKS</td>
<td>Vocabulary Knowledge Scale</td>
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<td>WSU</td>
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Abstract

This study explores multimodal pedagogy in teaching Chinese vocabulary at a Western Sydney primary school. It is designed as two cycled teacher’s action research. Data were collected from documents, observation, reflection journals and students’ focus groups. Through the teacher’s application of a series of designed multimodal activities in students’ vocabulary learning, this research found that multimodal pedagogy helped students’ comprehension and memorisation; improved their pronunciation accuracy and lowered anxiety over pronouncing vocabulary; and increased students’ willingness to write Chinese characters.

The research findings suggest that multimodal teaching is effective in teaching Chinese as a foreign language class. However, some key factors need to be considered with the application. Firstly of all, the teacher should consider time management for multimodal activities, preparation of technical equipment and effective instruction on the rules of the multimodal activities at the beginning of a lesson. During the lesson, the teacher should consider appropriate scaffolding, competition element to be built in the activities and carefully monitoring student’s understanding. In addition, when assessing students’ learning, the teacher should consider proper feedback on students’ performance.

Keywords: multimodal pedagogy, TCFL, vocabulary, aid to students’ comprehension and memorisation
Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction of this research. It firstly provides the background of this study in Australian context. It then presents the challenging and complicated Chinese teaching situation based on which the research questions were raised. To be followed are the expected research outcomes and the significance of this study. The final section introduces the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background

Asia literacy has become a national priority in Australia with documented support from the government. In 1994, the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) set up a program called the ‘National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) Program’ to promote Asian language learning and studies in Australian schools (Mackerras, 1995). The ‘Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians’ (MCEETYA, 2008) points out that China and other Asia-Pacific nations are becoming much more important in the world and there is a need for all Australians to become Asia literate. The foundation document for developing the Australian national curriculum, the ‘Shape of the Australian Curriculum’, states that students in Australia need to acquire skills to communicate and engage with peoples of Asia, and it is a priority for students to be Asia literate (Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2012). The ‘Australia in the Asian Century’ white paper recommends and encourages Australian students to learn at least one priority Asian language: Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Indonesian or Japanese (Australia in the Asian Century Taskforce, 2012). With the government’s support and encouragement, learning Asian languages quickly increased in Australia. China’s extraordinary rise as a key player in the world economy has made studying Chinese a priority in language education in Australia (Scrimgeour, 2014).
However, teaching and learning Chinese in Australia remains problematic due to the high drop-out rate of students. According to published statistics, 172,000 students in Australia were studying Chinese in 2015, and the number of students enrolled in Chinese programs in New South Wales (NSW) was estimated to be more than 2,000. However, the number of students who continue to learn Chinese to Year 12 is low, with only 4,500 students across the country still learning Chinese in Year 12 in 2015 (Orton, 2016). Among these students, most are first-language speakers of Chinese, so the number of non-Chinese background learners is particularly low (Chen, 2015). In 2015, only approximately 400 of 4,500 students were not of Chinese background, which is a 20% drop since 2007 (Orton, 2016). Consequently, the retention of non-background Chinese language learners is considered critical to the development of Chinese learning in Australia (Chen, 2015).

A number of reasons contribute to the low retention of non-background Chinese learners. First, Chinese is a difficult language for students whose first language is English, and more effort is required for students to succeed in speaking and writing Chinese (Orton, 2016; Scrimgeour, 2014). According to reports by the International Centre for Language Studies (ICLS) in Washington DC, a native English-speaking learner needs approximately 2,200 hours to become proficient in Chinese, compared to 650 hours for Italian (Chen, 2015). Second, non-Chinese background students in Australia are unmotivated (Chen, 2015; Orton, 2016; Scrimgeour, 2014). Further, Chinese teachers lack effective teaching pedagogy to help non-background learners in learning Chinese (Orton, 2016; Scrimgeour, 2014). Confronted with these features, the teacher-researcher who teaches Chinese in a primary school in the Western Sydney region, believes that her exploration of an effective pedagogy to help students’ Chinese learning is meaningful and necessary.

1.2 Research Problem and Question

Vocabulary plays an important role in learning a language. As McCarthy
observed, second language learners (L2 learners) cannot communicate in a meaningful way without having enough vocabulary. Vocabulary is central to the learning and teaching of a language as it affords learners access to all forms of oral and written communication, including literature, music and content language (Moeller, Ketsman, & Masmaliyeva, 2009).

Chinese classes in Australian primary schools combine cultural experiences with language knowledge in teaching, as is required in the NSW syllabus. However, many students have only one Chinese class every week, which means that students can only acquire some basic knowledge of Chinese. For Chinese learners with no or weak foundations, teaching vocabulary is particularly important (Nie, 2012).

Currently, there is a significant shortage of research into teaching Chinese vocabulary in Australia, and clear outcomes of research on the strategy of primary Chinese vocabulary teaching are scarce (Wang, 2011). Due to the shortage of effective teaching strategies for Chinese vocabulary and the lack of research about Chinese vocabulary teaching, conducting comprehensive and systematic research in this field and actively exploring effective vocabulary teaching strategies for Australian students is an important research topic.

Before teaching Chinese in an Australian primary school, the researcher had the opportunity to observe English classes in the same school. She found that many English teachers use a multimodal teaching approach to vocabulary teaching; that is, using different modes such as image, song and video to teach vocabulary. The multimodal approach to teaching vocabulary appeared to be enjoyable, and students could learn vocabulary efficiently when taught with this method. Therefore, this project explores how to use a multimodal teaching method for Chinese vocabulary teaching in a Western Sydney primary school, guided by the following research question and sub-questions:

*How did the teacher-researcher use multimodal teaching approaches in teaching Chinese vocabulary at a Western Sydney primary school?*

- What were the factors that needed to be considered in designing
multimodal lessons in teaching Chinese vocabulary at a Western Sydney primary school?

- How did the multimodal teaching approach influence students’ pronunciation, writing and understanding of vocabulary in this study?
- Based on this study, what could be suggested in teaching Chinese vocabulary with a multimodal approach at Western Sydney primary schools?

1.3 Expected Outcomes

This study aims to improve Australian students’ Chinese vocabulary learning through innovations in teaching methods. More specifically, a detailed multimodal approach to teaching Chinese vocabulary will be generated as the outcome of this research, which can be further divided into four parts:

- identify the combination of modes that may help students’ Chinese vocabulary learning
- discover principles for selecting modes for vocabulary teaching
- generate suggestions for using different mode combinations
- ascertain the effects of Chinese vocabulary teaching with a multimodal teaching approach.

1.4 Significance

This research will contribute to the development of the Chinese teachers’ professional teaching skills and the studies of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) pedagogy. As a member of the Research Oriented, School/Industry Engaged Teacher-researcher Education (ROSETE) Program, the teacher-researcher’s teaching practice in a school setting will generate primary data for analysis through scientific methods. The findings of this research are intended to be practical and insightful for teachers in this field. These findings may be used to address problems arising in the TCFL classroom and may influence Chinese teachers’ teaching ideology, which may be mismatched with their Western
students.

The results of this research may also help Australian students improve their interest and effectiveness in Chinese vocabulary learning. Vocabulary is an essential element of language teaching as it provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write (Richards & Renandya, 2010). An effective vocabulary teaching method can help students develop a better understanding of Chinese vocabulary, leading them to become more literate in Chinese.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 focuses on the purpose of the research. It provides a background for the study, which includes the importance of learning Chinese and current problems with teaching Chinese in Australia. The research question and sub-questions are developed, and the outcomes and significance of the study identified. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on vocabulary teaching in TCFL, the multimodal approach and applications of the multimodal approach. Concepts are identified and defined, and some former strategies and methods are highlighted to instruct the design of this research. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used in this study and how the qualitative action research was carried out. It discusses the research design and data collection methods (observational notes, self-reflective journals, students’ work samples and focus group) employed, and relevant ethical issues.

Chapters 4 to 6 of the thesis detail the data analysis; that is, the process of analysis for the 18-month practice. These chapters reveal how teachers can employ the multimodal approach for beginning learners to learn Chinese vocabulary, analyse the influence of a multimodal approach on students’ vocabulary learning and offers suggestions for using a multimodal approach to teach Chinese vocabulary. Finally, Chapter 7 brings together the study’s findings and puts forward its key contributions and limitations. It also offers suggestions for improvements and possible further studies.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter introduces the situation of vocabulary teaching in TCFL, which mainly focuses on the problems of Chinese vocabulary teaching. It then examines multimodal teaching by clarifying the key concepts of ‘mode’ and ‘multimodality’ to help explain multimodal teaching practices. Finally, the chapter briefly reviews how this method is used for teaching, which includes multimodal teaching in TCFL and frameworks for using different modes.

2.1 Vocabulary Teaching in TCFL

Vocabulary is a crucial part of learning a language; however, vocabulary teaching in TCFL has not received much attention, and it is still a weak aspect of TCFL (Hu, 1997; Lu, 1998; Sun, 2006; Zhao, 2004) (See Chinese reference). Some problems with teaching vocabulary in TCFL are ongoing.

First, the selection of vocabulary may be inappropriate (Lu & Li, 2007; Song, 2014; Wang, 2011). Lu and Li (2007) argue that vocabulary teaching is based on the articles provided by some Chinese textbooks, so the vocabulary are not very useful in Australia daily life. Wang (2011), who also researched Chinese vocabulary teaching in Australia, found that teachers did not pay particular attention to teaching vocabulary that would be useful in daily life, and asserted that this needs improvement. Also, although there are some textbooks designed for Australian students (Chinese textbook grade 1 of primary school for Chinese learner pinyin1-I, Collins Easy Learning Mandarin Chinese Characters - Trusted Support for Learning and Learn Chinese: 400 Actions + Activities - Everyday Chinese for Beginners), many schools in Western Sydney region prefer their teachers to devise their own curriculum to meet syllabus requirements. Song (2014) also noted that a Chinese textbook created by Australians, 你好 Hello (1991), is designed for high school students and not suitable for teaching primary school students, and some of its vocabulary is outdated. Thus, the vocabulary selected is
based on the general Chinese curriculum for the state, such as in NSW, and each Chinese teacher’s own experience. Consequently, the vocabulary selection is varied, and the teaching quality cannot be guaranteed.

Second, it is difficult to explain how to use vocabulary (Ye, 2001). Schmitt and Meara (1997) contend that vocabulary knowledge has three broad dimensions: form, meaning and use. The usage of Chinese vocabulary is difficult to explain because it has a strong relationship with Chinese culture, which has a long history and is very different from European culture (Ye, 2001). According to Chinese linguist He (2002), written Chinese has distinct characteristics of usage; in particular, hierarchical relationships within Chinese society, associated meanings of colours and emotional meanings are all reflected in the written vocabulary of the language.

In Chinese expression, the vocabulary fully expresses the hierarchical order of Chinese society. Chinese words are very detailed to show the relationship between relatives (He, 2002). For example, the word for father’s parents ‘爷爷’ ‘奶奶’ is different from the word for mother’s parents ‘外公’ ‘外婆’; however, they are all called grandfather and grandmother in English. The associated meaning of colours in Chinese is very different from English (He, 2002). For example, red means lucky in Chinese while it connotes war and blood in English, and yellow means power and dignity in Chinese but has no such meaning in English. There are also differences between Chinese and English in the emotional meaning of the vocabulary; for instance, whether a term is derogatory or commendatory (He, 2002). ‘Dog’ often has derogatory meaning while it represents loyalty, which is commendatory in English. All these aspects need to be considered in this research because vocabulary teaching should incorporate not only the meaning and form, but also the usage of vocabulary (Schmitt & Meara, 1997). The difficulty of explaining the usage of vocabulary can be partly solved with the assistance of multimedia in teaching, which combines different modes to help students understand the usage of Chinese vocabulary (Lu & Li, 2007).
Third, this literature turns to the teaching method. The translation method is the one most often used in teaching Chinese vocabulary, which means using the learner’s native language to explain the Chinese vocabulary and letting learner memorize the meaning and usage of vocabulary through some word-filling exercise (Liu & Ren, 2006). Wang (2011) notes that this method often leads to students’ misconception that Chinese and English words always have the same meaning. However, translation is a complex information processing activity, and is not necessarily linear in nature. People work backwards and forwards in the text working out the meaning, confirming and correcting their perception (Pellatt & Liu, 2010). Such a process requires students to have a basic knowledge of Chinese, so it may be not suitable for targeted participants of this research. As this method does not help elementary students master the basic meaning and usage of vocabulary, it results in a relatively low ability to put vocabulary into practical use. Song (2014) affirms that this method is not suitable for Chinese vocabulary teaching in Australian primary schools because Chinese class is an extension class, and this method does not attract the students’ interest.

Apart from three main problems of teaching Chinese vocabulary, Chinese writing should be specifically reviewed. Chinese words are composed of one or more Chinese characters, so the substance of writing Chinese vocabulary is writing Chinese characters. However, Chinese character, the basic component of the Chinese writing system to transfer and exchange information, is difficult to comprehend for Australian students who are used to writing alphabets. In fact, it’s commonly agreed that Chinese character learning is the main obstacle of learning Chinese. Huo (2010) has concluded three challenge of recognizing and writing Chinese characters. Firstly, the most frequently mentioned factor is the complexity of the graphic nature of Chinese characters, which requires the learners to have a good understanding of strokes, radicals and the whole character; The second reason is the absence of Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence rules in Chinese, which is obvious in Alphabetic languages such as English; The last challenge is the confusing similarity in the pronunciation and written forms. There are only 416
unique pronunciations (syllables) in spoken Chinese vs. around 6,000 common characters and many different characters have shapes that are similar to each other (Huo, 2012). To make things worse, stroke order in character writing is another headache for many CFL.

This part introduces the current problems of teaching Chinese vocabulary and the difficulty of learning Chinese vocabulary writing, which provides some points that should be paid attention to in vocabulary teaching. The literature moves now to multimodal pedagogy to see if it helps foreign students to learn Chinese vocabulary.

2.2 Basic Concepts of Multimodal Pedagogy

Multimodal pedagogy is developed from multimodal discourse, which is a complicated theory. So two keywords derived from the theory—multimodality and mode—are clarified before introducing multimodal pedagogy.

2.2.1 Multimodality

The basic assumption of multimodality is that meanings are made (as well as distributed, interpreted, and remade) through many representational and communicational resources such as image, gesture, gaze, body posture, sound, writing, music, speech, and so on, of which language is but one (Bourne & Jewitt, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Kress, 2006). From a multimodal perspective, image, action, and so forth are referred to as modes, as organized sets of semiotic resources for meaning making (Jewitt, 2008). Multimodality is primarily informed by linguistic theories, particularly Halliday’s (1994) social semiotic theory of communication and the developments of that theory (Hodge & Kress, 1988), but later other researchers set out to expand and re-evaluate this realm of reference, drawing on other approaches (e.g., film theory, musicology, game theory) (Jwitt, 2008).

2.2.2 Mode

Multimodality is defined as the combination of different modes for meaning
expression. However, scholars explain the definition of ‘mode’ with different language. Kress (2001, p. 11) defines mode as ‘a range of meaning-making systems; modes articulate the meanings demanded by the practical, social requirements of different communities. The use of different modes leads to meanings being made differently.’ Further, modes develop in response to the communicative needs of society, and they are not static or stable, but fluid (Kress, 2001). For Gu (2007), modes are the senses or channels (such as vision, touch) human beings use to interact with the external environment (such as computers, objects). According to this definition, human senses can also be regarded as modes, so the interaction between students and computers or tablets can also be regarded as multimodality.

The New London Group (1996) asserts that there are five types of modes, each with different elements. There are linguistic modes (delivery, vocabulary and metaphor, nominalisation of process, information structure, local coherence relations and global coherence relations); visual modes (images, colours, page layout and screen formats); audio modes (music and sound effects); gestural modes (body language and sensuality); and spatial modes (the meaning of environmental spaces and architectural spaces).

This study combines these opinions and works with the following definition of mode. Mode is a mean-making system used in communication between human beings with the external environment—such as language, image, sound and gesture—and can be divided into five types: linguistic modes, visual modes, auditory modes, gestural modes and spatial modes.

2.3 Multimodal Pedagogy

Bourne and Jewitt (2003) assert that the application of various modes, such as a combination of linguistic, visual, audio, spatial and gestural communicative modes in teaching, has been referred to as multimodal pedagogy. Zhang (2009) affirms that although each mode alone can express meaning in communication, a multimodal approach combines different modes together for meaning expression;
one mode is regarded as the main mode, which has other modes that work as supportive modes. In conjunction with these two opinions of a multimodal approach, Shi (2017) divided multimodal pedagogy into three categories: visual-based methods, audial-based methods and gestural method. She used these three categories for teaching Chinese in one Australian high school and found that multimodal pedagogy improved students’ engagement in learning Chinese. Kress (2001) also includes a language-based method, which regards language as the main mode and has other modes such as image and sound as supportive modes. In the current study, multimodal pedagogy means combining different modes for teaching, and it incorporates four methods: visual-based methods, language-based methods, audial-based methods and gestural-based methods.

Compared with traditional teaching approaches (using written material without ways of echoing the sound, image and so on), a multimodal approach has many advantages. Traditional teaching concentrates on language—that is, the teachers’ speech and written texts—and can only be regarded as one mode in teaching (Kress, 2001). For example, yet TESOL professionals act as though language fully represented the meanings they wish to encode and communicate. They admit that other features (other modes) are important, but if pressed, the linguist and the applied linguist (the language teacher, let us say) would maintain that their business was language, after all, and these other things were someone else’s look after (Kress, 2001). As Kalantzis and Cope (2008, p. 22) state, ‘meaning expressed in one mode cannot be directly and completely translated into another. The movie can never be the same as the novel. The image can never do the same thing as the description of a scene in language’. So other modes, including images and sounds, should be paid more attention to in the teaching process by both teachers and students (Kress, 2001). Multimodal approaches help students develop their life skills. Ntelioglou (2011) argues that a multimodal teaching approach uses different modes for students and helps them express their ideas and understanding, which equips the language learners for life outside the classroom. Multimodal approaches let students learn happily and effectively (Zhang, 2013; Zhao, 2017). Zhang (2013)
reports that this pedagogy lets students study in a relaxed, active, autonomous learning atmosphere. As they absorb a variety of sensory channels to make use of information and knowledge, the learning effectiveness is enhanced. With the widespread use of multimedia technology in the field of teaching, multimodal teaching approaches have emerged, and students’ development of multiliteracy has become possible (Zhao, 2017).

2.3.1 Multimodal approaches to teaching

This part introduces researches that involve certain modes in teaching, which are visual modes, gestural modes and audial modes. They help the teacher researcher in modes selection and inspire the teacher researcher to consider factors that may influence multimodal activity design.

