Making Chinese learnable from perspectives of Australian beginning learners:

Through lesson preparation, materials and teaching strategies

YUE Yi

Bachelor of Arts (Teaching Chinese as Foreign Language)
(Anhui Normal University, 2012)

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education (Honours)

Research Oriented School Engaged Teacher Education (ROSETE) Partnership

School of Education
University of Western Sydney

Supervisory Panel

Professor Michael Singh (Principal Supervisor)
Dr Jinghe Han (Associate Supervisor)

March, 2014
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 Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

..................

Yi YUE

March, 2014
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout my whole journey of becoming a teacher-researcher, I received plenty of support from supervisors, colleagues and family so that I could present this research project to the public. First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my Principal Supervisor, Professor Michael Singh, who provided with significant guidance that inspired me to have these ideas presented in my thesis. His arrangement of weekly meetings, workshops and seminars delivered important skills for being a researcher and writing a thesis.

Second, special gratitude goes to my Associate Supervisor Dr Jinghe Han, who cared about my life and made me feel like I have a family in this country. She also organised activities for my colleagues and me and even cooked Chinese cuisine so that we would not feel homesick.

As a volunteer teacher, I appreciated this opportunity initiated by the three parties: Ningbo Municipal Education Bureau, the NSW department of Education and Training (Western Sydney Region) and the University of Western Sydney (Centre for Educational Research). With their efforts, this program was organised and I was lucky to become a part of this family. Additionally, I am grateful for the training that Cheryl Ballantyne (School Development Officer) from DEC offered and from whom I learned teaching methodology and culture comparison which was not taught at my
university lectures in China.

I would love to express my appreciation to the principal, teachers and students in my participant school. With their support, I was able to conduct the research successfully, experience local school context and improve my teaching capabilities.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest love for my family. Their understanding and encouragement gave me the strength to believe in myself and continue to do what I want to do.
# CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** .................................................................................................................................................i

**LIST OF TABLES** ......................................................................................................................................................... viii

**LIST OF FIGURES** ...........................................................................................................................................................ix

**ABSTRACT** ...........................................................................................................................................................................xii

Chapter 1 ...............................................................................................................................................................................1

Making Chinese learnable for beginning second language learners ................. 1

1.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................................................... 1

1.2 The Background of the researcher ......................................................................................................................... 3

1.3 Research questions ...................................................................................................................................................... 7

1.4 Significance and value of this study ......................................................................................................................... 9

1.5 Preview of the literature review ............................................................................................................................ 10

1.5.1 Circumstance of Chinese in the world ............................................................................................................. 10

1.5.2 Issue of teaching materials ............................................................................................................................ 11

1.5.3 Possible ideas of teaching strategies ............................................................................................................... 12

1.5.4 Professional development as beginning bilingual teacher ......................................................................... 14

1.6 Preview of research method .................................................................................................................................. 15

1.7 Thesis statement ....................................................................................................................................................... 18

1.8 Structure of this thesis .............................................................................................................................................. 20

Chapter 2 ..........................................................................................................................................................................22

Making Chinese learnable – a theoretic-practical framework: ......................... 22

2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................................................... 22

2.2 Circumstance of Chinese teaching and learning .................................................................................................. 23

2.2.1 Situation of Chinese language in the world .................................................................................................. 24

2.2.2 Challenges of Chinese teaching .................................................................................................................... 27

2.2.3 Learners’ perspective of Chinese learning concerns ..................................................................................... 28

2.3 Lesson preparation through choosing teaching materials .................................................................................. 30

2.3.1 Critique of textbooks and ideas of selecting materials .................................................................................. 30

2.3.2 Current issues of teaching materials in TCFL education ............................................................................. 32
2.4 Teaching strategies from learners’ perspective ................................................................. 36
  2.4.1 Anxiety and reticence in second language classroom ................................................. 36
  2.4.2 Critique of monolingualism ......................................................................................... 38
  2.4.3 Critique and difficulties of CLT ................................................................................... 40
  2.4.4 Using learners’ first language to learn Chinese ......................................................... 43
  2.4.5 Interaction strategy in the classroom ......................................................................... 46
2.5 The development of teaching abilities as beginning bilingual volunteer teacher .......... 49
  2.5.1 Current problems of qualified teachers ....................................................................... 49
  2.5.2 Teacher’s identity as bilingual .................................................................................... 50
  2.5.3 Challenges as beginning bilingual volunteer teacher-researcher .............................. 51
2.6 Gaps in present knowledge and understandings ............................................................. 54
2.7 Summary .......................................................................................................................... 55

Chapter 3 ......................................................................................................................... 56

Justifying the research methodology and methods: ......................................................... 56
3.1. Introduction .................................................................................................................... 56
3.2. A research methodology for studying this particular field ........................................... 57
3.3. Research strategy – Case study ..................................................................................... 60
  3.3.1 Definition of case study ............................................................................................ 60
  3.3.2 Case study for teacher-researchers’ professional learning ......................................... 62
  3.3.3 Triangulation ............................................................................................................ 64
3.4 Case study research design ............................................................................................. 66
  3.4.1 Research site ............................................................................................................. 66
  3.4.2 Ethical considerations ............................................................................................... 68
  3.4.3 Participants and the criteria for their selection ......................................................... 71
3.5 Generating the findings: Data collection methods .......................................................... 74
  3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews ....................................................................................... 74
  3.5.2 Observations ............................................................................................................. 76
  3.5.3 Diaries/reflection journal ......................................................................................... 78
  3.5.4 Questionnaire .......................................................................................................... 80
  3.5.5 Statement of connection to research questions ....................................................... 82
3.6 Verifying the conclusions reached in the proposed thesis: Data analysis techniques ...... 84
  3.6.1 First level analysis with coding ............................................................................... 84
3.6.2 Second level analysis -- Evidentiary unit conceptual analysis.......................... 86

3.7 Summary .................................................................................................................. 89

Chapter 4 ...................................................................................................................... 90

Lesson preparation through lesson design and choosing materials ................. 90

4.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 90

4.2 Knowing foreign language learners .................................................................... 90

4.2.1 Background information of learners .............................................................. 92

4.2.2 Purpose of learning Chinese ........................................................................... 94

4.2.3 Characteristics of learners .............................................................................. 96

4.3 Design of a lesson .................................................................................................. 97

4.3.1 My design of lessons ....................................................................................... 98

4.3.2 Importance of sequence in organising activities ............................................ 104

4.4 Choosing appropriate materials to stimulate students’ learning ..................... 107

4.4.1 Relevant to everyday knowledge ..................................................................... 109

4.4.2 Diverse and updated materials based on students’ interest .......................... 113

4.4.3 Design and adapt materials to fit each levels .................................................. 120

4.4.4 Teachers’ feedback ......................................................................................... 123

4.5. Discussion ............................................................................................................ 124

4.6. Summary ............................................................................................................. 125

Chapter 5 ...................................................................................................................... 127

Teaching strategies and students’ learning strategies ................................. 127

5.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 127

5.2 Factors restrains foreign language development ............................................. 127

5.2.1 Anxiety in foreign language classroom ......................................................... 128

5.2.2 Reticence in foreign language classroom ...................................................... 130

5.3 Possible teaching strategies for beginning learners to reduce anxiety and reticence ..... 132

5.3.1 Finding similarities between L1 and FL ......................................................... 133

5.3.2 English as a communication media .............................................................. 136

5.3.3 Teacher interaction strategy for beginning learners ..................................... 138

5.3.4 Learner-centred classroom strategy - Group work ....................................... 142

5.4 Students’ engagement ......................................................................................... 146

5.4.1 Students’ feedback ......................................................................................... 146
7.3.4 The development as a beginning bilingual teacher ................................................. 208

7.4 Limitations and delimitations of this study ................................................................. 211

7.5 Implications for teaching and learning Chinese .......................................................... 213

7.6 Recommendations for further research ....................................................................... 216

7.7 Reflections on becoming a teacher-researcher ........................................................... 218

REFERENCES .................................................................................................................. 222

APPENDICES ................................................................................................................ 229

Appendix 1. University of Western Sydney Human Ethics Approval ............................... 229

Appendix 2. State Education Research Approval Process (SERAP) Approval................. 230

Appendix 3. Participant Information Sheet (Students) ..................................................... 231

Appendix 4. Participant Information Sheet (Parents/Caregivers) .................................... 233

Appendix 5. Participant Information Sheet (Teachers) ..................................................... 235

Appendix 6. Participant Consent Form (Students) ............................................................ 237

Appendix 7. Participant Consent Form (Parents/Caregivers) ........................................... 238

Appendix 8. Participant Consent Form (Teachers) ........................................................... 239

Appendix 9. Interview Schedule (Classroom teacher) ...................................................... 240

Appendix 10. Questionnaire for students (term 1, 2013) ............................................. 242

Appendix 11. Questionnaire for students (term 2, 2013) ............................................. 244

Appendix 12. Unstructured observational feedback (Rosemary) .................................... 246

Appendix 13. Unstructured observational feedback (Halina) ......................................... 247

Appendix 14. Interview Transcript 1 ............................................................................. 249

Appendix 15. Interview Transcript 2 ............................................................................. 253
Table 3.1 Triangulation matrix: Case study data collection and analysis procedures. 65
Table 3.2 Overview of students as participants. 72
Table 4.1 Themes and data information. 91
Table 4.2: Language background survey. 92
Table 4.3 Future expectations of Chinese. 94
Table 4.4 Themes and data information. 97
Table 4.5 Sample of Chinese lesson plan. 98
Table 4.6 Opinions about revision lesson. 101
Table 4.7 Sample of revision lesson plan contains new knowledge and several previous language topics. 102
Table 4.8 Sample of lesson plan showing sequence. 104
Table 4.9 Data information. 108
Table 4.10 Views about content related to everyday knowledge. 111
Table 4.11 Topics that students want to learn in the future learning. 112
Table 4.12 Stages of students’ feedback about Chinese learning in term 1, 2013. 115
Table 4.13 Stages of students’ feedback about Chinese learning in term 2, 2013. 117
Table 4.14 Votes for different materials. 119
Table 5.1 Data information. 128
Table 5.2 Data information. 132
Table 5.3 Evaluation about method of similarities. 134
Table 5.4 Six slides of PowerPoint about family members. 135
Table 5.5 Feedback about using English to learn Chinese. 137
Table 5.6 Group work survey. 143
Table 5.7 Data information. 146
Table 5.8 Feedback of general impression about Chinese lessons. 147
Table 5.9 Impressions about Chinese. 149
Table 6.1 Data information. 163
Table 6.2 Data information. 167
Table 6.3 Data information. 171
Table 6.4 Data information. 178
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 procedure of this project.................................................................19
Figure 4.1 Sample of worksheet for stage 1 ....................................................121
Figure 4.2 Sample of worksheet for stage 2 and stage 3 .................................122
Figure 5.1 sample of group competition.........................................................145
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFL: Chinese as Foreign Language
CLT: Communicative Language Teaching
DEC: Department of Education and Communities
EFL: English as Foreign Language
ESL: English as Second Language
FL: Foreign Language
HL: Heritage Language
IWB: Interactive White Board
L1: First Language
L2: Second Language
NSW: New South Wales
ROSETE: Research-Oriented School-Engaged Teacher Education
SLA: Second Language Acquisition
TCFL: Teaching Chinese as Foreign Language
TL: Target Language
UWS: University of Western Sydney
ABSTRACT