2.3.1.1 Visual modes

Images are a common mode used in multimodal pedagogy. As an independent, organised and structured message, an image can transfer a particular meaning and contribute to the effective delivery of knowledge (Shi, 2017). Children can be asked to illustrate their learning with images, and they can be stimulated by watching videos.

Kress and Leeuwen (2002) adopted Halliday’s metafunctional theory and identified colour as a mode by exploring its grammar. They contend that colour generates meaning through five scales: differentiation, saturation, purity, value and hue. The differentiation of colour varies from monochrome to varied colours. The saturation of colour means colour change from pure to pale and then to black and white. The purity of colour runs from purity to hybridity, and the value scale refers to the scale of grey from light (white) to dark (black). Hue moves from red to blue, with the red end of the spectrum connoting warmth, energy, salience and foregrounding, while the blue end means cold, calm, distance and backgrounding (Kress & Leeuwen, 2002). This research will consider these scales of colours for teaching Chinese vocabulary.
2.3.1.2 Gestural modes

Action is a powerful mode for realising meaning in the classroom, although its effect is often short-lived (Franks & Jewitt, 2001). Action is what people do while being motivated, interested and making meaning; it includes gesture, posture and facial expression (Franks & Jewitt, 2001). Parsons and Brown (2002) state that the social nature of the body, time and space of the class and the meaning of objects and entities should be considered when using actions to realise meanings, because our environment and culture significantly influence our bodily expression. Therefore, the researcher should pay attention to Australian culture when using action for teaching. Franks and Jewitt (2001) posit that the time and space of the class sets the boundaries for using action to make meaning. Thus, the researcher should also consider the time and arrangement of the classroom before using action for teaching. Further, because entities and objects mediate action, the researcher should select the objects and equipment used in the Chinese class carefully for most effective teaching.

Lancaster (2001) undertook a multimodal analysis of a video of a two-year-old girl drawing and working with her father, and concluded that intense visual concentration has three functions: analytic, interpersonal and expressive. Children can work out difficult questions of symbolic representation through a combination of language, gesture, action and movement. Further, he observed that an adult is a resource to support children’s generation of meaning (Lancaster, 2001). As a resource helping children’s meaning generation, teachers should consider how to use other modes to help children understand meanings.

2.3.1.3 Audial modes

Using song as a teaching mode has a lot of advantages (Salcedo, 2002). Song not only expresses meaning, it also helps express emotion efficiently (Richman, 1993). Kind (1980) purported that teaching students with songs they are familiar with lowers their anxiety over learning a new language and increases students’ language learning efficiency. Teaching with songs enriches students’ vocabulary,
corrects their pronunciation, raises their cultural awareness and helps memory retention (Hua, 2015; Salcedo, 2002). In this research, although students in Australia are not familiar with Chinese songs, many Chinese songs for children have the same melody as English songs and they will be adopted for teaching.

2.3.2 Multimodal teaching approach in TCFL

This part introduces research that uses multimodal teaching approaches in TCFL and their conclusion provide some suggestions for using multimodal pedagogy.

As a new teaching method, multimodal pedagogy has attracted many researchers’ interests in recent years. Broadly, these research studies can be divided into two types. The first type concentrates on how to use a multimodal teaching method in TCFL (Huang & Huang, 2012; Si, 2013; Zhang, 2013). The second type focuses on the effectiveness of using this pedagogy for different language skills, such as speaking, listening and vocabulary memorisation (Hua, 2015; Zhao, 2017; Zhu, Fung, & Wang, 2012).

Zhang (2013) discusses the advantages of using a multimodal teaching method in TCFL and offers some suggestions for teachers who want to use this pedagogy. She points out that teachers should have the ability to use different multimedia so they can have more choices of modes to present teaching content. Huang and Huang (2012) observed a class in which the teacher used a multimodal approach to teach international children Chinese. They noticed that the teacher chose modes according to their students’ interest, so they claimed that students’ interest and preference should be considered for modes selection.

Zhu et al. (2012) examined the effects of pronunciation and stroke order animation in digital flashcards on memorising the forms, learning pinyin (the system for transliterating Chinese ideograms into the Roman alphabet) and learning definitions of new Chinese words. This research included both visual and oral modes of teaching. The results showed that the pronunciation in digital flashcards helps students memorise pinyin, but there was no significant effect on memorising
the forms and definitions of the new vocabulary. Stroke order animation (as shown on video) had a statistically negative effect on students’ memorisation of Chinese vocabulary in general. Hua (2015) used Chinese songs in TCFL and found this mode in Chinese class can help students’ text recall and improve their interest in learning Chinese. Zhao (2017) compared the multimodal approach with a monomodal approach in a listening class and found that students who learned through a multimodal approach performed better in listening tests. The interviews with students suggested that the multimodal approach lowered the difficulty of understanding listening materials and made the class environment more active.

Although multimodal approaches in TCFL have involved many aspects of language learning, there are still some flaws. The selections of modes given by researchers are very general, and they are not generated from practical teaching experience (Huang & Huang, 2012). Also, the effectiveness of a multimodal approach is mainly observed on listening and other skills rather than on vocabulary (Hua, 2015; Zhao, 2017). Although the effectiveness of using some modes in vocabulary teaching is proven, researchers have not provided detailed descriptions of how to use them for effective teaching. Thus, there is a gap in the research on the application of a multimodal approach in Chinese vocabulary teaching. As action research into using a multimodal approach for teaching Chinese vocabulary, the suggestions for mode selection and method of using different modes in the current study arise from the teacher-researcher’s own teaching experience.
Chapter 3 – Methodology

This study is designed as action research. This chapter briefly introduces action research and details its process in the current research project. It outlines the methods of data collection and data analysis employed and reviews the principles that guide this research procedure.

3.1 Action Research

3.1.1 Definition of action research

Over the last decade, action research has begun to capture the attention of teachers, administrators and policymakers around the world (Mills, 2014). The term ‘action research’ was first used by Lewin, who applied action research in behavioural science to solve sociological problems (Lesha, 2014). The use of action research in educational research was not widespread until the 1990s (Tomal, 2010).

Action research is a systematic approach undertaken by practitioners. Researchers use this method to improve practices, solve practical problems and formulate their own understanding or theory of an issue (Lesha, 2014; McNiff & Whitehead, 2005; Tomal, 2010).

Action research has many models, and there are few differences in their structures. Kemmis, McTaggart and colleagues (1988) introduced Lewin’s action research model as spiral cycles, which each contain four steps: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. In this model, planning means choosing the topic and formulating the schedule of a research; acting is taking actions with participants; data collection occurs in the observation phase; and reflection refers to data analysis and report preparation. Mertler (2014) describes different models of action research and posits his own model, which includes planning, acting, developing and reflecting. His model is different from Lewin’s in the acting and developing stage. For Mertler (2014), acting means data collection and analysis and developing
means ‘taking the results of your data analysis, your interpretations of those results to draw the final conclusion’. However, regardless of the model, action research incorporates four parts—research planning, taking action, data collection and reflection—which formulate a spiral cycle. Action research contains at least two cycles, whereby the later cycle is usually an adjustment based on the consequences of the first cycle.

Action research in education can be categorised in different ways. First, according to its contribution; that is, it can be divided into practical action research and participatory action research. Lesha (2014) suggests practical action research contributes to education practice through the study of a local problem, while participatory action research is usually implemented on a larger scale to improve the quality of people’s organisation, communities and family lives. Second, action research can be divided according to the scale of the research; that is, individual action research, collaborative action research and district-wide action research. Individual action research focuses on single classroom issues, collaborative action research operates in several classes with a common issue, and district-wide action research focuses on district issues or organisational structures (Ferrance, 2000). Third, there are different needs for using action research in education. Tomal (2010) presents four different types of issues: student-centred issues, teacher-classroom issues, school-centred issues and instructional development issues. These needs and issues also serve as standards for dividing action research.

According to the categories noted above, this research is practical action research that contributes to students’ Chinese vocabulary learning by using a multimodal teaching method. It is a collaborative action research aimed at solving student-centred issues. This research aims to improve Australian students’ Chinese vocabulary learning effectiveness by applying multimodal teaching methods in several lessons. The researcher, mentor and class teachers are expected to also contribute to this research project through conversation and formal and informal feedback in response to classroom activities.
### 3.1.2 Advantages of conducting action research

Action research is suitable for this research because of its flexible structure and because it benefits different stakeholders: the researcher and students. Action research can start whenever the researcher is ready, be implemented wherever the researcher requires, and provide immediate results (Mertler, 2011). The current study aims to use a multimodal teaching method to contribute to teaching Chinese vocabulary in a western Sydney primary school. However, as the researcher is a Chinese teacher without teaching experience, the reflective spiral cycle will help the researcher have a better understanding of the multimodal teaching method through practice and reflection. Thus, this flexible and practical structure will be used in this research.

Lesha (2014) suggests that action research helps teachers’ and educators’ self-development because they are required to become highly involved in the research. Their skills in thinking, communicating and problem-solving can be improved, and they can become open to new ideas and more willing to collaborate with others to make progress. In turn, they may also become more confident about what they believe about education (Lesha, 2014; McAteer, 2013; Mertler, 2014; Parsons & Brown, 2002). Thus, through action research, the researcher can expect to develop a better understanding of multimodal teaching methods and also improve her confidence and socialising skills. Kemmis (1988) indicates that action research can help students improve their academic achievement because they receive more effective teaching and administration. In this research, the teacher will use a multimodal teaching method that may help students’ Chinese vocabulary learning. Educational theory can become more practical through action research (Mertler, 2014). Through this research, the theory of a multimodal teaching approach is implemented in the complicated psycho-sociological climate of ongoing school activities, and can be adjusted and complemented for better practice.
3.2 Research Design

This section introduces the participants, the research site, research circles, data collection methods and the approach to data analysis. The research lasts eighteen months and the timeline of this research have been provided in appendices (see appendix D)

3.2.1 Participants

The participants include the teacher-researcher, students from two Stage 2 classes and their classroom teachers in Chinese classes at ‘Xunlu’ Primary School (Xunlu is a pseudonym). Students in this research study are in two Year 4 classes in Xunlu Primary School, classes 4A and 4B, totalling 30–40 students. Participants of this research were all born and grew up in Australia. Although they have been taught Chinese previously, all students knew only a few Chinese words and have not learned Chinese systematically. A simple survey about Chinese level has been done by the teacher researcher with these participants and all of them had a similar level of Chinese language and Chinese culture. Students have been provided with pseudonyms to protect their anonymity and data provided by them will remain confidential. Their real names were replaced with the first or first two letters of their real names.

Two classroom teachers from these classes were also participants of this research. Both have at least five years’ teaching experience, and as they are experienced in mode selection, interviews with them about mode selection will be important data for this research. Moreover, as these two teachers stayed throughout the Chinese class to observe the class and assist the teacher-researcher, their comments and observations about multimodal teaching methods are valuable.

The teacher-researcher is also a participant of this research. As she implemented the research and conducted the lessons, her reflections on teaching are also a valuable resource for this research.
3.2.2 Site selection

This research was carried out at Xunlu Primary School in western Sydney, which has been a member of the Chinese literacy program run by the NSW government for four years. The teacher-researcher has written a letter (see appendix C) to the Principal of this school and have got permission to conduct the research in Xunlu Primary School. The school has around 600 students. Generally, each student at this school would have one-term Chinese lesson per year, and there is a Chinese extension class in which students have learnt Chinese for three consecutive years. There is no experienced Chinese teacher, and the teacher-researcher from the ROSETE program is the only Chinese teacher in this school. The teacher-researcher is not an experienced teacher, so she does not take full responsibility for teaching. The classroom teacher stays in the classroom as an assistant and observer during the Chinese class.

3.2.3 Cycles

The researcher taught Chinese in Xunlu Primary School with a multimodal teaching method for four terms. The study comprised two research cycles. Each cycle lasted for eight lessons, which was effectively one school term (there were 10 Chinese lessons per term, but the first and last lessons were not used for data collection to ensure the validity of the data). Cycle one is Term 2, and cycle two is Term 3. In the first cycle, the researcher used different mode combinations to teach students Chinese words. These modes were a visual-based method, audio-based method, linguistic-based method and gestural-based method. Each method contained two lessons: the first was used to teach new vocabulary, and the other to review and let students finish the Vocabulary Knowledge Scales (VKS). Each cycle contained four steps—planning, acting, observation and reflection—to see what modes or mode combinations were better for teaching Chinese vocabulary. The effects of using these methods were analysed through observations by two classroom teachers, students’ VKS scores and the teacher-researcher’s reflections.
During the second cycle, the multimodal methods were edited and improved, then implemented again in Class 4B to observe the effects.

### 3.3 Data Collection

Data collection is the basis of a research project, and there are many ways to collect data in qualitative research. Creswell (2009) describes four methods of data collection: observations, interviews, studies of documents and studies of audio-visual materials. In this research, interviews, observations and documents are used to collect data.

#### 3.3.1 Interview

In an action research project, interviews are always regarded as the main way to collect data because they can help both the researcher and other participants get inside the story (McAteer, 2013). According to their structure, interviews can be divided into three types: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews (Gill, Stewart, & Chadwick, 2008). According to their form, interviews can be divided into four types: face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, focus groups and email/online interviews (Creswell, 2013). McAteer (2013) suggests some key points to consider when designing and preparing an interview:

- selection of interview participants
- location and time of the interview
- relationship between interviewer and interviewee
- ensuring encouragement during the interview without asking leading questions
- capturing the content of the interview.

This qualitative research project used interviews with the classroom teacher and student participants, which took place at the school. The teacher-researcher was the students’ Chinese teacher and the classroom teacher’s colleague. During the interviews, all questions were open questions and focused on the research topic.
This research used semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is one that has both structured questions and flexibility for creating new questions during the interview (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, Dicenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state that some of the advantages of semi-structured interviews are that they generate greater depth than structured interviews and consume less time than unstructured interviews. They also increase interactions and draw responses that are more personalised than structured interviews (Xerri, 2018). Therefore, this research adopted semi-structured interviews because of their flexibility and because they allow the researcher to create new questions during the interview, which helped the researcher delve deeper into certain aspects.

3.3.1.1 Interview of classroom teachers

Two classroom teachers assisted the teacher-researcher in introducing vocabulary, so their suggestions and opinions were important to this research. As noted in Section 3.2.1, both have at least five years’ teaching experience, so their methods of selecting and using different modes of teaching were regarded as data.

Two classroom teachers were interviewed separately in face-to-face, semi-structured interviews that mainly focused on mode selection and strategies. Each interview on mode selection took place at the beginning of the research and lasted approximately 30 minutes. Interviews about modes were conducted after every two Chinese classes and lasted about 15 minutes. Thus, each teacher was interviewed every two weeks, and each attended four interviews. Samples of the two classroom teachers’ interviews are provided in Appendix E, which is designed by the teacher researcher herself.

3.3.1.2 Focus groups of students

Students from classes 4A and 4B were the main participants in this research and their opinions and feedback on teaching methods were vital data for this project. Students’ views were collected through focus groups. At the end of each cycle, 5–8 students from classes 4A and 4B whose parents had given permission, were invited according to their willingness to attend a focus group to answer some
questions. The questions centred on their attitudes towards different mode combinations and suggestions for using different modes combinations. The focus groups lasted about 30 minutes; a sample of questions asked in the focus groups with students is provided in Appendix F, which is designed by the teacher researcher herself.

The focus group format is suitable for this study because it is more suitable for young participants and it allows students get involved in the research. Burns (2010) observes that the advantages of focus groups include taking the individual spotlight away from one speaker who may get nervous or anxious about being interviewed, and allowing ideas and thoughts to be triggered by what others in the group say. Thus, the adoption of a focus group format for interviewing students is appropriate because the participants of this research are young and may find it difficult to articulate their opinions about teaching suggestions alone, and they may also be too nervous or anxious when they are interviewed alone. The presence of friends in the student focus groups may assist to generate reliable feedback.

3.3.2 Observation

Observation is another important method for gathering information in qualitative research. Through observation, researchers can collect some information about the physical environment and human behaviours that participants may not want to discuss, and the information can then be directly recorded without the accounts of others (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). Also, the reliability of research results can be increased by using observation to supplement information obtained from other resources (Creswell, 2013).

In this research, a semi-structured observation sheet designed by the researcher was provided to the two classroom teachers. It included some key phrases that focus on teaching effectiveness to remind them what to observe. Combining observation with feedback of students’ VKS improves the reliability of a study on the effects of using a multimodal approach in teaching Chinese vocabulary. A sample of the observation sheet is provided in Appendix I.
3.3.3 Documents

Documents are also valuable data resources, as they can enable a researcher to develop insight into the language and words of participants (Creswell, 2009). In this research, the documents utilised include the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal and lesson plans and students’ assignments, which include their VKS, drawing and writing done in class.

3.3.3.1 Reflection journal

A reflection journal can be a useful research tool, which Elliot (2013) suggests keeping on a continuous basis during an action research project. By using a reflection journal, the teacher-researcher can keep narrative accounts of their professional reflection on their professional practice (McAteer, 2013). This process also provides the researcher with an opportunity to understand herself as a teacher, and helps her improve her work as a teacher (Cole & Knowles, 2000).

Many things can be written in a reflection journal. Kemmis et al. (1988) notes that a reflection journal should ‘contain personal accounts of observation, feelings, reactions, interpretations, reflections, hunches, hypotheses, and explanations’. In addition to these aspects, anecdotes, near-verbatim accounts of conversations and circumstances can also be included in a reflection journal (Elliot, 2013).

During this research project, entries into the reflective journal were written after each Chinese lesson. The entries mainly consisted of observations and reflections. With observations, the researcher noted participants’ feedback, particularly regarding the effectiveness of the pedagogy in use and students’ reactions towards this teaching approach. With reflections, the teacher-researcher focused on her design of mode selection. Her interpretations of and reflection on the situations she observed in the class were part of the reflection, which engaged her past knowledge, personal experience and educational knowledge to contribute to planning the next cycle.

3.3.3.2 Students’ Vocabulary Knowledge Scales

Developed by Wesche and Paribakht (1996), VKS are considered an effective
way of showing students’ understanding of vocabulary they have learned (Rosszell, 2008). Figure 3.1 is a sample VKS.

1. I don’t remember having seen this word before.
2. I have seen this word before, but I don’t think I know what it means.
3. I have seen this word before, and I think it means____________ [synonym or translation]
4. I know this word. It means____________ [synonym or translation]
5. I can use this word in a sentence.