This study concentrates on exploring how to make Chinese learnable for beginning learners in Australia, due to the proliferation of Chinese that attracts an increasing number of people who show intention of learning in the future. Specifically, it offers an investigation into the analysis of three aspects that including lesson preparation through design and materials, teaching strategies and teacher-researcher’s professional learning.

This thesis aims to answer the following three research questions: How to prepare learner-centred lessons and choose appropriate teaching/learning materials to stimulate beginning learners to learn Chinese? What teaching/learning strategies are acceptable to beginning learners to learn Chinese? How can beginning bilingual volunteer teacher-researchers from China improve their skills in lesson preparation and teaching/learning strategies?

Concerns about challenges of teaching around materials and strategies, even the intrinsic difficulties of Chinese itself that impede the development of Chinese learning, questions have to be raised to gain further research insights on how to overcome these difficulties and improve Chinese education. First, before starting lesson preparation, learners’ background information needed to be clarified. Then, the way to design a lesson and the sequence of arranging activities affect students’ learning and
engagement. Several principles of dealing with materials to fit different learners were introduced, as the lack of appropriate materials has been an issue for teachers. Various teaching strategies were adopted specifically for beginning learners, such as using L1, L2 similarities, English as communication tool and facilitator-oriented interaction strategy. Besides, how to develop professional learning as bilingual beginning volunteer teacher was described. Case study was the main research strategy in this study combining the data from interviews and classroom observation with teachers, the questionnaire with students and reflective journals from the teacher herself in order to increase the reliability.

For this research project, beginning learners were stimulated to learn Chinese and achieve slight success. Furthermore, possible ideas of improving teaching materials and using strategies were proved to be feasible. Finally, bilingual beginning volunteer teachers made progress in teaching Chinese and learning to develop as a TCFL teacher-researcher.
Chapter 1

Making Chinese learnable for beginning second language learners

1.1 Introduction

My name is 岳异. It can be written as ‘Yue Yi’ in pinyin (a system of using alphabet to pronounce Chinese words). This name came from a Chinese idiom which can be written as ‘日新月异’ in Chinese characters (Han zi), meaning every day has a new appearance and every month brings about new changes. My last name 岳 which means mountain and my first name 异 means unique or different. I found that it is a challenge for foreign language learners to say my last name 岳, especially to pronounce the letter ‘y’. So I choose a similar sound ‘york’ to help them to pronounce the ‘y’ sound. The pronunciation of my first name 异 is the same sound as the letter ‘e’. However, the tone is quite difficult because English language speakers do not use them very often to convey meanings of words. Both the two characters in my name have the falling tone, just like the tone in ‘yes’.

This short impressionistic story focuses on the challenges of teaching just two Chinese words to beginning foreign language learners who speak English. It gives an incisive impression about the challenges I expected in my efforts to finds ways to
teach so as to make Chinese learnable.

The method that I used to record my story is called “vignettes”. It is a way to develop research writing by telling first-person story to “recall a professional experience that connected many pedagogic identities” (Hunter, 2012, p. 91). In terms of the word “vignette”, Hunter (2012) explains the origin and definition in details:

“The term vignette comes from the French word vigne and means small vine. Vignettes are generally described as short stories, scenarios, depictions of situations, accounts using imagery, and recollection of actions” (Hunter, 2012, p. 92).

Obviously, vignette is a perfect tool using in narrative to describe inside stories, which provides both readers and the author with easily understandable information just as clear as crystal.

The research reported in this thesis focuses on how to make Chinese learnable for beginning learners from the aspects of teaching materials and strategies. In this chapter, the background information is provided first, explaining my personal life experience about how I became a teacher-researcher of Chinese teaching. This background influenced my conception of teaching and how this research was constructed. This information may help readers to know the story behind this research and have a better understanding of it. Then, the main research question followed by three contributory questions are listed. The significance and value of this
research are explained. A preview of the relevant literature and research methods are offered. Finally, the thesis statement is demonstrated and the structure is outlined. After all, this chapter contains clear a view of this research.

1.2 The Background of the researcher

To understand the focus of this research project, it is useful to have an understanding of myself as a teacher-researcher. Research is always about producing original knowledge – and producing innovative researchers. My name is Yue Yi. Yue is my family name, which I inherited from my father. Yi is my given name. As noted in the vignette above my whole name comes from a Chinese idiom, which my mum chose by looking in the dictionary. Mum found this one “日新月异 /ri xin yue yi/” which literally means every day brings about new changes and every month has a different appearance. I guess my parents want me to be an excellent person in every step of my life. My name carries their best wishes for me.

Coming from a family of teachers, I always had a particular interest in education. My dad was a high school teacher and now he is running a school and which the main purpose is helping people to improve their social abilities. My mother is teaching history and geography in the middle school. I believe the root of my strong will to be an excellent teacher comes from the education provided by my family. When I was a child, my grandmother raised me. She used to be a Chinese teacher before her
retirement. She always told me stories and answered my questions patiently. She gave me my very first impression of a good teacher. In addition, my parents’ valuing of education has affected my whole life. My father preferred the development of my abilities rather than the scores I could get in school. During my childhood, my parents never asked me to be the top of the class or forced me to take part in additional classes. Actually, what I needed to do was choose the classes that I liked. Accordingly, I chose to play the piano and erhu (a Chinese traditional instrument that makes beautiful music). Although I gave up playing piano when I went to boarding school, I am still grateful for this experience. I believe that my childhood had less pressure and more freedom than many other Chinese students.

My boarding school experience made up most of my youth. From Year 2 in primary school to now, I have always lived in school that is located far away from the place where my family lived. Surrounded by loneliness around me, however, I also learnt to become more independent and engaged in efficient self-management. This led me to be more mature than others of my age. Nevertheless, I still felt that I lost some mental connection with my parents because every time I came back home, they always had to work. Luckily, I met a teacher who was the most helpful in my learning mathematics at high school. She had a good taste in clothing and looked very charming every day. She liked to tell us stories about her previous students, which made us laugh and taught us at the same time to be good students. Actually, I was good at mathematics but I often felt too nervous under pressure, which always
resulted in failing in the examinations. Without blaming me, she chose to talk with me. Every time after finishing the conversation, I felt relaxed. From day to day, I became more confident and solved my problems about being nervous. Finally, I got 130 out of 150 in my College Entrance Examination. Therefore, the idea that teachers could make an educational difference was impressed upon in my heart.

Enrolling at Anhui Normal University I was a little bit upset at first about my major, which is teaching Chinese as second/foreign language. The main reason for my disquiet is that I am not proficient in Chinese even though I know it is profound and well worth studying and researching. My father said that my whole family is not well versed at Chinese so that maybe I just did not have the right ‘gene’. To be honest, I was more interested in mathematics than Chinese. However, when I started my studies of Chinese including its pronunciation, characters (Han zi), and grammar, I felt that what I had known was just a small part of this precious intellectual culture. During the days on campus, I learned much more theoretical knowledge and methodology about teaching Chinese as second/foreign language. The history and culture about China totally fascinated me. Not surprisingly, I started to think about how to make Chinese learnable for foreigners so as to let others have a much better understanding of it.

During my last year at University I was given a precious chance to have my internship in an international school. Because of this opportunity, I met a very
experienced teacher called Brett. Brett is an Australian who has been a teacher for over 15 years. He had a great influence on my understanding of teaching. On the first day of my internship, one of the teachers was absent and they asked me to take her place! It was really a huge challenge because the students in her three classes were totally different Year levels, ranging from Year 1 to Year 11. When I went to the Year 1 class, the children were so excited about their ‘new teacher’. They moved around in the classroom and did not follow my instruction. I hardly knew what to do with this situation. I was very confused about how I should proceed. So I went to Brett to ask for help. He said nothing but asked me to play a little game to gain the little children’s attention. They became very concentrated and involved. It was so very impressive that I realised a real excellent teacher is the one who has his own methods to stimulate students’ interest and make even difficult knowledge learnable. After that, I reset my goal of teaching, which is to research and think about my own ways to gain students’ keen interest in learning Chinese. During the period of my internship, I observed all his classes - English reading, mathematics, and social environment. His methods of explaining the knowledge made it learnable and a great deal of fun. Therefore, all the children loved his lessons and enjoyed the time they spent with him. This experience was the milestone in shaping my views about theoretic-practical ideas of education.

In 2012, I was selected to be the volunteer teacher-researcher in University of Western Sydney. I was honored to be a member of the ROSETE research team. The
Western Sydney-Ningbo Partnership gave me the opportunity to test my theoretic-practical knowledge about teaching Chinese and to have a chance to connect with an exotic culture. However, I faced an enormous challenge as a beginning teacher-researcher who just graduated from University, even with a major in teaching Chinese as second/foreign language. I faced a totally different culture of teaching and learning. Since arriving in July 2012, I have found that the teaching and learning of Chinese in Australia has many problems that the ROSETE research team is helping to work out. Especially for learners who speak English as first language, they felt learning Chinese as extremely challenging, as it is very different compared with English. Even learners who have learnt Chinese opted to drop out. After several weeks in school with my students, I found they were curious about Chinese language and culture. As the majority of them were without Chinese as a foreign language background, I felt that I could not let them down and I wanted to make Chinese easy for them to accept and maintain their interest in learning Chinese. Therefore, my task was to focus on how to make Chinese learnable for my beginning foreign language learners. Finally, I hoped my research could make contribution to TCFL education.

1.3 Research questions

Initially, I was thinking about how to choose and stimulate students’ interests to learn Chinese. However, after several weeks of spending time with my students who were
beginners of learning Chinese, I felt that perhaps the focus should be on something that is more basic. Then, I found that plenty of relevant literature showed that learners who learnt Chinese as foreign language complained about the intrinsic difficulties (Wang & Higgins, 2008; Scrimgeour, 2012; Zhang & Li, 2010). Therefore, it was the priority to find something acceptable and practical for these beginning learners instead of making them nervous about learning Chinese. Therefore, making Chinese learnable from the perspectives of materials and strategies is an appropriate choice. In addition, having conversations with students after lessons helped. I asked them different kinds of questions that made me realise they have their own points of views about what and how they want to learn Chinese. I believed that learning Chinese would be easier and interesting provided more attention was paid on students’ perspective about learning. Therefore, I decided to focus on making Chinese learnable based on the voices from learners who were beginning learners.