Figure 3.1 Sample VKS (adapted from Wesche & Paribakht, 1996)

VKS is suitable for this research because it shows both students’ receptive knowledge and their ability to use some specific vocabulary (Tan, Pandian, & Jaganathan, 2016). In Chinese vocabulary lessons in Australian primary schools, students generally learn about seven words in one class, so the understanding of each word can be shown through VKS. As it can be used to assess the vocabulary of any language (Wesche & Paribakht, 1996), VKS is suitable for use in this research because it shows students’ understanding of Chinese vocabulary. The reliability of VKS has been affirmed by many researchers (Rosszell, 2008; Tan et al., 2016; Wesche & Paribakht, 1996) and a sample of VKS for students is provided in Appendix G.

3.3.3.3 Other documents

In addition to the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal and students’ feedback on the VKS, other documents such as students’ drawings and writing in class and the teacher-researcher’s lesson plan (see Appendix H) were collected as data. Students’ work in class partly reflects their learning effectiveness, and the teacher-researcher’s lesson plan shows the thoughts behind selecting modes and using mode combinations.
3.4 Data Analysis

Analysing qualitative data is an inductive process. The researcher needs to develop general conclusions and theories from specific data collected through the research (Mertler, 2014). Parsons and Brown (2002) divide this process into three steps: organisation, description and interpretation.

In the organisation stage, a coding scheme or organisation system is developed to sort the raw data into groups of data that have similar characteristics (Parsons & Brown, 2002). Creswell (2013) states that coding is a theoretical system and there are different types of codes, but in social sciences, codes are usually those words or phrases that appear in the data that represent specific events or observations. As for the method of coding, different researchers have different ways and one popular way is to use markers to highlight the raw data, whereby data highlighted with same colour comprise a group (Parsons & Brown, 2002). In this research project, codes such as ‘students’ interests’ were generated from the data and the researcher coded the transcripts with different coloured markers.

Description means concluding the data of different categories and generating their descriptors for their main features or characteristics (Parsons & Brown, 2002). During this step, the researcher tends to connect groups of data with research questions; however, not only those categories of data that meet the researcher’s hypothesis were noticed, as data that conflicts with the trends should also attract attention (Mertler, 2014).

Interpretation means answering the research question and providing challenges or guides for future research according to the coded data (Parsons & Brown, 2002). The researcher should be objective and open-minded in this progress (Schwalbach, 2003). Concrete transcripts or examples should accompany the interpretation offered to ensure objectiveness (Parsons & Brown, 2002). In this research, all interpretation was based on the given transcripts.
3.5 Research Principles

3.5.1 Ethical consideration

Ethical issues are very important for every research project, and they exist in all stages of the research: the research problem, research purpose and questions, data collection, data analysis and writing up the research (Creswell, 2013). This research will clarify its ethical consideration at each stage.

During the identification of the research problem, the researcher should consider if the research will benefit participants as well as the researcher, and whether it will harm or marginalise the participants (Punch, 2005). The problem that is central to this research is the ineffectiveness of Chinese vocabulary teaching in Australia. The main participants in the research are Australian students and two classroom teachers. Identifying this problem will not marginalise the participants; rather, the students will directly benefit from the research through the possibility of improved teaching effectiveness. Of more significance are interactions with participants during the research.

The purpose of this research—which is to improve Chinese vocabulary teaching in Australia through using multimodal methods—will be explained to all participants when the research starts.

During the data collection stage, many ethical issues may arise, so researchers need to design an informed consent form for participants before they attend the research (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009, p. 89) offers ten points to incorporate into the informed consent design:

- identification of the researcher
- identification of the sponsoring institution
- identification of how the participants were selected
- identification of the purpose of the research
- identification of the benefits of participating
- identification of the level and type of participant involvement
- notion of risks to the participant
• guarantee of confidentiality to the participant
• assurance that the participant can withdraw at any time
• provision of names of persons to contact if questions arise.

The teacher-researcher of this proposal graduated from Ningbo University and is now a graduate student of Western Sydney University (WSU). WSU sponsor the research. Before starting this research, the research proposal has got ethical approval from WSU and NSW (see appendix A and Appendix B). Also, before attending this research, all participants were provided with information sheet and consent form of this research (see appendix K to N). All personal information, including participants’ names and the name of the school, is anonymous. Participants in this research could withdraw at any time, and they were provided with the researcher’s email address in case questions arose.

In the data analysis stage, ethical issues include the anonymity of individuals, roles and incidents in the project, the time period data is kept, ownership of the data and the accuracy of data (Creswell, 2009). In this research, all the personal and identifying information about participants and incidents was anonymous. Pseudonyms were used for the participants and the research site. Different resources and strategies were used to check the accuracy of the data. The data sources were from observations, interviews, documents and reflection journals provided by students, classroom teachers and the teacher-researcher.

3.5.2 Triangulation

Patton (1999) affirms that triangulation refers to adopting different methods and data resources to help understand phenomena in research. There are four types of triangulation: method triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and data source triangulation (Carter et al., 2014; Denzin, 2017; Patton, 1999). Triangulation is very important in a research study because it demonstrates the reliability of the research (Creswell, 2009). The current study utilises method triangulation and data source triangulation.

Multiple methods of data collection used in the same phenomenon is called
method triangulation (Carter et al., 2014). In this research, the vocabulary learning effectiveness of students was analysed through the researcher’ and classroom teachers’ observations, and VKS scores were adopted to assess students’ learning effectiveness. The suggestions for selecting modes were generated through interviews with classroom teachers, focus groups with students and the researcher’s own reflection journal. The strategies for using multimodal methods were generated through the researcher’s reflection journal, students’ focus groups and classroom teacher interviews.

Collecting data from different types of people is called data source triangulation (Carter et al., 2014). This research collected data from three types of people: students of an Australian primary school, two classroom teachers and the Chinese teacher-researcher.

3.5.3 Generalisability

Polit and Beck (2010) posit that ‘generalization is an act of reasoning that involves drawing broad conclusions from particular instances—that is, making an inference about the unobserved based on the observed’. Qualitative research is often considered to lack generalisability because it ‘lies in the particular description and themes developed in context of a specific site’ (Creswell, 2009). Transferability is defined as adapting some results that have been found in other research (Smith, 2018). Transferability can be still realised in qualitative research. This research is qualitative research that will use a multimodal teaching method for Chinese vocabulary teaching in an Australian primary school. The participants of this research are some Stage 2 and Stage 3 students who have limited understanding of Chinese, two classroom teachers and one inexperienced Chinese teacher. The results of this research may contribute to the development of a multimodal teaching theory, so other Chinese teachers who may want to use a multimodal teaching method may also benefit from this research.
Chapter 4 – Multimodal Design of Lesson Plans

This chapter aims to answer the question: What were the factors that needed to be considered in designing multimodal lessons in teaching Chinese vocabulary at a Western Sydney primary school? The discussion is based on the analysis of the teacher-researcher’s lesson plan and reflection journal, classroom teachers’ observations, and feedback from student focus groups. The chapter begins with the lesson plans, which provide details of the teacher-researcher’s process of designing multimodal activities, and then the modes used, which are usually concluded from multimodal activities. Next, the three factors that influence mode selection—the teaching content, students, and the teacher-researcher—are discussed, and the principles of using certain modes explored.

4.1 Multimodal Activities in this Research

Five topics were taught with a multimodal teaching approach in this research: family members, possessive pronouns, numbers over 10, school items and body parts. Different modes were integrated and formed into different multimodal activities. This section primarily introduces different multimodal activities and states which modes were used in this research.

4.1.1 Family members

In this unit, four multimodal activities were used to teach words of family members: ‘observe and guess’, ‘observe and read’, ‘family tree’ and ‘trace with animation’. Six words were taught: 爸爸 [bà ba, Dad], 妈妈 [mā ma, Mum], 哥哥 [gē ge, Big brother], 姐姐 [jiě jie, Big sister], 弟弟 [dì di, Little brother], 妹妹 [mèi mèi, Little sister]. Table 4.1 outlines the lesson plan for teaching family members.
### Table 4.1 Lesson plan of family member

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: Family members</th>
<th>Time: 30 mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior Learning – Before starting this activity, students should be able to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to call and write family members in English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson Objectives:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn the meaning, pronunciation and writing of six words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to call and write family members in Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key vocabulary:</strong></td>
<td>Analysis of teaching contents: All six words about how to call family members are taught in this lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>爸爸 [bà ba, Dad] 妈妈 [mā ma, Mum]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>哥哥 [gē ge, Big brother] 姐姐 [jiě jie, Big sister] 弟弟 [dì di, Little brother]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>妹妹 [mèi mèi, Little sister]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Students learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audial mode</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher’s oral language</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 mins</strong></td>
<td>Greeting and introduction of today’s learning contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 mins</strong></td>
<td>Observe and guess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Present some pictures related to the meaning of vocabulary being taught and the characters of vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Leave some time for students to discuss the meaning of vocabulary being taught.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Invite students to give their understanding in English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 mins</strong></td>
<td>Observe and read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Look at the pictures of family members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Read vocabulary with the teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8 mins</strong></td>
<td>Family tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Match the family portraits with the vocabulary in text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Invite students to introduce their family map in front of the class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: The teacher raises questions according to the introduction the students and let other students answer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10 mins</strong></td>
<td>Trace with animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Present the tracing animation on the whiteboard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Give out Chinese writing paper to students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Let students observe and trace with the animation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Audial mode:** Teacher’s oral language

| 3 mins | Review and conclude what were learned today and introduce family members in pairs |

**Audial mode:** Teacher’s oral language

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**Figure 4.1** PowerPoint slide: Family members

**Figure 4.2** Worksheet for family tree
Activity 1: Observe and guess

‘Observe and guess’ was the first activity designed by the teacher-researcher according to her understanding of a multimodal teaching approach to teach students vocabulary of family members. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 1 of the first cycle (8 May 2019).

The activity design (see Table 4.1) and the PowerPoint slides (see Figure 4.1) indicated how different modes were integrated in this activity to help students learn the vocabulary of family members. The main modes involved in this activity were visual modes (pictures and written language) and audial modes (the teacher-researcher’s oral language). The teacher-researcher’s family photo (visual mode) led students into this topic, which was followed with the characters (visual mode) of vocabulary 爸爸 [bà ba, Dad], 妈妈 [mā ma, Mum]. At the same time, students listened to the explanation of the teacher-researcher (audial mode). The cartoon image of another family (visual mode), which was accompanied with characters (visual mode) of vocabulary 爸爸 [bà ba, Dad], 妈妈 [mā ma, Mum], 哥哥 [gē ge, Big brother], 姐姐 [jiě jie, Big sister], 弟弟 [dì di, Little brother], 妹妹 [mèi mèi, Little sister], was presented to help students learn these words. Students made a link between the visual and audial modes through their visual and audial senses.

Activity 2: Observe and read
‘Observe and read’ was the second activity designed by the teacher-researcher according to her understanding of a multimodal teaching approach to teach students vocabulary of family members. The teacher-researcher also conducted this activity in Week 1 of the first cycle (8 May, 2019).

The activity design (see Table 4.1) indicated how different modes were integrated in this activity to help students learn the vocabulary of family members. The main modes in this activity were visual modes (pictures of family members) and audial modes (the teacher-researcher’s guidance). Students observed the pictures of family members (visual mode) and listened to the teacher-researcher (audial mode), and then read with her. Visual and audial modes integrated to help students understand the meaning and pronunciation of the learning vocabulary.

**Activity 3: Family tree**

‘Family tree’ was the third activity designed by the teacher-researcher according to her understanding of a multimodal teaching approach to teach students vocabulary of family members. Again, the teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 1 of the first cycle (8 May, 2019).

The design of the activity (see Table 4.1) and the worksheet design (see Figure 4.2) showed how different modes cooperated to help students’ vocabulary meaning and pronunciation. Students matched the portraits (visual mode) with the texts in the first step. Then, in the second and third steps, students observed the family map (visual mode), listened to the introduction of a certain student (audial mode) and answered the question (audial mode) raised by the teacher-researcher. Students interacted with visual and audial modes to learn the meaning and pronunciation of vocabulary.

**Activity 4: Trace with animation**

‘Trace with animation’ was the fourth multimodal activity designed by the teacher-researcher according to her understanding of a multimodal teaching approach to teach students vocabulary of family members. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 2 of the first cycle (15 May, 2019).
The activity design (see Table 4.1) and the sample animation (see Figure 4.3) indicated how different modes were integrated in this activity. First, students observed the animation, which was a short video about how to write a Chinese vocabulary that concluded with an image of the vocabulary (visual mode) and pronunciation (audial mode) of the vocabulary. Next, students wrote (action mode) the vocabulary on the paper under the teacher-researcher’s guidance (audial mode). Visual, audial and action modes linked together to help students write words.

4.1.2 Possessive pronouns

In this unit, three multimodal activities—‘catch what you hear’, ‘listen and recognise words’ and ‘listen and fill the lyrics’—were designed for students to learn words of possessive pronouns, with the aim to improve students’ vocabulary learning. Four words were taught: 我的 [wǒ de, my/mine,], 你的 [nǐ de, your/yours], 她的[tā de, her/hers], 他的[tā de, his/his]. The teacher-researcher linked students’ prior knowledge of vocabulary of family members with the Chinese pronouns to learn these four new words. Table 4.2 is the lesson plan for possessive pronouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: Possessive pronouns</th>
<th>Time: 30 mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior Learning – Before starting this activity, students should be able to: Know how to say 我[wǒ, I/me]; 你[nǐ, you/you]; 他[tā, he/him]; 她[tā, she/her] in Chinese (Students have learnt these words in term 1 and this lesson is a build-up).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Objectives: Learn the meaning, pronunciation and writing of four words Try to link possessive pronouns with family members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key vocabulary: 我的[wǒ de, my/mine]; 你的[nǐ de, your/yours]; 她的[tā de, her/hers]; 他的[tā de, his/his] Analysis of teaching contents: All four words of possessive pronouns are taught in this lesson.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources/Equipment: Whiteboard, Smartboard, computer, flashcards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Lesson plan for possessive pronouns
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 mins</td>
<td>Greeting and introduction of today’s learning contents</td>
<td>Language mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 mins</td>
<td>Review four pronouns of Chinese</td>
<td>Visual mode:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1: Present some pictures related to the meaning of vocabulary being taught and the characters</td>
<td>images and written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of vocabulary.</td>
<td>language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 2: Read these words with the teacher and do the certain gestures</td>
<td>Audial mode:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(point self when read 我[wǒ, I/me]; point the teacher when read 你[nǐ, you/you]; point a female</td>
<td>teacher’s oral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>classmate when read 她[tā, she/her]; point a male classmate when read 他[tā, he/him])</td>
<td>language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual mode:</td>
<td>Gestural mode:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>images and written language</td>
<td>Gestures of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audial mode:</td>
<td>pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 mins</td>
<td>Catch what you hear</td>
<td>Visual mode:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1: The teacher prepares cards with vocabulary that students will learn.</td>
<td>images and written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 2: Divide students into groups of four;</td>
<td>language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 3: The teacher speaks out the word;</td>
<td>Audial mode:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 4: Students work as a group, catch and raise the vocabulary cards when they hear the word</td>
<td>teacher’s oral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 5: Compose a sentence with vocabulary cards and read it.</td>
<td>language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 mins</td>
<td>Listen and recognise words</td>
<td>Audial mode:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1: listen to the song <em>Chinese possessive pronouns</em> and recognise possessive pronouns from the</td>
<td>teacher’s oral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>song by raising cards.</td>
<td>language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 2: listen to one sentence of the song <em>Backpack</em> and recognise possessive pronouns from the song</td>
<td>songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 3: listen to some sentences of the song <em>My baby</em> and recognise possessive pronouns from the song</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 4: Students sing the song with the video.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 mins</td>
<td>Listen and fill the lyrics</td>
<td>Audial mode:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1: Choose the lyrics of a song and make it into a word file</td>
<td>The song “Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 2: Delete the vocabulary being taught and make it into a worksheet</td>
<td>possessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 3: Give out the worksheet and let students fill in the blanks while listening to the song</td>
<td>pronouns”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Chinese possessive pronouns.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 1: Catch what you hear

‘Catch what you hear’ was the first audial-based activity designed by the teacher-researcher to help students learn words of possessive pronouns. The activity was conducted in Week 3 of the first cycle (22 May, 2019). This activity was to improve students’ pronunciation and meaning of these words.

The design of the activity (see Table 4.2) and the vocabulary cards (see Figure 4.4) showed how different modes cooperated to help students’ vocabulary learning. The main modes involved in this activity were visual (vocabulary cards), audial (songs) and gestural (looking for cards) modes. Students were triggered by the teacher-researcher’ instruction (audial mode) to look for cards of certain words.
(visual and gestural mode). Finally, students composed a sentence with the vocabulary cards (visual mode) and read it.

**Activity 2: Listen and recognise words**

‘Listen and recognise words’ was the second audial-based activity designed by the teacher-researcher according to her understanding of a multimodal teaching approach to teach students words of possessive pronouns. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 3 of the first cycle (22 May, 2019).

The design of the activity (see Figure 4.2) indicated how different modes were integrated to help students’ vocabulary pronunciation. Students listened to a song (audial mode) while looking at the images on the Smartboard (visual mode) to recognise the taught words. Then, students looked for the heard words among their cards (visual mode) and raised the card to show the teacher their understanding. Finally, students watched the images (visual mode) and sang with the song (audial mode).

**Activity 3: Listen and fill the lyrics**

‘Listen and fill the lyrics’ was the third audial-based activity designed by the teacher-researcher according to her understanding of a multimodal teaching approach to teach students words of possessive pronouns. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 4 of the first cycle (29 May, 2019).

The design of this activity (see Table 4.2) and the worksheet (see Figure 4.5) showed how different modes were integrated to help students’ vocabulary learning. Visual and audial modes were involved in this activity. Students listened to the song (audial mode) and dictated the word according to the hint provided by the song and worksheet lyrics (visual mode).