My main research question is: How to make Chinese learnable from beginning L2 learners’ perspectives in a foreign, English speaking country such as Australia?

My contributory research questions are as follows:

1. How to prepare learner-centred lessons and choose appropriate teaching/learning materials to stimulate beginning learners to learn Chinese?

2. What teaching/learning strategies are acceptable to beginning learners to learn Chinese?
3 How can beginning bilingual volunteer teacher-researchers from China improve their skills in lesson preparation and teaching/learning strategies?

1.4 Significance and value of this study

Firstly, this research responds to the trend of foreign language learning in Australia. In the present era the status of China is much higher in many areas like the economy, politics and trade, than it has been for two hundred years (Orton, 2008). Australia is developing a partnership with China through many aspects to achieve mutual benefits (Orton, 2008). In terms of education, a growing number of Australian people are showing preference to Chinese language and culture.

Second, it contributes to the proliferation of Chinese education. Even with the reality that students maintain high interests in learning Chinese, there are many problems concerned with teaching Chinese in foreign countries. Zhang and Li (2010) summarise the challenges of TCFL education including the lack of materials and qualified teachers. This research aims at making Chinese learnable for beginning learners from their perspectives through aspects of teaching materials and strategies. Meanwhile, this study was expected to provide insights into the professional development of beginning bilingual volunteer teacher-researchers about how they
can adapt this new culture of teaching and learning and improve their teaching. Therefore, this research made contribution to both TCFL teachers and CFL learners.

1.5 Preview of the literature review

1.5.1 Circumstance of Chinese in the world

As the growing power and influence of China is developing in many areas, other countries have started to change the attitudes of Chinese learning and CFL became more potential in the education market (Zhao & Huang, 2010). Plenty of countries choose Chinese as second or foreign language education; even several governments encourage citizens to learn Chinese (Yu, 2010). Meanwhile, the number of foreigners who are learning Chinese is increasing rapidly, along with the cooperation and establishment of Confucius Institute, promoting the proliferation of Chinese around the world. In Australia, the mutual benefits with China result in the huge demand of learning Chinese as foreign language (Orton, 2008). Besides, the acquisition of a foreign language may enhance people’s competitiveness in future employment (Grosse, 2010).

However, students were apt to drop out of learning Chinese (Orton, 2008), which means CFL encountered challenges that restrain its development. Orton (2008) concludes with several key challenges of learning Chinese, including the pressure
from heritage Chinese learners, low level of achievement and unsupportive environments. Learners also expressed complaints about the intrinsic difficulties of learning Chinese itself, for instance, learning tones and writing characters (Wang and Higgins, 2008; Scrimgeour, 2012). Therefore, it is urgent to find out how to make Chinese learnable for learners and enhance their sense of success.

1.5.2 Issue of teaching materials

Zhang and L1 (2010) point out one of the issues that TCFL confronted is the lack of teaching materials. Textbooks are regarded as the traditional way of finding materials for learners, but it has been questioned as “the best medium for delivering language-learning materials” (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 157). Due to its standard content and fixed patterns, textbooks can hardly meet the need of all Chinese teachers and learners and even disappoints some teachers with its monotony (Wyatt, 2011). In order to achieve the flexibility of teaching materials, teachers have the responsibility of choosing or even “tailoring materials”, and making advantages of new technology (Gilmore, 2012, p. 251).

In terms of TCFL specifically, the lack of adequate syllabus or curriculum concerned teachers without professional guidance (Zhang & Li, 2010; Orton, 2008). Although various types of textbooks are available in the current market, they have the
drawbacks that are designed from language itself and hardly fit the local context and learners’ needs (Wang & Higgins, 2008; Scrimgeour, 2012; Lee & Bang, 2011). The teaching materials of TCFL are designed for first language learners in Chinese speaking environments rather than foreign language learners (Liu, 2013; Zhang & Li, 2010). With these challenges, it is understandable that learners felt frustrated in learning Chinese.

1.5.3 Possible ideas of teaching strategies

Anxiety and reticence, as common happenings in the foreign language classrooms, bring about negative feelings that hinder students’ progress of learning foreign language. Literature shows that more than one third of Chinese students have experienced anxiety in the ESL classroom (Shao, Yu & Ji, 2013). Anxiety may affect the acquisition level of foreign language and lead to learners’ failure and frustration. Reticence normally happened in Asian countries, also impacting on learners’ intake of knowledge (Cheng, 2000). There are plenty of factors that lead to anxiety and reticence, such as the introverted personality, fear of making mistake and failure of recall similar resources (Wilson, 2013; Motallebzadeh, Mirzaee & Baghaei, 2012; Jackson, 2002). Therefore, teachers have the responsibility to help learners minimise these negative emotions that hinder their foreign language development. Starting with exploring possible teaching strategies for learners is an appropriate aspect to achieve
the goal.

When it comes to teaching a foreign language, the exclusive use of TL is advocated especially in monolingualism and CLT, which is believed that no interference with L1 occurs when learning TL (Cummins, 2009; Ahmad & Rao, 2012; Littlewood & Yu, 2011). Besides, it allows the maximum exposure of TL during the limited learning period. However, it has been questioned in terms of beginning learners who may develop resistance of participation due to the low proficiency of TL (Chang, 2011). Moreover, L1 probably promote the TL learning, as it helps to build up communicative competence (McMillan & Rivers, 2011).

Using the similarities between learners’ L1 and TL is a potentially effective strategy. The process of providing education of a foreign language should include active learners’ prior relevant knowledge and make use of it to learn the TL, as learners still have low proficiency in TL (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008; Ringbom and Jarvis, 2009). This may help beginning learners to reduce their anxiety of learning Chinese. The strategy of minimising reticence in the classroom is the interaction strategy. The debate about teacher-centred strategy and learner-centred strategy has existed for years with individual benefits. Teacher-centred strategy is preferred by Asian countries due to the culture root of teachers’ role whereas student-centred is accepted by Western countries normally (Chowdhury & Phan, 2008). Overall, the interaction strategy affects learners’ willingness of participation. Lee and Ng (2010) introduce
the facilitator-oriented strategy, in which a teacher acts as a facilitator in the classroom with freedom given to learners to work by themselves. This strategy may have an influence with an increase in students’ participation.

1.5.4 Professional development as beginning bilingual teacher

With the huge increased quantities of CFL learners all over the world, the demand for qualified teachers is growing. In reality, the shortage of qualified teachers emerges as a factor that impedes expansion of CFL acquisition (Wang and Higgins, 2008; Zhang & Li, 2010). As discussed before, a qualified teacher, especially one with rich experience, has the ability to adapt the local context and even reduce the negative influence from the lack of material by creating a new piece of material. Besides, few teacher-training programs are developed focusing on fitting local contexts (Xu, 2012; Scrimgeour, 2010).

TCFL teachers basically can be separated into two types, one is native speaker of Chinese and the other is second language user of Chinese defined as Anglophones. Liddicoat (2005) states both the advantages and disadvantages of these two types as foreign language teachers and argues which group is more suitable. It is undeniable that L1 teachers can benefit students on different aspects especially when they need to find out their identities. New identity “bilingual” considers these teachers as
“legitimate L2 users rather than as failed native speakers of the target language” (Pavlenko, 2003, p. 251). This identity encourages teachers to find the right position during the period of teaching Chinese with less feeling of frustration.

As beginning bilingual volunteer teachers, challenges and uncertainties are expected to be encountered due to the role of novice teachers towards professional teachers (Choy, Chong, Wong & Wong, 2011). Even with the awareness of difficulties in advance, the reality is more difficult than newcomers thought (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008). Scrimgeour (2010) summarises the challenges as the lack of understanding local school contexts, ignoring learners’ perspective of learning and teachers’ responsibilities of engaging learners, and the low proficiency of using instructional language. Even when there are experienced teachers in the school to assist novice teachers; Le Maistre and Pare (2010) report that the attitudes from these experienced teachers about helping novice teachers are unforeseeable as it is time consuming. Therefore, frustration and painfulness accompany beginning bilingual volunteer teachers who are on the way to becoming professional teachers.

1.6 Preview of research method

My research project is designed to include the research methodology and strategy, research principles and procedures, data collection methods and data analysis
techniques. The research strategy I adopted is case study, which aims at investigating the real-context phenomenon of how to make Chinese learnable for beginning second language learners. The project was conducted in Lanshu Public School, the school where I teach Chinese as a volunteer teacher-researcher in NSW. Subject to ethics procedures and principles, I chose Lanshu as a pseudonym of this school to protect my participants including students and classroom teachers from being identified. Most of the data that were collected from them gave me insights into knowing more about learners and adjusting my teaching from the learners’ perspectives. Experienced classroom teachers were present in the classroom for every lesson and were invited to observe my lessons and provide feedbacks.

Semi-structured interviews containing both standard questions and open-ended questions were chosen for teachers to provide diverse responses to questions. Students were selected from different stages. Most of these students were beginning second language learners. Considering my participants were primary schools students, both open format questions and closed format questions were presented in the questionnaire. For the junior students, closed format questions were considered likely to be easier for them to understand and answer, whereas the open format questions might suit the more creative senior students. Students’ feedback was the key part of my data collection methods. Another important part of data comes from my lesson plans and reflective journals. As a teacher-researcher, I took notes when designing a lesson and also kept a diary after teaching to reflect every lesson in order
to improve personal teaching skills. Questionnaire was used as the method to collect data from students so that I can know how they felt about learning Chinese. They were asked to offer their background information to help me to understand them more and also to express how they felt about learning Chinese. The self-evaluation of performances in Chinese lessons that students made were the evidences that showed the effect of Chinese lessons including plans, materials and strategies that I designed for them. Besides, these answers from students assisted me to realise how I might improve my teaching skills as well.

Classroom observation and interviews were the two methods I used to collect data from classroom teachers. Classroom observations were completed during normal Chinese lessons and interviews were conducted at the end of this project. As the witnesses from the very beginning to the end, they observed the whole journey about how Chinese started school with difficulties and then developed with fulfilments. As experienced teachers who have worked with students for a long period of time, their opinions about my advantages and disadvantages of both lessons and teaching skills provided significant information for me to realise how I might contribute better to students’ Chinese learning and improve more as a CFL teacher.

Reflective journal is the information about plans before a lesson and self-evaluation after implementation. As a participant in this project, my journals recorded both the process and reflection from my angle of view. In addition, the conversations I had
with teachers and students after class, inspired me to gain ideas about teaching and were written in the reflective diaries as extra data. With this information source, direct and raw data helped me to know more about my learners and improve myself as a teacher at the same time.

Thus, a range of ideas, lesson plans and teaching materials, along with students’ personal feelings and responses were recorded to produce a data set for analysis as part of this research project. Data analysis proceeded through a first and second level, from the more procedural to the more conceptual. The mountain of raw data was divided into different categories and then explained in details with commentaries.