**4.1.3 Numbers over ten**

In this unit, three multimodal activities were designed for students to learn words of numbers: ‘gesture the words’, ‘tone dancing’ and ‘transfer the word with your body’. Numbers from zero to 10 were reviewed, and new numbers from 11 to 20 were taught. Table 4.3 outlines the lesson plan.
### Table 4.3 Lesson plan for numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: Numbers from 11 to 20 mins</th>
<th>Time: 30 mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior Learning</strong> – Before starting this activity, students should be able to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to count from zero to 10 in Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson Objectives:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn the meaning, pronunciation and writing of words from 11 to 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know the expression of Chinese number gestures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key vocabulary:</strong></td>
<td>Analysis of teaching contents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>十一[eleven]; 十二[twelve]; 十三[thirteen]; 十四[fourteen]; 十五[fifteen]; 十六[sixteen]; 十七[seventeen]; 十八[eighteen]; 十九[nineteen]; 二十[twenty]</td>
<td>10 words from 11 to 20 are taught in this lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources/Equipment:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard, Smartboard, computer, flashcards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time guide</strong></td>
<td><strong>Students learning activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 mins</td>
<td>Greeting and introduction of today’s learning contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 mins</td>
<td>Review numbers from zero to ten with Australia way of expressing numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1: Listen to the Chinese number song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 2: Ask students how they express numbers from zero to ten with hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 3: Count numbers from zero to 10 with hand in Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audial mode: Number song teacher’s oral language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td>Gesture the words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1: The teacher introduced specific actions of learning words and performs these words together for several times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 2: The teacher invites a student stand in front of the classroom and face to his classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 3: The student who has been invited performs a number and let the remainder guess the word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual mode: written language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audial mode: teacher’s oral language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students’ oral language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Tone dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1: The teacher presented four tones on the whiteboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 2: Introduce four tones with body movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>images of four Chinese tones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(First tone: open arms horizontally; Second tone: Raise one arm in a slanting position; Third tone: Draw a “V” with body movement; Forth tone: foot stepping)

Step 3: The teacher invites individual student to read the word according to the left students’ performance of the tones of a word

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 mins</td>
<td>Transfer the word with your body</td>
<td>Visual mode: Writing animation Gestural mode Transfer words by writing on another student’s palm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1: Group students of five</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 2: Let the first student to observe the words animation and write it on next students’ hand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 3: The following students transfer the vocabulary by observing prior students’ writing and the last student need to write the vocabulary on the whiteboard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 mins</td>
<td>Review and conclude what we learned today and count from zero to 20.</td>
<td>Audial mode Teacher’s and students’ oral language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity 1: Gesture the words**

‘Gesture the words’ was the first multimodal activity designed by the teacher-researcher to help students learn words of numbers from 11 to 20. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 5 of the first cycle (5 June, 2019).

The design of the activity (see Table 4.3) and the PowerPoint of number action (see Figure 4.6) showed how different modes were combined to help students understand numbers. The main modes involved in this activity were gestural, visual and audial modes. Students acted the number (gestural mode) after observing

![Chinese gestures for numbers](image)
modelling by the teacher-researcher and the gesture pictures (visual mode). Then, students pronounced numbers by looking at the number gestures of a student (visual mode). Finally, students listened to and imitated the teacher-researcher’s modelling pronunciation (audial mode).

**Activity 2: Tone dancing**

‘Tone dancing’ was the second multimodal activity designed by the teacher-researcher to help students learn words of numbers from 11 to 20, which was conducted in Week 5 of the first cycle (5 June, 2019).

The design of this activity (see Table 4.3) indicated how different modes were integrated to help students to learn words of numbers. The main modes involved in this activity were visual, action and audial modes. First, students observed images of tones and writing vocabulary (visual modes). Then, they described the tone with a body movement (gestural mode) while pronouncing the vocabulary. Finally, one student was invited to pronounce a vocabulary according to a body movement (gestural mode) of the other students.

**Activity 3: Transfer the word with your body**

‘Transfer the word with your body’ was the third multimodal activity designed by the teacher-researcher to help students learn words of numbers from 11 to 20. It was conducted in Week 6 of the first cycle (12 June, 2019).

The design of ‘transfer the word with your body’ (see Table 4.3) showed how gestural mode integrated with other modes for students’ vocabulary learning. The main modes involved in this activity were visual and action modes. Students observed the previous students’ writing or writing animation (visual modes) and used their hands to write the vocabulary (gestural mode) on the next student’s palm. The whole process operated under the control of the students’ actions.

**4.1.4 School items**

In this unit, four multimodal activities were designed for students to learn words of school items: ‘watch a video and discuss’, ‘show me the correct tones’, 
‘map locating’ and ‘introduce the map’. Six words were taught: 小学 [xiǎo xué, primary school], 教室 [jiào shì, classroom], 图书馆 [tú shū guǎn, library], 操场 [cāo chǎng, playground], 办公室 [bàn gōng shì, office], 学生 [xué shēng, student]. Table 4.4 outlines the lesson plan:

Table 4.4 Lesson plan for school items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: School items</th>
<th>Time: 30 mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior Learning – Before starting this activity, students should be able to:&lt;br&gt;Know how to read and write some school items in English&lt;br&gt;Understand similarity and difference between Chinese primary school and Australia school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Objectives:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn the meaning, pronunciation and writing of six words&lt;br&gt;Understand similarity and difference between Chinese primary school and Australia school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key vocabulary: &lt;br&gt;小学 [xiǎo xué, primary school], 教室 [jiào shì, classroom], 图书馆 [tú shū guǎn, library], 操场 [cāo chǎng, playground], 办公室 [bàn gōng shì, office], 学生 [xué shēng, student]</td>
<td>Analysis of teaching contents:&lt;br&gt;All six vocabulary about school items are taught in this lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources/Equipment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard, Smartboard, computer, flashcards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time guide</td>
<td>Students learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 mins</td>
<td>Greeting and introduction of today’s learning contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 mins</td>
<td>Watch a video and discuss&lt;br&gt;Step 1: The teacher searches a video introducing Chinese school that contains school items such as a playground&lt;br&gt;Step 2: Presents the picture of school items of Chinese primary school through whiteboard&lt;br&gt;Step 3: Let students discuss the similarity and difference between their own school and Chinese school.&lt;br&gt;Video source: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPGTYwdyL_Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPGTYwdyL_Y</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Show me correct tones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Vocabulary with picture, Pinyin and writing form were presented on the whiteboard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: The teacher prepares cards of four tones for each student and review four tones.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: The teacher points a word and let students show the tones of this word with tone cards on their hands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4: The teacher let students read the word with her several times.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map locating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Match the school map with certain school items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Invite students to introduce their school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: The teacher raises questions according to the introduction the students and let other students answer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce a map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Present the tracing animation on the whiteboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Give out Chinese writing paper to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Let students observe and trace with the animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4: Let students introduce their school map in Chinese in pairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audial mode: teacher’s oral language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual mode: The school map and written language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual mode:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 4.6 Tone cards for the lesson](image)
Activity 1: Watch the video and discuss

‘Watch the video and discuss’ was the first multimodal activity used to teach students words of school items. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 1 of the second cycle (31 July, 2019).

The design of this activity (see Table 4.4) showed how different modes were integrated to help students understand school in China. The main modes involved in this activity were visual and audial modes. Students watched a video introducing the daily life of a Chinese primary school (visual mode) and looked at some pictures of Chinese primary schools (visual mode). Then, they discussed the similarities and differences between Australian and Chinese schools (audial mode). The students were directly relating new words to their own experience.

Activity 2: Show me the correct tones

‘Show me the correct tones’ was the second multimodal activity used to teach
students words of school items. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 1 of the second cycle (31 July, 2019).

The design of the activity (see Table 4.4) and tone cards (see Figure 4.6) indicated how different modes were integrated to help students pronounce school items. The main modes involved in this activity were audial and visual modes. Students observed writing vocabulary (visual mode) and tone cards (visual mode). Then, they listened to the teacher-researcher’s modelling pronunciation (audial mode) of a certain word and raised tone cards of this word.

**Activity 3: Map locating**

‘Map locating’ was the third multimodal activity used to teach students words of school items. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 2 of the second cycle (7 August, 2019).

The design of the activity (see Table 4.4) and the worksheet (see Figure 4.7) indicated how different modes were integrated to help students with vocabulary meaning and pronunciation. The main modes involved in this activity were visual and modes. The students matched the school map (visual mode) with pictures of certain school items (visual mode). Then, they listened to one student’s introduction of the school map (audial mode) and answered the teacher-researcher’s questions in Chinese.

**Activity 4: Introduce the map**

‘Introduce the map’ was the fourth multimodal activity used to teach students words of school items. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 2 of the second cycle (7 August, 2019).

The design of the activity (see Table 4.4), the worksheet (see Figure 4.8) and the writing animation (see Figure 4.9) indicated how different modes were integrated to help students’ vocabulary writing and pronunciation. The main modes involved in this activity were visual and audial mode. The students traced the vocabulary with writing animation (visual mode), and then listened to the introduction (audial mode) of a peer student about their school.
4.1.5 Body parts

In this unit, four multimodal activities were designed for students to learn vocabulary of body parts, with the aim of improving students’ vocabulary learning: ‘listen and sing’, ‘listen and point’, ‘match the lyrics’ and ‘sing and dance’. Six words were taught: 头 [tóu head], 肩膀 [jiān bang shoulder], 膝盖 [xī gài knee], 脚 [jiǎo feet], 眼睛 [yǎn jīng eye], 耳朵 [ěr duo ear], 嘴 [zuǐ mouth], 鼻子 [bí zi nose]. Table 4.5 outlines the lesson plan:

Table 4.5 Lesson plan for body parts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: Body parts</th>
<th>Time: 30 mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior Learning – Before starting this activity, students should be able to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to how to sing the English song <em>Head, shoulders, knees and toes</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Objectives:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn the meaning, pronunciation of six words and learn writing of four words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing and perform the song <em>Head, shoulders, knees and toes</em> in Chinese with actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key vocabulary:</td>
<td>Analysis of teaching contents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>头[tóu head], 肩膀[jiān bang shoulder], 膝盖[xī gài knee], 脚[jiǎo feet], 眼睛[yǎn jīng eye], 耳朵[ěr duo ear], 嘴[zuǐ mouth], 鼻子[bí zi nose]</td>
<td>All six words about how to call body parts are taught in this lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource/equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard, Smartboard, computer, flashcards</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time guide</td>
<td>Students learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 mins</td>
<td>Greeting and introduction of today’s learning contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Listen and sing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1: The teacher prepares a song that is related to teaching contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 2: The teacher reads lyrics with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 3: Play the song and sing with students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 4: Let students sing by themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Listen and point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1: The teacher speaks the word;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 2: Students point to the body parts when they hear the word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 3: Practice for several times to get familiar with the activity, then have a competition who can react fastest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10 mins | Match the lyrics  
Step 1: Choose the lyrics of a song and make a word file  
Step 2: Delete the words that students have learned recently.  
Step 3: Provide writing sequence of deleted words at the beginning of the worksheet.  
Step 4: Give out the worksheet and let students match the deleted words with blanks while listening to the song. | Visual mode:  
Written language on the worksheet  
Audial mode:  
The body part song |
|---|---|---|
| 5 mins | Sing and dance  
Step 1: learn simple actions with the video  
Step 2: practice the song with gestures for several times | Gestural mode:  
Actions for body parts  
Audial mode:  
The body part song |
| 3 mins | Review and conclude what we learned today and sing the song together | Audial mode  
The body part song  
Visual mode:  
The gesture video |

Figure 4.9 PowerPoint slide of body parts

Figure 4.10 Worksheet for lyrics filling
Activity 1: Listen and sing

‘Listen and sing’ was the first multimodal activity designed by the teacher-researcher according to her understanding of a multimodal teaching approach to teach students words of body parts. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 3 of the second cycle (14 August, 2019).

The design of the activity (see Table 4.5) and the worksheet (see Figure 4.10) indicated how different modes were integrated to help students’ vocabulary writing and pronunciation. The main modes involved in this activity were visual and audial modes. Students listened to the song (audial mode) and watched the video (visual mode). Then, they looked at the PowerPoint slide (visual mode) and read the words with teacher.

Activity 2: Listen and point

‘Listen and point’ was the second multimodal activity designed by the teacher-researcher according to her understanding of a multimodal teaching approach to teach students words of body parts. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 3 of the second cycle (14 August, 2019).

The design of the activity (see Table 4.5) indicated how different modes were integrated to help students’ vocabulary writing and pronunciation. The main modes involved in this activity were audial and action modes. Students listened to the teacher-researcher’s pronunciation of a certain word (audial mode) and then pointed to their own body part (gestural mode) to show their understanding of
vocabulary meaning.

**Activity 3: Match the lyrics**

‘Match the lyrics’ was the third multimodal activity designed by the teacher-researcher according to her understanding of a multimodal teaching approach to teach students words of body parts. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 4 of the second cycle, (21 August, 2019).

The design of the activity (see Table 4.5) and the worksheet (see Figure 4.11) indicated how different modes were integrated to help students’ vocabulary writing and pronunciation. The main modes involved in this activity were visual and audial modes. Students observed the missing words in their writing sequence (visual mode) at the beginning of the worksheet and filled the blank words in according to the song playing on the video (audial mode).

**Activity 4: Sing and dance**

‘Sing and dance’ was the fourth multimodal activity designed by the teacher-researcher according to her understanding of a multimodal teaching approach to teach students words of body parts. The teacher-researcher conducted this activity in Week 4 of the second cycle (21 August, 2019).

The design of the activity (see Table 4.5) and the worksheet (see Figure 4.12) indicated how different modes were integrated to help students’ vocabulary writing and pronunciation. The main modes involved in this activity were visual, audial and gestural modes. Students watched the video (visual mode) and listened to the song (audial mode) several times. Then, they performed the gestures (gestural mode) and sang the song with the video.

**4.1.6 Modes used in this research**

In this research, different modes were integrated to form different multimodal activities to help students’ Chinese vocabulary learning. Table 4.6 summarises all modes that appeared during the research. There were mainly three types of modes: visual, audial and gestural modes. Visual modes included different pictures, written language and some videos. Audial modes included different songs, such as the
number song and body parts song, as well as the teacher-researcher’ oral language and students’ oral language. Gestural modes included different gestures and actions, such as number gestures and tone gestures.
Table 4.6 Modes used in this research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit topic</th>
<th>Multimodal activities</th>
<th>Modes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>Observe and guess</td>
<td>Visual mode: image; written language; writing animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observe and read</td>
<td>Audial mode: teacher’s oral language; Students’ introduction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family tree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trace with animation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possessive pronouns</td>
<td>Catch what you hear</td>
<td>Visual mode: image; written language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen and recognise words</td>
<td>Audial mode: teacher’s oral language; song</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen and fill the lyrics</td>
<td>Gestural mode: gestures of pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers over ten</td>
<td>Gesture the words</td>
<td>Visual mode: image; written language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tone dancing</td>
<td>Audial mode: teacher’s oral language; song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer the word with your body</td>
<td>students’ oral language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gestural mode: gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School items</td>
<td>Watch a video and discuss</td>
<td>Visual mode: video, image, written language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Show me correct tones</td>
<td>Audial mode: teacher’s oral language; students’ oral language</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Map locating</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce a map</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body parts</td>
<td>Listen and sing</td>
<td>Visual mode: video, image, written language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen and point</td>
<td>Audial mode: song; teacher’s oral language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match the lyrics</td>
<td>Gestural mode: actions for body parts song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sing and dance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Factors Influencing Multimodal Lesson Design

4.2.1 Learning contents

I am going to have my first lesson next week, which frustrated me a lot, our school regards Chinese as an interest-oriented lesson and there is no textbook or teaching guidance preparation. As a member of ROSETE 11 program, our teacher required us to analyse Chinese K–10 syllabus and gave us a scope and sequence for school members like my school, which was designed by ROSETE 10 volunteers. The teacher required us to select topics from the scope and sequence to teach. Five topics are family members, possessive pronouns, numbers, body parts and school items. I developed the unit work by myself and I chose the most common words that will be used during our daily life to teach and there are around eight words for each topic. But I am still not confident about what I am going to teach. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 1/5/2019)

We have a workshop today to discuss the unit work we designed on Wednesday. My ROSETE members gave some comments on my unit work and they thought it might be too much for Year 4 students, so I decided to delete two topics and plan to use them as teaching content for next term. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 22/8/2019)
According to the above entries from the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, the learning content for students played an important role in multimodal lesson design, as the teacher-researcher started to search and organised all modes used during the lesson after settling on the teaching content. So, deciding the teaching content guided multimodal lesson design.

However, how to decide on the teaching content is a critical question that should be discussed. According to the reflection journal, ‘scope and sequence’, ‘ROSETE program members’ and ‘I’ (the teacher-researcher), were the main factors that influenced the confirmation of teaching content. These three elements were discussed in the order of their appearance in the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal: first ‘scope and sequence’, followed by ‘the teacher-researcher herself’, then ‘the ROSETE program members’.

**Scope and sequence provide topics**

The scope and sequence (see Appendix J) used by the teacher-researcher provided teaching topics that were suitable for English background students. The ROSETE 10 volunteers developed the scope and sequence at the end of their teaching, according to the Chinese K–10 syllabus and their 18-month teaching experience. After 18 months teaching voluntarily in the western Sydney region, the ROSETE 10 teachers were already familiar with students’ characteristic and interests. Also, they had workshops and lectures every week to learn the teaching culture and education policy of Australia over the past year. Thus, their teaching and studying experience qualified them to compose the scope and sequence under the guidance of Chinese K–10 syllabus.

The scope and sequence were designed for western Sydney region schools that regard Chinese as an interest-oriented course. These schools usually had no regular Chinese teacher or teaching materials, and ROSETE volunteers conducted all Chinese teaching. The teacher-researcher volunteers at Xunlu Primary School, which is located in the western Sydney region and has no Chinese teacher. It was appropriate for the teacher-researcher to select teaching content from the scope and
sequence for Stage 2 and developed the unit work.

**The teacher-researcher decides main teaching content**

Teachers played an important role in deciding teaching content in this research. In Australia, all teachers teach students without official textbooks because the Australian education system emphasises the role of hands-on activities to develop students’ deep understanding of knowledge (Chen, 2015). That is, teachers need to decide learning content and design activities themselves. This situation is very different from the one in China, where teachers have little power to decide teaching content, as all knowledge and learning content are decided by the national education department and official textbooks. Compared with teachers in Australia, teachers in China are more like the presenters of knowledge.

For a beginning Chinese teacher, having to decide on teaching contents was a big challenge. The teacher-researcher was born and educated in China, and used to teaching and learning with content provided by official textbooks. However, she has to adapt to the reality of teaching in an Australian primary school and choose her own teaching content. This was an obstacle she reflected on her journal, as she felt frustrated and not confident with the learning content she chose for the students.

**Peer review from ROSETE program members**

The teacher-researcher’s fellow ROSETE members also influenced the teaching content decision. According to her reflection journal, the original unit work designed by the teacher-researcher was not finalised and needed to be discussed with the ROSETE members. This took place during the Teaching Chinese Language and Culture in NSW Schools workshop, and the teaching content was adjusted after discussion among volunteers.