1.7 Thesis statement

This research concentrates on a bilingual beginning volunteer teacher from China who tried to make Chinese learnable based on designing lessons, choosing teaching materials and strategies from beginning learners’ perspective, and then moved to professional development as a Chinese teacher-researcher. Figure 1.1 explains the procedure of this project.
Before the whole procedure started, an observation period was arranged for me to have time to work with students and teachers. This is an opportunity I had to enable close communication with them, which helped me to learn more about students’ background information and what they expected about learning Chinese. Then, with this knowledge about learners and their needs, I started to design lesson plans including choosing appropriate materials and strategies for learners. When delivering these well-prepared lessons, I could put all my plans into practice and find out if these fit learners’ demands through the observation by both classroom teachers and myself about learners’ interactions and engagement with lessons. After that, I collected feedbacks from students and teachers, which were the important data to develop my understanding of better lesson preparation including choosing appropriate materials and strategies, which also improved my teaching skills of Chinese teacher. Besides, my self-reflection after teaching lessons made me realise the advantages and disadvantages of my lessons, which increased the level of my professional learning.
1.8 Structure of this thesis

This thesis contains 7 chapters in total. Chapter 1 provides an overview information, Chapter 2 is the literature review part that was generated from different authors comprising of various views about teaching materials, strategies and the professional development of bilingual beginning volunteers.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of research methodology and methods that is proposed to use in this study in order to produce this thesis. The section includes a brief description of research principles and procedures, research strategy and site. Meanwhile, the research design leads to a discussion of the data collection methods and the data analysis techniques. Besides, the ethical issues have also been addressed due to the principles and procedures involved in collection of data from people especially the young students.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are three evidentiary chapters of data analysis from different resources containing lesson plans, reflective journals, students’ feedback and questionnaires, classroom teachers’ observation and interviews. Each piece of data is explained and analysed in detail in order to get close to the final findings.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion chapter, which summarises the crucial findings of this research to answer the research questions. Besides, the limitations of this research and
the recommendations for further research are also presented in this chapter as conclusion.
Chapter 2

Making Chinese learnable – a theoretic-practical framework:

Intellectual context for this study

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research project was to find out how to make Chinese learnable from beginning learners’ perspectives. There are three main aspects that are discussed. They are lesson preparation through lesson design and selection of materials, possible ideas of teaching strategies and bilingual teacher’s professional learning. In this chapter, the information from literature that relate to these three aspects are generated. It begins with the description of the current circumstance of Chinese teaching and learning in the world (Zhao & Huang, 2010; Yu, 2010; Wang & Higgins, 2008; Chmelynski; 2006; Zhang & Li, 2010), especially in Australia (Orton, 2008; Grosse, 2010; Bianco, 2007) including good sides and problems that emerged. Challenges of teaching Chinese (Zhang & Li, 2010; Tam, 2012; Orton, 2008) is summarised, along with learners’ opinions (Zhang and Li, 2010; Wang & Higgins, 2008; Orton, 2008; Scrimgeour, 2012) about Chinese learning. Then comes to lesson preparation, combining the critique of textbooks (Tomlinson, 2012; Wyatt, 2011; Gilmore, 2012) and issues of Chinese teaching materials (Zhang & Li, 2010; Lee & Bang, 2011; Tam, 2012; Orton, 2008; Liu, 2013; Scrimgeour, 2012). After the
discussion about anxiety (Shao, Yu & Ji, 2013; Motallebzadeh, Mirzace & Baghaei, 2012) and reticence (Cheng, 2000; Jackson, 2002) that happened in foreign language classroom, possible ideas of strategies (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; McMillan and Rivers, 2011; Ahmad & Rao, 2012; Salomone, 1998) for teaching Chinese are described to reduce these negative emotions. The bilingual teacher’s improvement including the problems of qualified TCSL teachers (Wang & Higgins, 2008; Xu, 2012; Scrimgeour, 2010), how bilingual teachers find their identity (Liddicoat, 2005; Achugar, 2009; Pavlenko, 2003), and what challenges are confronted by teachers (Choy, Chong, Wong & Wong, 2011; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008; Le Maistre & Pare, 2010). Finally, the gaps in knowledge in this field are discussed, the reasons for the research focus in this thesis and a summary are provided.

2.2 Circumstance of Chinese teaching and learning

This section states the circumstances for implementing of Chinese language in the world and specifically in Australia. Even though Chinese language teaching/learning having a promising prospect, there are challenges that restrict its development. Especially, learners’ opinion and feedback about how they feel about learning Chinese is significant for further research of Chinese teaching.
2.2.1 Situation of Chinese language in the world

Due to growing economic power and international status, “China’s economic power is changing attitudes towards Mandarin Chinese worldwide and Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) consequently emerges as a subject for research as well as an educational market” (Zhao & Huang, 2010, p. 127). Yu (2010) summarises that many countries opt for learning Chinese as a second or foreign language preferentially. For instance, the most important language in the USA and most frequently used second language in Canada and Australia, as well as the government from other Asian countries “encourage their citizens to learn Chinese” (p. 302). As a result, the number of foreign learners studying Chinese achieved significant growth. Generally, more specific, Wang and Higgins (2008, p. 91) quote the estimation from The People’s Daily (2006) that “there are about 40 million non-native speakers learning Mandarin at present and that this will increase to about 100 million by the year 2010. Requiring five million teachers of Chinese as a foreign language”. Other countries started to search for a way to cooperate with China and promote Chinese teaching and learning among citizens as well, such as the establishment of the Confucius Institute and collaboration program. The Confucius Institute, with the support from government of China, has been found in most countries of the world as an opportunity to spread the Chinese language and culture to people in these countries. Besides, partnership also was developed between China and other countries. Zhang and Li (2010) state that a collaboration agreement was signed by the Chinese and British governments which
focuses on “the promotion of Chinese and English language learning and teaching in china and the UK, including a school exchange program administered by the British council” (p. 87). According to Chmelynski (2006), in America, experts predicted that the number of K-12 schools that offered Chinese learning will increase soon and the policymakers asserted that it is necessary to enlarge the study of Chinese due to the expanding power in different areas that China has.