Peer review is the informed colleague judgement about faculty teaching for either fostering improvement or making personnel decisions (Chism, 2007). Peer review from ROSETE program members could make the teaching content more suitable for students’ learning level. The teacher-researcher selected five topics to teach in one term; however, the group members suggested that 40 words over eight
weeks was too much for beginning learners. Subsequently, the teacher-researcher removed two topics and planned to teach them in the next term.

4.2.2 Students

Students’ background influence multimodal design

Students come to tell me that they have not only one brother or they don’t have Mum or Dad, what can they do? Such questions make me a little worried cause I don’t know if they’d like to share information about their family in public. I asked them to leave it blank and add numbers for the family member if they have more than one certain family member. Then at the sharing part of this activity, I invited students according to their willingness and it was a relief that most students were willing to introduce their family. Students focused their eyes on the introducing person and listened carefully. I asked questions like ‘how many brothers does student B have?’ and ‘who is in student N’s family?’ (Observation of the teacher-researcher, 8/5/2019)

During the multimodal activity on family member, students’ questions showed that the teacher-researcher did not consider students’ backgrounds when selecting modes. The conception of family in Australia is a little different from family in China. For children in Australia, family means themselves, their parents and siblings if they have any. In Australia, children usually have more than one sibling. Family in China includes not only parents and children, but also grandparents and other relatives such as aunts and uncles. Compared to Chinese society, it is more common and acceptable in Australia that children are living with one parent or one parent and their partner, which is a type of relationship that is less common in China. Also, according to the teacher researcher’s observation, people in Australia preferred not to share personal information like age, salary or family details in public, and it might be offensive if they were required to do so. The questions students initiated reminded the teacher-researcher of students’ backgrounds. Therefore, she adjusted her design and suggested that the students add numbers to indicate the quantity of siblings and invited students to introduce family members according to their willingness. The success of this adjustment indicated the importance of considering students’ backgrounds when designing multimodal
activities.

**Students’ characteristics influence multimodal design**

The most impressive one is the third tone, which is like a ‘V’. I suggested that we could move our butt to draw a V and I performed it first. All students thought this action was hilarious and they followed me and couldn’t stop laughing. The whole activity went on very well until I invited individual students to perform in front of the class. Only a few students were willing to perform, and most of them just wanted to read with me instead of performing alone. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 5/6/2019)

All students were in engaged, all were practising in the activity, but some students are too shy to perform alone in front of others. You can tell that students enjoy this activity, making movement, pronunciation and tone in one activity let students be able to use the movement to emphasise the tones and it also allows them to use the correct tones. (Classroom teacher R’s observation, 5/6/2019)

Teacher-researcher: I observed that most of you were not willing to perform alone in front of the class, could you tell me the reason?
Student G: It’s embarrassing.
Student V: Yeah, and if you make a mistake, others will laugh at you.
(Excerpt from the focus group at the end of the first cycle)

Some students were not willing to participate the activity because they thought acting the tones in front of the whole class was embarrassing, and they were afraid of making mistakes in front of classmates and having classmates laugh at them. According to the observation of the classroom teacher, one possible reason for students’ response to this activity was their introvert personality. Students were too shy to act in front of others and acting among peers made them anxious and frustrated. Moreover, a typical characteristic of young learner is craving approval (Harmer, 2015). They were afraid of making mistakes in front of the whole class, which could be regarded as a sign of denying. So students’ characteristics was regarded as a factor that influenced conducting multimodal activities.

**Relate to students’ daily life**

When I started to present the pictures about a Chinese primary school, students seemed quite interested. They came closer and tried to make sure they could observe carefully. Some of them kept asking questions about primary school in China. They compared the differences and similarities between their own school and the Chinese primary school I
presented. They also kept saying that students in China were lucky to have this awesome playground. I presented all the pictures with Chinese words and required them to have a guess at the meaning of these words. All of them raised their hands and wanted to have a try. They tried to give their answer according to the given picture, and usually they could give an English synonym within three tries … then I presented another picture that contained a pointing finger and a short sentence ‘这是…’ and asked them to guess the meaning, and some of them said ‘this is …’. I gave them an example ‘这是教室 (this is the classroom)’ I pointed at another picture of a student and required them to make a sentence, and they directly said the sentence ‘这是学生 (this is a student)’. Then I pointed at all the pictures, one by one and let students make sentences, and all of them could provide a correct one, which made me very happy. (Teacher-researcher’s observation, 31/7/2019)

Students asked questions during the presentation of pictures, and they supplied answers for the teacher-researcher’s question. Students’ faces were happy as they discussed with each other about pictures. Students are extremely curious when they saw themselves and Mr. L, the Principal’s office on the whiteboard. (Classroom teacher Y’s observation, 31/7/2019)

Teacher-researcher: Can you tell me why you like this activity?
Student Ch: The pictures of Chinese school are interesting, and it helped me learn about China.
Student Ki: Yeah, especially the morning exercising, it’s funny and we don’t have that.
Student Bo: I also like the playground, it has track and field for running events, which is awesome.

According to two teachers’ observations, students were extremely curious when they saw their own pictures and images related to their own life, such as the image of their principal’s office. They compared the school items between China and Australia and raised questions. This phenomenon suggested that teachers should consider students’ daily life as guidance for selecting modes when using a multimodal approach for vocabulary teaching. Children are keen to talk about their lives, which is usually a main topic in the classroom (Harmer, 2015). Making the teaching relate to what learners have in their lives is easier for beginning learners to acquire language and engagement (Yue, 2014).

4.2.3 The teacher-researcher

I consider using body movement to help students to pronounce a word. This idea comes
from one of my teachers at university. I once attended a lesson of appreciating Western music, the teacher of that lesson tried to let us enjoy music with our body. She invited us to dance with music freely, which impressed me a lot. It was a very successful class, every student laughed happily and immersed in music. It is a lesson that I will never forget. In my opinion, Chinese tones are similar to music. I can lead students to design some gestures to represent Chinese tones, and we can dance and read words together to make pronunciation of vocabulary more interesting. (Teacher-researcher’s observation, 31/7/2019).

First, the researcher’s learning experience influenced the design of multimodal activities. The reflection journal showed the teacher-researcher’s learning experience as an undergraduate student in Ningbo University, and how this experience left a deep impression. So, she adopted this multimodal activity and adjusted it for teaching Chinese tones. This example indicated that the teacher-researcher’s prior learning experience influenced her design of multimodal activities for teaching Chinese.

Moreover, the experience of teaching Chinese also influenced the design of multimodal activities, as demonstrated in another example from the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal:

When the first cycle did not help students learn very much because the song I selected was too difficult for them and there were over 50% strange words. Because of the experience of last cycle, I reconsidered the design of this activity carefully. My students are only Year 4 students who almost never learned Chinese before, so the lyrics we learned maybe taught word by word. The lyrics of Head, shoulders, knees and toes is simple for them to memorise; however, most of these words are still difficult to write because they are too complicated for beginners. I cut down the writing content and selected words with the simplest writing sequence, and also provided more scaffolding to help students’ writing. These two adjustments worked very well. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 14/8/2019).

This exercise was successful because the teacher-researcher designed the multimodal activity according to her prior teaching experience. The teacher-researcher put herself in the students’ shoes when selecting modes. In the first cycle, the teacher-researcher selected a song that students could not understand because they did not know half the words in the lyrics. However, after working
with Year 4 students for two terms, the teacher-researcher came to understand her students better, by observing them each week and gaining teaching experience. She not only knew that her students were only in Year 4, but she also started to accept her students’ real level and adjust her teaching according to her students’ situation. Consequently, her teaching experience led her to reconsider the design of the multimodal activity.

4.3 Criteria for Using Certain Modes

4.3.1 Image

Image is a mode that teachers frequently used in teaching Chinese vocabulary. However, not all pictures are suitable for teaching vocabulary. Some criteria have been concluded from students’ feedback, interviews with other teacher interview and entries in the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal.

First, teachers need to consider picture quality. According to this research, the quality of pictures influenced students’ understanding of vocabulary meaning. High-quality pictures could show the meaning of vocabulary clearly, and students could understand the meaning of vocabulary easier. However, low-quality images might not express the exact meaning of the vocabulary and students might get confused about what they were learning. The teacher-researcher held a focus group at the end of the first cycle with participant students and asked what they disliked about learning Chinese vocabulary with pictures:

Teacher-researcher: Any dislike about learning with pictures?
Student N: If the picture is not good quality, I can’t understand it.

Second, teachers need to consider the relationship between the images presented and the words being taught. This criterion was concluded from one of the teacher-researcher’s lessons, which was observed and reflected on by the teacher-researcher and the classroom teacher:

I used my family photo to help students to understand the meaning of 爸爸, 妈妈 and
我，因为我认为照片有助于直接解释词汇的含义。当我将我的家庭照片呈现到智能白板上时，学生们直接认出了我，并且其中一些人指着照片问：‘这是你吗？’我说是的，并提出了一个问题，你们能猜出他们是谁吗？他们积极举手，并直接回答：‘那是你的妈妈和爸爸。’然后我将妈妈和爸爸的中文词汇写在黑板上，并用中文教他们妈妈和爸爸，然后让他们跟我一起读。……当我呈现另一张包含更多家庭成员的家庭照片时，他们仍然可以轻松地给出这些词的同义词。然后我将照片上的一张成员单独展示，并询问他们这是谁？他们开始猜测。有些学生说这是哥哥（big brother），有些学生说这是弟弟（little brother）。我失去了对课堂的控制，学生们开始聊天。　（Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 8/5/2019）

Figure 4.12 PowerPoint slide: 哥哥(Big brother)

According to the teacher-researcher’s observation, students raised a question spontaneously about the picture showed in this activity, which showed their interests. Students actively raised hands and gave synonyms of words being taught, indicating they were willing to participate in this activity. They also burst into laughter, which showed their enjoyment in this activity. All these phenomena indicated that the students enjoyed learning Chinese vocabulary with images. However, a problem occurred when a person in the image was shown individually, as students could not recognise the meaning of those words and began to guess. The teacher-researcher reflected:

Why can’t students give a synonym of a word when family members are presented individually? I opened my PowerPoint again and looked at the image for 哥哥（big brother），which is a cartoon portrait of a little boy. Exactly! The image can be regarded as a little boy instead of big brother, only when the boy was in a family image, then can
students have a conception of regarding him as big brother of this family. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 8/5/2019)

Teacher judgment about the modes to present is important and helps students to make sense of the content. The teacher-researcher reflected on the teaching process after the lesson and found why the problem occurred during the activity. The image and word were not closely related, which was why the students had difficulty understanding the meaning of these words. The image in Figure 4.1 was regarded as a family picture. When these people stood together, the height and gender of each person showed the relationship between them, which reinforced the meaning of the words in text so students could provide and English synonym. However, when presented individually (see Figure 4.13), only the gender could be recognised, and the relationship between people no longer existed. Therefore, the relation between the picture and the word was not clear, which created difficulty in understanding the meaning of vocabulary and students ‘started guessing’. In other words, the relation between images and word need to be considered when using images for vocabulary teaching.

Understanding the type of relationship between image and language helps students’ vocabulary learning, and should be considered when using multimodal pedagogy. Royce (2002) used a social semiotic approach to explore visual-verbal relations and found six relations between visual and verbal modes: repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy (class-subclass relation), meronymy (part-whole relation) and collocation. He states that when a word is presented with a visual representation, students can immediately make a link between the word and the visual mode, which sets up a cognitive association and facilitates vocabulary learning (Royce, 2002). The teacher-researcher’s reflection noted that the image did not provide the form of a big brother, so students were unable to link the word and the image. In other words, the image need to reiterate or reinforce the text so that students could understand the meaning of vocabulary being taught. That is, when the image repeated the meaning of vocabulary or when the information provided by the image was the synonym of the language mode, students could
understand the meaning of vocabulary. However, when the image was irrelevant to the vocabulary being taught, it might cause distraction among students.

4.3.2 Colour

I used four colours to show four tones, hoping that they can notice the tone difference. I presented four tones on the whiteboard, and students were directly attracted by those colourful tones, especially the third tone, labelled in light yellow. Because they had seen it before, they spontaneously reviewed four tones by themselves with murmuring. I let them try by themselves for a while, then I calmed them down and let them repeat four tones with me. As they observed tones on the one hand, and repeated with me on the other hand, their sounds became more accurate. Then I involved tone cards to help students observe the pronunciation of new words. I let them look at those new words and use the tones cards on their hand to show me the tones of these words and gave them some time to check with their classmates to get the right answer. Students repeated reading these words with me and I checked their tones accuracy with tone cards and asked questions like ‘which are the tones of this word?’ They answered with ‘the yellow and green tone’ with observing the print words on the Smartboard. Sometimes one student may raise the wrong card and the others corrected them and said, ‘no, it’s the tone in blue not red’. (Teacher-researcher’s observation, 31/7/2019)

Students appeared to be using the correct intonation and some of them checking the tone accuracy by calling out the colour of the tone. This activity is effective as most students were able to correct the student who misread a word. (Classroom teacher Y’s observation, 31/7/2019)

Teacher-researcher: What is the good point of this activity?
Student Bo: I can check my sound through tone cards and raising cards with others help me correct my answer. Also, I think colourful words make me feel less bored.
Student Ki: Make the tones in different colour are easier for me to recognise their difference. Especially the second tone and the fourth tone, which are usually looks similar to me.

Colour is defined as a mode, as it can realise three communicative functions: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function (Kress & Leeuwen, 2002). Colour has two types of affordance (the sources of the mode to make meaning), which are the provenance or association of colour and its distinctive feature, a range of visual scales including value, saturation, purity, modulation, differentiation and hue (Kress & Leeuwen, 2002).

The hue of colour, which is the scale from blue to red, played an important role
in tone comprehension. In the current study, the researcher used four hues to show four tones: red, blue, yellow and green (see Figure 4.7). The observation that students ‘were directly attracted by the colourful tones’ indicated that colours on tones improved students’ attention to tones. Also, students’ feedback that ‘colours help me distinguish the second tone and the fourth tone’ affirmed that the student noticed the difference between two tones by the different colours on the tones. An article from the British newspaper *The Guardian* supports the view that adding colours on document can improve people’s attention. It stated that ‘adding colours to documents can increase the reader’s attention span by more than 80 percent’ (Kress & Leeuwen, 2002). The four different colours also created positive feelings while learning vocabulary tones. Students’ statement that ‘colourful words helped me feel less bored’ indicated that colour on tones increased interest while learning tones. The improved attention to tones and positive emotions associated with learning might facilitate students’ better comprehension of tones. Students ‘confirmed their pronunciation with colourful tone cards’, and the classroom teacher observed that ‘students checked tone accuracy by calling out tone colours’, which showed that students tried to understand different tones with the help of colours. Further, students ‘used correct intonation’ and ‘were able to correct students who misread tones’, which indicated that they understood Chinese tones with the help of colours.

Using colour to arouse people’s attention is the interpersonal function of colour, which means to use colour to enact or help enact interactions between humans (Kress & Leeuwen, 2002). Colours also have ideational and textual functions. The ideational function of colour means it can be used to represent different substances. For example, colours on maps represent mountains and water and places, while a series of colours in a flag can represent a country. The textual function of colours relates to colours being used to achieve coherence in texts. For example, different apartments in one building use different colours to distinguish one from another, yet can also form a unity with a series of colours. How these two functions of colours can be used for vocabulary teaching should be explored
further.

4.3.3 Song

Students enjoy learning vocabulary with songs, but not all songs are suitable for beginning Chinese learners and choosing an appropriate song for vocabulary teaching is important for conducting an activity. The teacher-researcher found that pop songs could be used to raise students’ learning interests, but children’s songs with a repetitive structure and catchy rhythm were more suitable for teaching vocabulary pronunciation and meaning.

When I started to play the song of possessive pronouns, students seemed to be very excited. Because the rhythm of this Chinese song is a little bit like rock, students were really into music with catchy tune and eager to learn the song that includes possessive pronoun. I asked them to repeat the lyrics with me, students were willing to repeat with me, but their pronunciation were unrecognisable even after repeating for several times, and some students felt bored with frequent repeating. Then I had to play the video again and let them sing with the video and the environment was animated again with the help of the song video. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 22/5/2019)

Some students moved their bodies when listening to the song. Most students were fully concentrated on the screen. They spontaneously followed the song, murmuring. Some pointing to the screen, very interested obviously. Students were singing along even after class. (Classroom teacher R’s observation, 22/5/2019)

Using pop songs in Chinese teaching can raise students’ learning interests. According to the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, students moved their body to follow the rhythm. Some of them directly expressed their enjoyment with language, such as ‘I like these songs’, and some asked for the name of the song so they could search for it after school. All these phenomena indicated students’ interest. The classroom teachers also found that students were really engaged with the Chinese songs and even hummed them after the lesson.

However, even though students liked the pop songs, their impact on vocabulary learning was not evident:

At the beginning of the lesson, I asked if students remembered the words that we learned with the song last week, students moved their body and called out yes. Then I added if
they could sing for me. However, I could only understand their tune but couldn’t recognize their words. Also, most students just murmured with the music instead of singing. I think the music reminded students of certain pronunciation, but it is hard for students pronounce Chinese vocabulary without several repetitions and written lyrics. What’s more, the song I picked not only includes words we have learned, half of the lyrics are words we haven’t learned yet, which may be another reason of learning difficulty. I paid too much attention to the catchy rhythm and neglected students’ Chinese levels. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 29/5/2019)

According to the journal entry, although students were interested in singing the pop songs in Chinese, they did not help students’ vocabulary learning because the lyrics were too difficult for beginning learners. So, the teacher-researcher used a children’s song with simple, easy-to-follow lyrics for teaching body parts vocabulary:

When I started playing the song, students seemed to have an ‘a-ha’ moment and told me they knew this song in English. They tried to follow the song by themselves but failed. Then I took out the lyrics I prepared before the lesson and let them read with me. Students seemed much more interested in reading than before. After reading for several times, I played the song again and it was still hard for them to follow the song on the first two rounds, but they tried to catch up and their singing became better and better after listening five times. Some students could even recite the song without music at the end of the lesson. (Teacher-researcher Y’s reflection journal, 14/8/2019)

The effectiveness of using children’s song to teach pronunciation of vocabulary is proven. Children enjoy singing songs and saying chants in rhythm, and the melody and rhythm of songs are useful for improving students’ pronunciation and intonation of a second or foreign language (Shin, 2017). The influence of using songs for vocabulary teaching was much more positive in this cycle than the first cycle, as the teacher-researcher increased repetition and chose an appropriate song.

Several principles of choosing appropriate songs for vocabulary teaching have been concluded based on the teacher-researcher’s observations and reflections. First, the content of the song should be consistent with students’ language level. Students in this research are elementary Chinese learners who have not received any systemic language learning before this research. Using songs in this activity contained too many unfamiliar words, thus led to unrecognisable singing. Second,
vocabulary being taught should be mostly included in the song. As the song is selected to help students’ vocabulary learning, the lyrics of the song should include all or most of the vocabulary being taught to help students’ pronunciation and memorisation of them; otherwise, the song is meaningless. Third, the rhythm of the song should be catchy as it attracts students’ attention and creates a comfortable environment for learning.

4.3.4 Gesture

Gesture is a mode used in this research to help beginning Chinese learners to learn vocabulary. Students really enjoyed learning vocabulary with gestures in this research; however, teachers need to pay attention to the different meanings behind gestures, as the following teacher-researcher experience:

After I reviewed numbers from zero to 10, I started show them the Chinese way of showing numbers with gestures. Students were curious about learning Chinese number gestures and imitated with me carefully. However, when they saw the gesture of number eight, which was a gesture done by thumb and index finger, some boys regarded it as a gun and tried to ‘shoot’ others, and students who were ‘shot’ by them seemed to get annoyed. Seeing this situation, the classroom teacher stopped them and told them it was rude to do this gesture. Then I tried to explain to them that when we do the gesture of eight, we didn’t use this gesture to point to others directly, and I also showed the correct way with pictures. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 28/8/2019)

The beauty of the Chinese number signals is that people can count from one to 10 just by using one hand, and this kind of method was widely used in ancient Chinese commercial activities to avoid the misunderstanding brought by dialects. However, in this case, the teacher-researcher met misunderstanding because of the different meanings behind the gesture. The gesture of eight is normal for Chinese, but it was a little bit ‘rude’ for Australian students and teachers. Thus, teachers need to pay attention to the meaning of certain gestures before using them for teaching.

4.4 Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter has answered the first research sub-question: What were the factors that needed to be considered in designing multimodal lessons in teaching
Chinese vocabulary at a Western Sydney primary school? The teacher-researcher outlined from her multimodal design and summarised the main modes used in this research. The three factors that influenced mode selection were pointed out, and some criteria provided for using certain modes.

First, the teacher-researcher presented her design of multimodal activities during the research. During the study, five topics were taught—‘family members’, ‘possessive pronouns’, ‘numbers over 10’, ‘school items’ and ‘body parts’—and there were three to four multimodal activities for each topic. Then, the main modes used in this research were concluded. The main visual modes used were images, written language and videos. The main audial modes were the teacher’s and students’ oral language and different kinds of songs, and the main gestural modes used were some gestures and actions for Chinese vocabulary teaching.

Second, three factors that influenced the selection of modes were the learning content, students and the teacher-researcher. Notably, the teacher researcher found that the learning contents for teaching a foreign language in Australia was mainly decided by the teacher of the course under the guidance of the syllabus, which was very different from China’s use of fixed content taught with official textbooks. Also, students’ background and characteristics influenced mode selection, and it has suggested that it is better to relate to students’ daily life when selecting modes. Finally, the teacher-researcher’s experience also influenced mode selection, particularly in relation to their learning and teaching experiences. A number of researchers also list some factors that influence the selection of modes, and some of which are consistent with the teacher researcher’s findings. Jiang (2015) denotes that the principle in choosing teaching modes should be based on the teaching content and teaching objectives to gain the best teaching effects. Zhang (2009) also identifies three main factors that influence mode selection: the teaching content, the teaching objects and the teaching subjects.

Third, some guidance on how to use certain modes for vocabulary teaching were provided by the teacher-researcher. As a visual mode, images should be chosen according to their relationship with vocabulary, as students better
understood the meaning of words when the image repeats the information or it was a synonym of the verbal mode. Zhang (2009) explored principles of mode selection for foreign language teaching under the theory of semantic-functional linguistics (SFL) and determined that relations such as reinforcement, synergy and complementarity between modes can improve students’ comprehension. Conversely, contradiction or irrelevance between modes will create cognitive difficulty and distract students. Vunghthong, Djonov and Torr (2017) analysed the relationship between visual and verbal modes shown in multimodal texts designed for English elementary learners and found that repetition and synonyms were most frequently used for language beginners.

Colour as a visual mode has three functions: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function. Teachers could use the interpersonal function of colours by adding colours to what they want to emphasise to increase students’ attention.

As an audial mode, song is extremely effective at engaging students, and is particularly useful for young language learners (Shin, 2017). The teacher-researcher concluded some principles for choosing a song as an audial mode for teaching vocabulary. First, the contents of the song should be consistent with students’ language level; second, vocabulary being taught should be included in the song; and third, the song need to have a catchy rhythm. Pop songs could also be used for arousing students’ interests in learning Chinese. However, as the lyrics of pop songs contained too many unfamiliar words, they only raised students’ interests in learning Chinese instead of helping students understand the meaning and pronunciation of vocabulary being taught.

As for gestures, teachers need to pay attention to the meaning behind gestures; some gestures in Chinese may have no offensive meaning but may cause conflicts in Australia. Parsons and Brown (2002) affirm that the social nature of the body, time and space of the class and the meaning of objects and entities should be considered when using actions to realise meanings, as the environments and cultures in which we live greatly influence our bodily expression.
Chapter 5 – Influence on Students’ Vocabulary Learning

This chapter aims to answer the second research sub-question: How did the multimodal teaching approach influence students’ pronunciation, writing and understanding of vocabulary in this study. The discussion is mainly based on students’ reflection journals on multimodal pedagogy and students’ VKS results. The chapter explores the influence of multimodal pedagogy on students’ learning of vocabulary meaning, pronunciation and writing.

5.1 Influence on Students’ Vocabulary Meaning

5.1.1 Helps meaning retention

During the second cycle of implementing multimodal pedagogy to teach Chinese vocabulary, the teacher-researcher used a visual-based multimodal method to teach school items, an audial-based multimodal method to teach body parts and a gestural-based multimodal method to teach numbers from 11 to 20. A VKS was adopted to test students’ vocabulary understanding after each unit. The evaluating criteria of the VKS (adapted from Wesche & Paribakht, 1996) was presented as follows:

1. The word is not familiar at all.
2. The word is familiar, but its meaning is not known.
3. A correct synonym or translation is given.
4. The word is used with semantic appropriateness in a sentence.
5. The word is used with semantic appropriateness and grammatical accuracy in a sentence.

The full mark for each word is five, and the teacher-researcher marked students’ words according to the above criteria. After the implementation of each method, the teacher-researcher divided students’ understanding into three levels according to the VKS results. The first level indicated that students understood both the meaning and usage of vocabulary, which was labelled in blue. The second level
indicated that students understood certain words’ meaning and usage, but not all of them, which was shown in red. The third level indicated that students only had a basic impression of the word, or no impression at all, which was shown in white.

Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 present the results of students’ VKS tests:

**Table 5.1 VKS result for school items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>教室</th>
<th>图书馆</th>
<th>操场</th>
<th>小学</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ap</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bl</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ki</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ky</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.2 VKS result for body parts**

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<th>肩</th>
<th>耳朵</th>
<th>脚</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bl</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ki</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ky</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.3 VKS result for numbers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>十五</th>
<th>十六</th>
<th>十八</th>
<th>十三</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ap</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ar</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bl</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Ch</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is the last lesson of this term and I reviewed all words we learned this term and gave out some prizes to students according to their performance in Chinese lessons, which also aims to encourage their learning in the following year. I firstly took out the pictures of Xunlu Primary School, which includes pictures of students, the Principal’s office, the school library, the classroom for Chinese extension class, the Google map of the school and the playground of this school. I invited them to make a sentence with 这是 … (This is …). Students could say sentences like ‘这是教室’, ‘这是图书馆’, ‘这是学生’. Then I raised up my hands and did a gesture of number one, they directly called out 一, which is one in Chinese, and they continuously counted in Chinese without any reminder, which impressed me a lot. At last, I played the song Head, shoulders, knees and toes on the computer, and students became excited directly and stood up, singing and pointing their body parts according to the lyrics. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal 11/9/2019)

Multimodal pedagogy helped students’ vocabulary meaning retention. According to the results of students’ VKS test, all students could give an English synonym of those Chinese words as their scores were all above three, indicating that they remembered the meaning of those words after learning with a multimodal pedagogy. The teacher-researcher’s observation at the end of the study supported this opinion. Students called out words of school items according to the teacher-researcher’s picture annotation, counted numbers from zero to 19 with number gestures and sang the Chinese song Head, shoulders, knees and toes and pointed to body parts accordingly.

5.1.2 Facilitate students’ meaning comprehension

When I presented all the pictures with Chinese words and required them to have a guess at the meaning of these words, all of them raised their hands and wanted to have a try. They tried to give their answer according to the given picture and usually they could give an English synonym within three tries. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 31/7/2019)

When I started playing the song, students seemed to have an ‘a-ha’ moment and told me they knew this song in English. They tried to follow the song by themselves but failed. Then I took out the lyrics I prepared before the lesson and let them read with me. After staring at the lyrics for a while, one of them called out ‘Miss, I know the meaning of these words, [tou] is head, right?’ I was a little surprised that they tried to understand the
meaning of these words by themselves because of the song. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 14/8/2019)

Two examples observed by the teacher-researcher indicated that the cooperation of different modes could help students understood the meaning of vocabulary. According to Krashen, ‘languages are learnt most effectively’ when learners are exposed to ‘comprehensible input’ in a real communicative context (as cited in Littlewood & Yu, 2011). Hull and Nelson (2005) found that compared with inputting information through one sense, information input through multiple sensory channels is more easily recognised and comprehended. In the current research, the multimodal method adopted by the teacher-researcher not only used verbal explanation to help students to understand the meaning of vocabulary, but also added images and actions to illustrate the meaning of school items. The cooperation of different modes made students’ recognition and comprehension easier, so students could quickly give an English synonym of Chinese vocabulary within three times trials.

Other research studies support this result. Hu and Zhang (2013) investigated the effects of multimodal pedagogy on students’ listening comprehension. They found that compared with pure listening, multimodal listening—which combines visual and auditory modes—is more helpful for students’ comprehension when the visual information corresponds with the audio information. Zhang (2009) explored principles of mode selections for foreign language teaching using SFL theory, and found that relations such as reinforcement, synergy and complementarity between modes can improve students’ comprehension. Conversely, contradiction or irrelevance between modes creates cognitive difficulty and distract students (Zhang, 2009).

5.2 Influence on students’ vocabulary pronunciation

Multimodal activities like ‘observe and read’, ‘catch what you hear’ and ‘tone dancing’ were designed by the teacher-researcher to help students pronounce vocabulary. The teacher-researcher reflected on students’ pronunciation
When I was preparing four tones for my students, I used four different colours to make them more attractive, and I also enlarged the size of these tones to help students to observe clearly. Then it was time to see the effects of my efforts. I presented four tones on the whiteboard, and students were directly attracted by those big and colourful tones, especially the third tone, labelled by light yellow. As they observed tones on the one hand and repeated in oral with me on the other hand, their sounds became more accurate. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 31/7/2019)

Students could read all words after listening for about seven times of the song. I could clearly distinguish their pronunciation. Because we were learning through singing, students were more willing to open their mouths. Some active students started singing even without accompanying music. I found their pronunciation became more and more accurate with the increase of playing times. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 14/8/2019)

Students were really active in this activity. We stretched our arms horizontally, then raised our right hand from left to right, and moved our body to draw a ‘V’, at last stepped our foot to end. I decided to let one student pronounce and let the remaining children use the action to express the tones of each word, which lower the embarrassment of individual performance. The students seemed to be a lot more daring to say words out, and they were very willing to perform, especially when they performed the third sound, the funny action made them so happy to do it well. The whole class was full of pleasure. The student at the front could read words according to students’ dancing and most of the words are recognisable. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 4/9/2019)

5.2.1 Help students pronounce vocabulary accurately

According to the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal entries, students pronounced vocabulary accurately when taught with a multimodal teaching method. Two conclusions could be drawn from the reflection journal entries. First, multimodal pedagogy helped students recognise Chinese tones; and second, students practised correct vocabulary pronunciation a lot with the help of different modes.

Tones play an important role in recognising a word in Chinese. The Chinese Pinyin system has four tones, which are 阴平 (high and level tone or first tone), 阳平 (rising tone or second tone), 上声 (falling-rising tone or third tone), 去声 (falling tone or fourth tone). Each syllable with different tones makes the meaning
of a word different. For example, when using different tones with ‘ma’, the character and meaning: ‘ma’ with the first tone ‘mā’ means 妈 (Mum), with the second tone ‘má’ means 麻 (rough), with the third tone ‘mǎ’ means 马 (horse) and with the fourth tone ‘mà’ means 骂 (curse) (Zhu, 2017). Orton (2016) examined issues regarding teaching Chinese in Australia and noted that English speakers need to put a lot of effort into recognising the tones of Chinese. Traditional Chinese teachers teach tones by letting students listen and repeat, which makes little difference (Orton, 2016). However, in the current study, the multimodal teaching method integrated visual modes (colour, images), gestural modes (tone dancing) and audial modes (song) into different activities to illustrate tones, which helped students’ comprehension of Chinese tones. The classroom teachers also agreed that multimodal activities helped students’ pronunciation:

Made the link between gestures, tones and words, all in one. Everyone was practising and were able to say the correct terms or words, really good lesson, you can tell they enjoy it, and they were able to use the movement to emphasise the tones and it also allows them to use the correct tones. (Observation of Classroom teacher R, 9/5/2019)

This activity is effective as most students were able to correct the student who misread the word. Students appeared to be most using the correct intonation (means tone) and some of them were looking at the tone cards to confirm. (Observation of Classroom teacher Y, 31/7/2019)

The multimodal teaching approach also provided students with different ways of imitating standard vocabulary pronunciation, which decreased the ambiguity of vocabulary pronunciation. Pronunciation ambiguity occurs because of negative language transfer. English background learners, especially young children who are still learning their own language, will pronounce the Latin alphabets in the Pinyin system with the rules for pronouncing English (Hua, 2015). In this research, multimodal activities such as ‘observe and read’, ‘sing with songs’ and ‘tone dancing’ allowed students to listen and feel standard vocabulary pronunciation with visual, gestural and audial modes, and these different modes combination
facilitated students’ understanding of vocabulary pronunciation and therefore improved students’ pronunciation accuracy.

5.2.2 Decrease anxiety of pronouncing

Anxiety exists in the learning process relating to fear and negative emotional reactions experienced when learning and using a second language (Young, 1990). Anxiety can be distinguished as two types: debilitative and facilitative (Young, 1990). Students with debilitative anxiety may have problems with concentration and be unwilling, or willing but unable, to participate in classes. Some can feel blocked or even paralysed in a language learning situation. According to the teacher-researcher’s observations, students actively attended all activities and were ‘more likely to open their mouths’ and ‘a lot more dared to say words out’. These symptoms indicated that students experienced low anxiety when pronouncing vocabulary.

Different mode combinations also created a familiar and comfortable environment that attracted students’ attention, which led to low anxiety over pronunciation. For English background learners, Chinese is a totally different language system, especially for language beginners who have low language proficiency. Consequently, the unfamiliar feeling will cause anxiety. A multimodal teaching method not only let students pronounce vocabulary by repeating with the teacher-researcher, the use of actions and songs reduces the unfamiliar feeling. Compared to pure listening and repeating, actions and songs more closely mimicked students’ lives, as human have the natural ability to express themselves with actions and rhythm. Further, students concentrated more when they were exposed to multiple modes, as they were using more sensory channels to process the information presented.

5.3 Influence on Students’ Vocabulary Writing

In this research, the teacher-researcher designed several multimodal activities related to students’ vocabulary writing, including ‘trace with animation’, ‘listen and
fill lyrics’, ‘transfer the word with your body’, ‘introduce a map’ and ‘match the lyrics’. The teacher-researcher observed:

Students seemed to become interested in writing. They kept quiet and focused on my tracing. I traced one line, and they followed one line and told me “down” when they finished. Some students even urged me hurry up so they can write more words in this lesson. They held up their writing format and called out ‘Miss, Miss, see’ with a sense of pride. Their happy smile impressed me a lot. Because we wrote two words in this lesson, which are “学生 student” and “小学 primary school”, some students found that there were two duplicated characters, and they asked me one question what was the meaning of “学”. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 7/8/2019)

Then I gave out the unfinished worksheet to them and played the song through the computer at the same time. Students settled down quickly after they received the worksheet and grabbed pencils to figure out the lyrics. All of them kept quiet to listen to the music carefully. However, even though I put the writing sequence at the top of the worksheet, students wrote words with their own thoughts and didn’t follow the correct writing sequence. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 21/8/2019)

They actively raised their hands to challenge different roles in the competition and were able to help each other pass a word together. Regardless of whether their writing was correct, they would cheer when they finished, showing the team spirit well. Of course, the team that did not write correctly would show a frustrated expression when knowing the answer, but everyone still encouraged each other and kept trying next time. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 4/9/2019)

5.3.1 Improve Students’ Writing Willingness

At the beginning of this study, students were reluctant to write vocabulary in Chinese characters as they thought Chinese characters were difficult to write:

I presented the characters of words on the screen and asked students to copy those characters on their book. However, most students just sat there and did nothing. Students who were writing felt frustrated and gave up quickly. One boy even said: ‘It’s too hard’ and he felt very depressed due to writing difficulty. I tried to calm him down, but he kept scribbling on the paper and neglected me. Because of students’ complaints, I had to stop the activity and let them write Pinyin instead. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 15/4/2019)

As noted in the reflection journal, students’ behaviour in the early stages of the research, such as ‘did nothing’ and ‘scribbling on the paper’ expressed their negative attitude towards writing Chinese vocabulary. The teacher-researcher also
found that students used Pinyin only instead of writing characters in their note-taking. Chinese character writing seemed to be an impossible task for these students. The difficulty in learning Chinese was attributed mostly to the challenge in learning Chinese characters (Moser, 1991; Pei & Sun, 2010; Shen, 2005). Chinese learners, particularly young learners, found great difficulty in learning to write and remember the scripts. Pei and Sun (2010, p. 157) address this problem as ‘the bottleneck’ in Chinese learning, which is regarded as the main reason why students drop CFL learning. However, the situation changed dramatically after the teacher-researcher’s months of teaching using multimodal pedagogy, as students ‘kept quiet and wrote characters carefully’.

5.3.2 No obvious improvement in writing order

The teacher-researcher’s reflection journal entries on students’ writing showed that although students were willing to write Chinese characters with multimodal activities, their stroke order was still incorrect. That is, students ‘wrote Chinese characters with their own thoughts’ and ‘didn’t follow the sequence’.

One possible reason for this finding is time limitations. Because Xunlu Primary School regarded Chinese as an interested-oriented course, students received only 30 minutes of Chinese learning peer week. Consequently, students had limited time to learn the meaning, pronunciation and writing of vocabulary. Without enough time for practice, they could not realise the importance of writing sequences and memorising them.

Also, the complexity of Chinese writing system might be another reason for minimum improvement of students’ vocabulary writing. Teaching Chinese character writing is the main challenge of TCFL since the complexity of the graphic nature of Chinese characters, the absence of Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence (GPC) rules in Chinese and also the similar written forms confuse students who are used to alphabetic language (See Chapter 2, p. 9). Such a complex writing system requires participants to make an effort in memory which is not emphasized in the Australian education system.
5.4 Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter answered the second research sub-question: How did the multimodal teaching approach influence students’ pronunciation, writing and understanding of vocabulary in this study. Data from the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal showed that multimodal pedagogy influenced students’ vocabulary learning.

Multimodal pedagogy influenced students’ learning of vocabulary meaning. First, this pedagogy helped students’ meaning retention. Some previous research supports the finding that multimodal pedagogy helps students memorise the meaning of vocabulary. Li (2019) explored the multimodal teaching method for teaching international students in China vocabulary selected from Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK). Based on test scores and the results of surveys and interviews with students, she asserted that multimodal teaching approach is helpful for students to recall the meaning of vocabulary (Li, 2019). Apart from research on TCFL, a lot of TEFL research (Aghaei & Gougiani, 2016; Ma, 2019; Zarei & Khazaie, 2011) has adopted quantitative methods to compare multimodal teaching methods with traditional teaching methods for vocabulary teaching. These studies found that students who were exposed to multimodal teaching pedagogy achieved higher scores in tests and had better vocabulary meaning retention. Research on TEFL provides the possibility of using quantitative methods to explore the effects of multimodal pedagogy in TCFL.

Second, multimodal pedagogy facilitated students’ vocabulary meaning comprehension. This result is also supported by other research studies. Hu and Zhang (2013) investigated the effects of using multimodal pedagogy on students’ listening comprehension. They found that compared with pure listening, multimodal listening— which combines visual and auditory modes—is more helpful for students’ comprehension when the visual information corresponds to the audio information. Zhang (2009) explored principles of mode selection for foreign language teaching using SFL theory and found that relations such as
reinforcement, synergy and complementarity between modes can improve students’ comprehension.

Multimodal pedagogy also influenced students’ vocabulary pronunciation. First, students’ pronunciation became accurate after learning with multimodal activities. Multimodal activities provided students with interesting ways to practise vocabulary pronunciation and helped them realise the existence of Chinese tones; consequently, students’ pronunciation became more and more accurate. Second, students’ anxiety around pronouncing vocabulary was reduced when learning Chinese with multimodal pedagogy because multimodal activities integrated different modes and created a familiar and comfortable atmosphere.

Finally, multimodal pedagogy influenced students’ vocabulary writing. Students’ willingness to write vocabulary improved after learning with multimodal pedagogy; however, due to time limitations and the complexity of Chinese writing system, there were no evident improvement in students’ writing sequence.
Chapter 6 – Suggestions for Using Multimodal Pedagogy

This chapter aims to answer the third research sub-question: Based on this study, what could be suggested in teaching Chinese vocabulary with a multimodal approach at Western Sydney primary schools? Suggestions were concluded based on the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, observation of both classroom teachers and the teacher-researcher, and classroom teacher interviews. Suggestions for conducting multimodal activities are presented according to a lesson timeline; that is, at the beginning of the lesson, during the lesson and at the end of the lesson.

6.1 At the Beginning of the Lesson

According to the teacher-researcher’s reflection journals, observation of both classroom teachers’ teaching and interview data, three suggestions have been provided for teachers who are interested in conducting a multimodal lesson. Teachers should consider the time for implementing a multimodal activity, check the technical equipment and clearly explain the rule of a multimodal activity in advance.

6.1.1 Consider the time for implementing a multimodal activity

As for locating their own school map, which was almost at the end of lesson, students needed to have recess then, so I planned to let them do this activity in the next lesson; however, most of them stayed and said they were willing to finish this activity. They carefully cut out the pictures and placed them on the map, and their matching was correct. (Teacher-researcher’s observation, 31/7/2019)

Students were willing to finish this activity even when it was almost the end of the lesson. Some of them would rather shorten their recess time to finish this activity. (Classroom teacher Y’s observation, 31/7/2019)

The time needed to conduct a multimodal activity should be estimated before its implementation. According to the observation of both classroom teachers, students did not finish “Map locating” activity because of time limitations, and some students shortened their recess time to finish the map. With insufficient time
to complete an activity, the quality of the final work was low. Students finished the map at a lower quality because some were eager for recess. Students who still wanted to accomplish the map might have been disturbed by students who wanted to enjoy recess and did the activity as quickly as they could. Also, the activity’s purpose could not be achieved because students did not get enough practice to memorise the words being taught.

**6.1.2 Well-prepared technical equipment**

Today, I planned to teach words of body parts with the song “Head shoulders knees and toes”. However, after given out students’ name, I found that the computer was not working. The classroom teacher came over and tried to fix it for me but failed. Then I had to sing the song by myself and I felt a little bit embarrassed. Also, the atmosphere was not as active as playing the song with smartboard and computer. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 14/8/2019)

Teacher-researcher: What would you do if all the audial materials you prepared before can’t be used in the class because of unexpected situations?
Classroom teacher R: Have a backup device for example phone or iPad sing it to the students and they will pick it up
Classroom teacher Y: T should learn the song herself, and should prepare printouts of song words as plan B.

Conducting a multimodal activity had high requirements for technical equipment because different modes are presented with technical equipment. Also, technical equipment helped the modes integrate, which made the teaching atmosphere livelier. Therefore, technical equipment should be checked when beginning a multimodal activity. According to the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal in conducting “Listen and sing” activity, the effects of multimodal activity decreased without the use of technical equipment, and the teaching atmosphere was not as animated as playing songs with technical equipment.

However, technical equipment in classrooms inevitably malfunction; thus, as stated in the classroom teachers’ interviews, a ‘plan B’ should be prepared before the lesson. Instead of completely relying on technical equipment in the classroom, teachers can utilise their own technical devices in class, such as an iPhone or iPad.
Also, they can print out the teaching materials for students in case unexpected situations with technical equipment occur.

6.1.3 Clear explanation of the rules of multimodal activity

I told students the rule of the activity with oral explanation, but students were not very interested at the beginning because they were still not very clear about what they were going to do. Then I showed students the rules by a picture and presented it again with the classroom teacher, students started to be active and tried to join the activity by raising their hands. In order to make the activity clearer, I invited some students to practice in two groups. The atmosphere became more active after introducing the activity with different ways. Students actively raised their hands to challenge different roles in the activity and were able to help each other pass a word together. Regardless of whether their writing was correct, they cheered with each other when they finished, showing the team spirit well. (Teacher-researcher's reflection journal, 4/9/2019)

Clear explanation of rules was crucial to conducting a multimodal activity. In the above journal entry, the teacher-researcher noted using three methods to help students understand the activity “Transfer the word with your body”: explanation, self-performance and practice among students. First, she explained the rules with students’ native language, and then she gave examples with the classroom teacher to make the rules clearer. Finally, she invited some students to practise so all students were more familiar with the rules of the activity. In other words, students comprehend the rules through visual, auditory and kinesthetic ways, which made the rules more easily understood and allowed students to get into the activity quickly.

According to the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, observation of both classroom teachers and the teacher-researcher, and classroom teacher interviews, it is suggested that theachers should consider the time for implementing a multimodal activity, check the techniqual equipment and clearly explain the rule of a multimodal activity in advance.
6.2 During the Lesson

According to the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, observation of both classroom teachers and the teacher-researcher, and classroom teacher interviews, two suggestions have been concluded during the lesson. Teachers need build scaffolding for students in multimodal activities and involve competition appropriately in multimodal activities.

6.2.1 Scaffolding students in multimodal activities

When I gave out the traditional Chinese paper, students looked at the paper curiously because they have never seen this kind of paper before, they kept discussing with others about how to hold the paper. I couldn’t help smiling when I saw their curious face and hilarious way of holding the paper, then I showed them the correct way of holding the paper and they focused on my presentation and imitated carefully. I also presented the character tracing animation of ‘妈’ (Mum) on the smart board when they were ready. Some students were very surprised and said: ‘it looks awesome’. ‘Yeah, and you can trace the character on the paper and write your first Hanzi now’, I answered. Students observed the animation in earnest and raised their first Hanzi to me when they finished with a big smile. I could feel a sense of achievement from students. However, as the activity kept going, more difficult words for tracing animation were presented, such as 爸爸 (Dad), 哥哥 (Big brother), some students started to feel frustrated. One boy even said: ‘It’s too hard’ and he felt very depressed due to writing difficulty. I tried to calm him down, but he kept scribbling on the paper and neglected me. Because of students’ complaints, I had to stop the activity and let them write Pinyin instead. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 15/5/2019)

This activity was very helpful, all students seemed interested in this activity and focused on tracing at the beginning, although some words were too complicated for them to trace in one lesson, more scaffoldings are need. (Observation of Classroom teacher R, 15/5/2019)

In education, scaffolding is a series of instructional techniques are adopted by the teacher to help students progressively understand and finally become independent in the learning process. Scaffolding aims to ‘reduce the negative emotions and self-perceptions that students may experience when they get frustrated, intimidated, or discouraged when attempting a difficult task without the assistance, direction, or understanding they need to complete it’ (Great Schools Partnership, 2015).
Observations by the classroom teacher for “Trace with animation” activity indicated that more scaffolding was needed when conducting multimodal activities for vocabulary teaching. During the tracing activity, the teacher-researcher found that students did not know how to hold the paper and used four squares to write one character. Learning how to write Chinese vocabulary is an essential part of vocabulary learning. However, the Chinese writing system is a two-dimensional block structure and is very different from the English writing system, which a one-dimensional linear structure (Lu, 2016). Differences between the two writing systems leads to different writing paper designs. So it was understandable that students did not know how to use the Chinese writing paper and scaffolding, such as an explanation of how to use the paper to write, was necessary. Also, students could not follow the animation because the speed was too fast. Slowing down the speed of the animation was also necessary for students’ vocabulary writing, which was another instructional technique the teacher-researcher could offer.

When I started to play the music we learned before, they became excited instantly and kept move their body. Then I gave out the uncompleted lyrics and told them what we would do today. Because they liked the song, they were willing to learn it and followed my instruction. They took their worksheet with them and sat at their desk and waiting for me patiently. Then I started to replay the music we learned before, and they started to fill in the page. However, only a few of them tried to write something, most of them signed and gave up quickly. Most students complained that it was too difficult and tried to copy something from their desk mates. I had to stop because students were too noisy. I though this activity may be above their learning level, more scaffolds were needed. (Teacher-researcher’s observation, 29/5/2019)

This is a good activity to engage students, but the lyrics were too difficult for them to write out without any scaffolding, which discouraged them a lot. (Observation of the classroom teacher, 29/5/2019)

Student E: Yeah, I enjoy the music. The tune is catchy and makes me want to dance.
Teacher-researcher: But I have looked at your worksheets already, all of you didn’t write anything, could you please tell me the reason?
Student N: Because it’s too hard to write Chinese, we never learned writing these words before.
Other students: Yes, it’s too hard. (They nodded at the same time)
The implementation of “Match the lyrics” activity also indicated the importance of scaffolding. Students could not write vocabulary without appropriate scaffolding. Students had only tried Chinese writing several times and were not familiar with the Chinese writing pattern. Requiring students to dictate new words without any scaffolding was well above their language level. More scaffolding, such as vocabulary cards with writing sequence or matching lyrics by providing the missing lyrics at the beginning of the worksheet, would be better.

### 6.2.2 Involve competition appropriately in multimodal activities

In this lesson, the main activity is listening and catching the words and sentences. I used the form of group competition to stimulate their enthusiasm, which was very effective at the beginning. Students were very active in finding the words cards or sentences they heard. They repeated what I said in a low voice and looked for the word cards. They kept calling my name once they found the word, hoping that I can see them immediately. Whenever they got a point, they called out ‘Yeah!’ But I also noticed that some groups of students were frustrated and discouraged, as they can’t find words. So I gave them as many opportunities as possible to answer questions and keep them motivated. As the activity kept going, I gave students some phrases and sentences like “我的妈妈” (My mum), “你的哥哥” (your brother) and even a sentence “我爱我的妹妹” (I love my younger sister). Students still could find these phrases and sentences correctly. At the end of this activity, I required students to make sentences with vocabulary cards they had. To my surprise, each group gave a sentence with correct grammar. (Teacher-researcher’s observation, 22/5/2019)

They were highly motivated; they were eager to raise vocabulary cards. Some frequently called the teacher for a chance of getting a point. Students worked well in groups. Very few students were distracted from learning activities. Most Students were fully concentrated on the screen. They felt a little disappointed for losing the competition for a while but rejoined into the activity later. Team competition is a very engaging method, but students may get too excited, which may cause them to be silly, this is something small and can be fixed. Most students said they had fun after the Chinese teacher-researcher left. (Classroom teacher R’s observation, 22/5/2019)

According to both teachers’ observations for “Catch what you hear” activity, the teaching strategy of competition played an important role in conducting this multimodal activity with vocabulary cards. Students were highly engaged due to
the competitive aspect. Students actively raised cards and called the teacher-researcher, which showed their high interests in joining the multimodal activity. Also, most students continued to discuss the activity after class and said they had fun in this competitive multimodal activity, further supporting the value of competition.

However, involving competition in multimodal teaching also caused problems for vocabulary learning. Students got too excited and forgot that the purpose of the activity was to learn vocabulary. Also, most students in one group relied on certain students who learned well to win the game, and did not make an effort to learn. Students also had low self-efficacy—the judgement of personal capacity to perform a specific and prospective task—which may affect an individual’s level of motivation, affective states and actions (Bandura, 1997). Chan and Lam (2008) observed that students’ self-efficacy decreased when they engaged in vicarious learning in a competitive classroom. Involving competition in a multimodal teaching approach is a double-edged sword; thus, future studies could explore how to make full use of the advantage of this teaching strategy while avoiding the disadvantages.

6.2.3 Try to check each student’s understanding

In today’s review, I found most students didn’t remember what we learned last week, and they were confused about the words we learned last week. I tried to find the reason of this situation. After looking at the observation of the classroom teacher, I found that her observation was not consistent with my own impression about the process of the last lesson. According to the classroom teacher’s observation, only a certain group student understood words taught on that day and they kept raising hands to answer questions. Because I checked students’ understanding by inviting students who raised their hands to answer questions, the certain group of students who were outgoing kept raising hands. They attracted my attention a lot and left me with an impression that the whole class learned very well. However, the reality was not as satisfying as I thought. Only checking students’ understanding according to raising hands may need to be changed. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 7/6/2019)

The checking strategy employed during multimodal activities could not only focus on certain students. During the activity ‘Gesture the words’, the teacher-
researcher checked students’ understanding by asking students to answer questions according to their willingness. Students who understood the counting rules quickly got the answers and kept raising their hands. The teacher-researcher’s attention was attracted by students who actively answered questions and the inactive students were neglected, which led to some students’ indifference in this activity. To learn about students’ understanding, the teacher-researcher should pay attention to every student in the class and try to involve as many students as possible in the activity, so every child has a chance to answer questions. Students can be divided into small groups so they cooperate with group members to get the answer if there are too many students in one class.

Two suggestions have been concluded during the lesson from the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, observation of both classroom teachers and the teacher-researcher, and classroom teacher interviews. Teachers need build scaffolding for students in multimodal activities and involve competition appropriately in multimodal activities.

6.3 At the End of the Lesson

One suggestion has been concluded from the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, observation of both classroom teachers and the teacher-researcher, and classroom teacher interviews for teachers who are at the end of a multimodal lesson. Teachers need to give feedback to students about their performance in these activities.

During the activity, each student was in a hurry, and they paid all attention to this activity. Some of them hesitated while recalling the writing sequence, and when they remembered the writing order, their faces suddenly became bright and they were very excited and began to write carefully on the hands of their companions. Students who finished transfer gathered together to help the later students and provided some guidance on the writing. I can see their willingness to write words although their writing sequence is incorrect. (Teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, 12/6/2019)

Although students were really into the activity, students’ writing sequence was still not correct. As a learning activity, some feedback about their writing should be provided to help students write correctly. (Classroom teacher Y’s observation, 12/6/2019)
Feedback from the teacher should be provided at the end of multimodal activities. Although the teacher-researcher observed that students’ writing sequences were incorrect in conducting “Transfer the word with your body” activity, she did not give any feedback on students’ vocabulary writing, which led to no improvement in students’ vocabulary writing. Feedback in an educational context means a clear, constructive and specific communication given by the teacher to help students enhance learning (Wallace & Kirkman, 2017). The two types of feedback are praise and constructive comment. Praise is used to acknowledge students’ present achievements, and it immediately motivates students, while constructive comments set the direction for students’ improvement (Wallace & Kirkman, 2017). There are some protocols when giving feedback. Regardless of the type of feedback, teachers should always provide feedback based on clear criteria that has been presented at the very beginning of the activity (Berger, Rugen, & Woodfin, 2014; Wiggins, 2012). Feedback also should be comprised of detailed and specific descriptions according to the criteria or learning goals instead of generalised comments (Wiggins, 2012). Wallace and Kirkman (2017) also suggest that feedback should be given kindly, constructively, in a timely way and in an atmosphere of trust.

According to the recommendations on providing feedback, the teacher-researcher can compose the criteria for writing to give students undertaking this activity. It should include clear criteria, such as ‘write the vocabulary out with the correct writing sequence’, and be provided at the beginning of the activity. Then, the teacher can give feedback according to the criteria at the end of the activity. That is, she can acknowledge what students have already achieved, such as active participation, appropriate behaviour and good cooperation. Then, she can point out insufficient aspects in a positive way, such as ‘it would be better to write these words in the correct sequence’.
6.4 Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter answered the third research sub-question: Based on this study, what could be suggested in teaching Chinese vocabulary with a multimodal approach at Western Sydney primary schools? Suggestions for using multimodal pedagogy to teach Chinese vocabulary have been provided according to different stages of a lesson; that is, at the beginning of a lesson, during the lesson and at the end of the lesson.

At the beginning of a lesson, teachers should consider the time needed to complete a multimodal activity because not allowing enough time may lead to a lower quality of students’ learning comprehension. Researcher Shi (2017) expressed similar opinions. He posits the concept ‘度’ [dù, measure or degree] when using multimodal pedagogy for TCFL. Shi (2017) asserts that teachers need to manage ‘度’ well when using multimodal pedagogy for TCFL. Good management of 度 [du] includes having an appropriate number of different modes combined in one activity, an appropriate weight of setting or instruction in the multimodal method, an appropriate period assigned for one specific method, and an appropriate difficulty for the multimodal activity (Shi, 2017). Further, teachers should check the technical equipment before the multimodal activity because technical equipment is the carrier of modes, and it makes the teaching atmosphere more animated. Song (2012) concurs that multimedia equipment plays an important role in multimodal teaching and she offers some principles for using multimedia equipment. Moreover, teachers need to clearly explain the rules of a multimodal activity at the beginning of the lesson.

During the lesson, scaffolding was required to help students participate better in multimodal activities. Incorporating competition into a multimodal activity had both advantages and disadvantages, so teachers need to make use of its benefits and explore strategies to compensate for its disadvantages. Further research could explore how to avoid the disadvantages of involving competition in multimodal
activities. Moreover, teachers need to pay attention to all students instead of certain groups of students when using a multimodal teaching approach.

At the end of the lesson, teachers need to provide feedback to students about their performance in multimodal activities. Teachers should give detailed feedback, positively presented, according to criteria set before the activity.
Chapter 7 – Conclusion

This chapter draws on all the findings of the research. Key findings are listed as possible suggestions based on all evidence the teacher-researcher collected. Finally, it lists the limitation of this research and provides recommendation for further research, and for teaching and learning Chinese in Australia.

7.1 Summary of Chapters

This thesis reports on the teacher-researcher’s efforts to investigate how a beginning bilingual volunteer teacher used multimodal pedagogy to make Chinese vocabulary learnable for beginning learners in an English-speaking country. Previous chapters are summarised below.

Chapter 1 provided the background of this thesis. Since Chinese vocabulary teaching was not particularly paid attention to and the traditional monomodal methods was tedious and couldn’t intrigue students’ interest, the main research question and three research sub-questions were generated to provide a structure for exploring how to teach Chinese vocabulary for beginning learners with multimodal pedagogy. The main outcomes and significance of this study were provided, and the thesis structure outlined to indicate each chapter’s content.

Chapter 2 reviewed the relevant literatures determined by research questions and identified the gaps in current knowledge. After introducing the main situation of vocabulary teaching in TCFL, this chapter reviewed the basic concepts of a multimodal approach, which were multimodality, modes and multimodal pedagogy. The chapter concluded that there is lack of research in current literature focused on using multimodal pedagogy for teaching foreign language.

Chapter 3 introduced the study’s research method. It defined action research and provided the theoretical context of this method. It briefly described the research design, which included the participants, research site, and what would be done during the two cycles. Finally, it listed the methods of collecting and analysing
data, and addressed the issues of ethics, reliability and generalisability of the research, to ensure the data collected were trustworthy.

Chapter 4 was the first part of the data analysis, which was based on analysing the teacher-researcher’s lesson plan. The multimodal activities used in this researcher were designed by the teacher-researcher. Factors that influence multimodal design and some principles of using certain modes were concluded.

As the second part of the data analysis, Chapter 5 explored the impact of students learning Chinese vocabulary with multimodal pedagogy. The influence on students’ Chinese vocabulary learning with multimodal pedagogy mainly focused on students’ learning of vocabulary meaning, pronunciation and writing.

Chapter 6 was the last part of the data analysis that provided some suggestions for teaching vocabulary with multimodal pedagogy. According to different lesson stages, various suggestions were determined based on the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal and classroom teachers’ observations.

7.2 Key Findings

This research has found that three factors influenced multimodal design in this study. Teaching content, which is decided by the NSW syllabus in Chinese K–10 while the teacher-researcher devises the scope and sequence, is the base of multimodal design. The students who are taught with multimodal pedagogy play an important role in multimodal design, as their characteristics, backgrounds and daily life experiences influence multimodal lesson design. Finally, the teacher-researcher’s learning and teaching experiences also contribute to the design of multimodal lessons.

According to data collected in this research, some principles of using certain modes for teaching vocabulary have been identified. The quality of images and the relationship between images and vocabulary should be considered when using the visual mode of images. For colour, teachers need to pay attention to colour’s three functions when using it for teaching vocabulary. The audial mode of songs can raise students’ interests in learning vocabulary; however, teachers need to pay
attention to the principles of selecting a song for teaching. First, the contents of the song should be consistent with students’ language level; second, vocabulary being taught should be included in the song; and third, the song needs to have a catchy rhythm. When using gestures in vocabulary teaching, teachers need to pay attention to gestures that may cause misunderstanding or conflict due to having different meanings in different cultures.

Multimodal pedagogy positively influences students’ vocabulary learning. With the help of multimodal pedagogy, students comprehend and memorise the meaning of vocabulary more easily. Students have less anxiety over reading and pronouncing vocabulary accurately, and are more willing to write Chinese characters when taught with multimodal pedagogy. As noted in Chapter 6, multimodal pedagogy helps students’ vocabulary meaning comprehension and memorisation, and improves their willingness to write Chinese characters. However, due to time limitation and the complexity of Chinese writing system itself, students’ writing sequence when writing Chinese characters is still chaotic, and more time is needed to learn stroke sequences.

Although the multimodal approach has proven to be a good way to engage students’ vocabulary learning, the expected effects of multimodal pedagogy cannot be achieved without other supporting factors. Some suggestions for conducting a multimodal lesson have been determined from this research. At the beginning of the lesson, teachers need to consider the time needed for different multimodal activities, check technical equipment to ensure it works well during the lesson, and explain the rules of different multimodal activities clearly. During the lesson, teachers need to scaffold students in participating in multimodal activities, use competition appropriately, and try to check each student’s understanding. At the end of the lesson, feedback should be provided by teachers so that students can better understand what has been taught during the lesson.

7.3 Limitations of this Study

As this qualitative research was conducted with a small group of participants,
some limitations need to be noted. First, there is limited generalisability. The participants of this research are 30 students and two classroom teachers from a primary school in the western Sydney region. A smaller group of six students participated in the focus group. Therefore, this sample size is not large enough to construct a solid theory and draw generalisable conclusions. Further, the findings of this study are subject to the influences of different socio-economic backgrounds and geographical areas.

There was also a limited timeframe. The teacher-researcher had only 18 months to conduct the research. The first nine months were used for learning how to conduct research and deciding on a research topic. As the thesis was written in the last three months, only six months was available to collect data (i.e., two school terms). Due to the time limitation, this research was not able to explore some other variables, such as gender and age, which may contribute to higher levels of language learning.

Furthermore, there were limited data resources. The teacher-researcher used three ways to collect data, which were interviews, observations and documentation. However, students’ practice of Chinese is limited in Chinese class, and there is no language environment for them to speak Chinese outside the lesson, the data collected from classroom teachers and students through interviews and focus group showed a small influence on students’ learning improvement. Most data analysis relied on the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, which may affect the reliability of the findings of this research.

Finally, this research did not involve any control group in which monomodal methods can been used in contrast with a multimodal approach, which would help to draw a more affirmative conclusion that a multimodal approach is more effective than monomodal methods. Further research on this topic would be beneficial to include quantitative data.

7.4 Recommendations for Further Study

Since there are limitations in the current study, some recommendations for
Further research is provided.

First, a long-term research study could be undertaken to examine the effectiveness of using multimodal pedagogy in foreign language teaching. Because the participants of this research are 30 beginning Chinese learners, the teaching content is limited to Chinese words and some simple sentences. A long-term study could explore the influence of using multimodal pedagogy on students’ higher-level language learning. Also, other variables that may influence students’ higher-level language learning, such as gender and age, can also be verified.

Second, data resources could be diversified. This research used qualitative data and analysis of the data mostly relied on the teacher-researcher’s reflection journal, so the findings of this research are subjective. More quantitative data could be involved in further studies to make the findings and conclusions more objective.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Western Sydney University Human Ethics Approval

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

1 April 2019
Associate Professor Anne Power
School of Education

Dear Anne,

Project Title: "An Action Research Project of Teaching Chinese Vocabulary with Multimodal Approaches"

HREC Approval Number: H13156
Risk Rating: HREC - Moderate

I am pleased to advise the above research project meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2013).

Ethical approval for this project has been granted by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018).

Approval of this project is valid from 1 April 2019 until 1 April 2020.

This protocol covers the following researchers:
Anne Power, Mengyao Feng, Kay Carroll

Summary of Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report will be due annually on the anniversary of the approval date.

2. A final report will be due at the expiration of the approval period.

3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee prior to being implemented. Amendments must be requested using the HREC Amendment Request Form.

4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events on participants must be reported to the Human Research Ethics Committee via the Human Ethics Officer as a matter of priority.

5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the Committee as a matter of priority.

6. Consent forms are to be retained within the archives of the School or Research Institute and made available to the Committee upon request.

7. Project specific conditions:
There are no specific conditions applicable.

Please quote the registration number and title as indicated above in the subject line on all future correspondence related to this project. All correspondence should be sent to humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au as this email address is closely monitored.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Professor Elizabeth Deane
Presiding Member,
Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee
Appendix B State Research Approval Process Approval (SEARP)

Dear Miss Feng,

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in NSW government schools entitled *An Action Research of Teaching Chinese Vocabulary with Multimodal Approach*. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved.

You may contact principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation. You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to principals.

This approval will remain valid until 7 June 2020.

The following researchers or research assistants have fulfilled the Working with Children screening requirements to interact with or observe children for the purposes of this research for the period indicated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher name</th>
<th>WWCC</th>
<th>WWCC expires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mengyao Feng</td>
<td>WWC1744228V</td>
<td>30-Aug-2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As this research does not involve face-to-face contact with children, no researchers or research assistants have been screened to interact with or observe children.

I draw your attention to the following requirements for all researchers in NSW government schools:

- The privacy of participants is to be protected as per the NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- School principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time. The approval of the principal for the specific method of gathering information must also be sought.
- The privacy of the school and the student is to be protected.
- The participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and must be at the school’s convenience.
- Any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the research approvals officer before publication proceeds.
- All conditions attached to the approval must be complied with.

When your study is completed please email your report to: serap@det.nsw.edu.au.
You may also be asked to present on the findings of your research.

I wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Sandi Simpkins
Director, School Policy and Information Management
Friday, 7 June 2019
Appendix C: Letter to Principal of Participant School

Dear Mr. L,

I am Mengyao Feng, one of the Chinese teachers at Bennett Road Public School. I am going to conduct a research about Chinese teaching pedagogy at class 4A of this school and my research topic is about using multimodal approaches to teach Chinese vocabulary, which aims to improve the teaching efficiency of Chinese vocabulary. I have discussed my research with my mentor Natalie Marr and the classroom teacher of class 4A Mrs. Rebecca and got their approval and I would greatly appreciate your approval of my research.

Thank you

Mengyao Feng
Appendix D: Timeline for the research

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<td>Choose a research topic</td>
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<td>Ethics application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
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<td>Data analysis</td>
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<td>Thesis submission</td>
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</table>
Appendix E: Interview of classroom teacher

Interview of classroom teacher for modes selection

Explanation: Mode is a mean-making system and semiotic signs used in communication, such as language, image, sound, gesture, and they can be divided into five types of modes: linguistic modes, visual modes, audio modes, gestural modes and spatial modes.

1. Do you see the benefit of teaching Chinese language? What is the benefit?

2. What kinds of mode or mode combination do you think students like best in teaching vocabulary?

3. What do you consider when choosing a mode or mode combination for vocabulary teaching? Or what is the reason for your choice of using these modes for teaching some vocabulary?

4. What kinds of mode or mode combination do you often use in teaching vocabulary?

5. According to the mode or mode combination you mentioned in the last question, can you give some suggestions about how to use them in teaching vocabulary?
Interview of classroom teacher after each lesson

1. What were the good points about this class? What can be improved?

2. Is it appropriate to use songs and recording materials/gesture/picture material to teach Chinese vocabulary? Why do you think so?

3. Can you list some advantages of using songs and audial materials/gesture/picture material to teach Chinese words?

4. Can you list any disadvantages of using songs and audial materials/gesture/picture material to teach Chinese words?

5. What advice do you have for teaching Chinese with songs and audial materials/gesture/picture material?

Note: The interview will be given to classroom teachers every two weeks and it will be incorporated with the observation sheet.
Appendix F: Focus group of students

1. Do you enjoy the Chinese class in this term? Why or why not?

2. In this term we used different methods for teaching Chinese words, they are:

   a) Songs and recording materials
   b) Videos and pictures
   c) Facial expressions or body movement
   d) Teachers’ explanation in English

      Can you list them from your most favourite to your least favourite?

3. In this term we used different method for teaching Chinese vocabulary, they are:

   a) Songs and recording materials
   b) Videos and pictures
   c) Facial expressions or body movement
   d) Teachers’ explanation in English

Which method helps you memorise Chinese words most effectively? Can you list these methods according to their effectiveness?

4. What do you like about teaching with songs and recording materials? What do you dislike about it? Do you have any suggestions for how to use this method?

5. What do you like about teaching with videos and pictures? What do you dislike about it? Do you have any suggestions for how to use this method?

6. What do you like about teaching with facial expressions and body movement? What do you dislike about it? Do you have any suggestions for how to use this method?

7. What do you like about teaching with teachers’ explanation in English? What do you dislike about it? Do you have any suggestions for how to use this method?
### Appendix G: A sample of vocabulary knowledge scale

#### Vocabulary knowledge scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>I don’t remember having heard/seen this word before</th>
<th>I have seen/heard this word before, but I don’t think I know what it means</th>
<th>I have seen/heard this word before, and I think it means</th>
<th>I know this word. It means</th>
<th>I can use this word in a sentence:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nǐ hǎo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>zǎo shàng</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>wǎn shàng</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>hěn hǎo</td>
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<tr>
<td>míng tiān</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zài jiàn</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The VKS scale is adapted from Wesche & Paribakht, 1996
Appendix H: A sample of lesson plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time guide</th>
<th>Students learning activities</th>
<th>Modes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2mins</td>
<td>Greeting and introduction of today’s learning contents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3mins</td>
<td>Play a Chinese song that concludes words that students will learn in this class. Lyrics of the song: Nǐ hǎo, nǐ hǎo, nǐ hǎo ma? Zǎo shàng hǎo, zǎo shàng hǎo! Nǐ hǎo, nǐ hǎo, nǐ hǎo ma? Wǎn shàng hǎo, wǎn shàng hǎo! Zài jiàn, zài jiàn, zài jiàn! Míng tiān jiàn, míng tiān jiàn! Zài jiàn, zài jiàn, zài jiàn! Míng tiān zài jiàn.</td>
<td>song, image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5mins</td>
<td>Read the lyrics with recording materials.</td>
<td>audio mode, language mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td>Guessing the means of words appeared in the recording materials with some pictures.</td>
<td>audio mode, image mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Sing the song together twice.</td>
<td>song mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5mins</td>
<td>Review and conclude what we learn today: greeting with each other in pairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix I: Observation sheet for the classroom teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points to observe</th>
<th>Words tick list</th>
<th>Notes and evidence from observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The song and recording material (audio modes) used in this lesson help students</td>
<td>____Most agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memorise words.</td>
<td>____Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____Most disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The song and recording material (audio modes) used in this lesson help students’</td>
<td>____Most agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronunciation.</td>
<td>____Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____Most disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The song and recording material (audio modes) used in this lesson help students’</td>
<td>____Most agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing of words.</td>
<td>____Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____Disagree</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>____Most disagree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The song and recording material (audio modes) used in this lesson help students’</td>
<td>____Most agree</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>using of words.</td>
<td>____Agree</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____Most disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students enjoy learning words with this modes combination.</td>
<td>____All of the time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____Most of the time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____Some of the time</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____Never</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix J: Scope and sequence for Stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage and term</th>
<th>Learning Focus</th>
<th>Sample Learning Experiences</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2 Term 1</td>
<td>Me and my family</td>
<td>Ask students what festivals they celebrate and compare different festivals in Australia and China. Introduce and describe themselves. Introduce and describe family members.</td>
<td><strong>Language:</strong> Name, surname, my name is… Father, mother, grandfather, grandmother Morning, afternoon, evening, night How are you, I am fine, thank you, and you, I am fine too. 1–10 numbers Family celebrations in China: Spring Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-autumn Festival <strong>Intercultural:</strong> Different name pattern in Chinese. Family size in China. Compare and contrast ways of celebrating in China and Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2 Term 2</td>
<td>My School</td>
<td>Respond to classroom instructions and routines in Chinese Write subjects in pinyin on the front of all the subjects’ booklets. Identify and describe classroom spaces and items Describe the school in Chinese including number and size of buildings, number of students, number of teachers, class names, names of buildings and spaces. Recognise and say the date in Chinese.</td>
<td><strong>Language:</strong> Class routine: 上课, 起立. 同学们好, 老师好, 请坐. (Class begins, stand up please, good morning students, good morning teacher, sit down please.) Math, English, Science, Chinese, P.E., history, biology… Day, month, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. 喜欢, 不喜欢 (like, dislike) You, me, he/she, we, they Names of classroom items (book, pen, paint, bookshelf, desk, chair) and parts of the school (classroom, library, canteen, office) Size vocabulary (large, small) <strong>Intercultural:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping for clothes</td>
<td>Identifying and describing clothing items</td>
<td>Language: Shirt, t-shirt, hat, pants, dress, jumper, jeans, coat, trousers Good-looking(好看), ugly(难看), cheap, expensive, big, small. 元角分(Dollar, dime, cent) Price This, that, these, those 这个东西多少钱(What is the price for this) 这个东西…(This cost…) …块钱可以吗(Is it okay with …(Price)?)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 3</td>
<td>Intercultural: Comparing Chinese money with Australian money Bargaining in China</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Term 4</td>
<td>Identifying Chinese cities and landmarks from a map. Recognising Chinese landmarks from a picture or video. Recognising Chinese foods from a Chinese menu. Listening to a story about the origin of Chinese sports (Ping-Pong, football, basketball, badminton Where do you live? I live in… I want (this food). I do not want (this food).</td>
<td>Language: Beijing, Shanghai, Xi’an, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Chengdu, Harbin The Great Wall, the Palace Museum…… Dumplings, Bao, Noodle, Sausage, Rice, Fried Rice…. Ping-Pong, football, basketball, badminton Where do you live? I live in… I want (this food). I do not want (this food).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pong), and recognising traditional Chinese sports.</td>
<td>I like (this)…. I do not like (this)…. South, north, east, west</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intercultural:</strong> Comparing Chinese sports and foods with students’ experiences of sports and foods.</td>
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