In terms of Australia, “no country is linked to Australia through such a dense and varied set of factors as today’s China now is” (Orton, 2008, p. 8). With the present relationship between these two countries, there are mutual benefits to the proliferation of Chinese in Australia. Further development of Australia’s present relationship with China requires “a solid pool of Australians in a range of sectors who deeply understand China and who can speak Chinese well” (Orton, 2008, p. 5). Therefore, a growing number of Australian people are developing an appreciation for Chinese language and culture. Bianco (2007) describes the development of Chinese learning in Australia:

Since the mid 1990s a major expansion in Chinese learning in Australia has resulted from this diversification of the student population, so that schools and universities are now catering to growing, and in some institutions to numerically dominant, groupings of native speakers (p. 20).

Furthermore, being capable in speaking another language is now seen as, potentially at least, leading to future employment. Corporate recruiters have an increasing desire
for the graduates who have the knowledge of another language and culture: “No matter which language they studied, almost all [corporate interviewees] stated that they believed knowledge of the language and culture would enhance their employability, and that the language they chose had economic importance in the global market” (Grosse, 2010, p. 1).

However, there are some unsatisfactory evidences showing the negative side of Chinese language education that restrict the number of people who are willing to learn Chinese, even learners who are Chinese immigrants having learnt Chinese want to drop out. Xu (2012, p. 2) describes the fact that “less than 1% of American high school students combined study Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Japanese, Korean, Russian or Urdu”. After the research of the language experience of two Chinese immigrant groups in the U.S.A, Zhang (2010) concluded the key finding that intergenerational language transmission is minimised by the Fujianese-speaking children, and is actually resisted by the Mandarin-speaking children due to the dominating sociocultural power relations that privilege English in the USA. Moreover, as Orton (2008) states in the research findings “94% of these learners drop out before year 12, usually once the language is no longer mandated” (p. 5), which proves that there are still many factors that restrict the growth number of Australians learning Chinese as a second language. Many second language learners decide to drop out of learning Chinese.
2.2.2 Challenges of Chinese teaching

As discussed before, challenges in the world impede the proliferation of Chinese teaching that leads to the reality that people have low-motivation to learn Chinese, even for Chinese immigrant children. It becomes essential to analyse these challenges and minimise its negative influence on learners’ willingness.

Zhang and Li (2010) list five problems in their research. It starts from the lack of syllabus and an appropriate examination system to meet the demands from the learners, teachers, and educators including the education system. Meanwhile, it is extremely difficult to set up a standard syllabus because of the different teaching goals and contents that schools want to focus on. The lack of qualified and experienced teachers is another issue. Especially the experienced teachers, who play the pivotal role in Chinese teaching, are in great demand. The remaining problems are lack of related research that help to deal with the above problems and the lack of cooperation between organisations and institutions. Tam (2012) summarises the challenges that many countries have encountered from several authors, which includes low language proficiency of teachers (may refer to non-native speakers of Chinese), the lack of curriculum specialists and unsupportive environment.

As stated in the previous section that loads of students chose to drop out Chinese learning, Orton (2008) concluded several keys reasons through Chinese language
education:

i. The presence of strong numbers of first language speakers, locally born or otherwise, who share their classes and overwhelm them in assessment.
ii. Their lack of success in developing proficiency, which is due to the intrinsic difficulties of Chinese for an English speaking learner, combined with insufficient teaching of certain aspects, and a totally inadequate provision of time needed for the task.
iii. They attempt to learn the language in an often unsupportive environment at school, in their family, and in the community (Orton, 2008, p. 5).

As Orton (2008) identified, the first reason is the pressure from peers whose first language is Chinese with natural advantages. Then they have low achievements of proficiency together with time limitation issue, leads to frustration because of the intrinsic difficulties of Chinese. Lastly, the unsupportive environment around students failed to give them opportunities to practise. Therefore, the learning – and teaching – of Chinese faces major challenges in Australian schools.

2.2.3 Learners’ perspective of Chinese learning concerns

Even though the number of people from other countries who want to learn Chinese is increasing, there are still plenty of considerations that represent what they feel about learning Chinese. As discussed above, Orton (2008) identifies the students’ low achievement that reduces their motivation of continuing Chinese learning so that they
chose to drop out. One reason that results in students’ sense of lack of success is the intrinsic difficulties of learning Chinese language. Wang and Higgins (2008) also state how students consider the Chinese language. For instance, they concluded that the four tones with plenty of sounds have many different meanings easily that could possibly lead to difficulty of understanding. Besides, the writing of characters is a huge challenge for alphabetic language learners. Scrimgeour (2012) advocates writing difficulty that attributes “Chinese language learning and performance is restricted by the challenges of learning to write in characters and limited opportunities to use Chinese to communicate meaningfully outside the classroom” (p. 324). Wang and Higgins (2008) quote from The Economist (2007) to describe the reality that Chinese language learning takes a long time to achieve success in learning, compared with other European languages in the similar language system with English. Zhang and Li (2010) support this opinion as well that “students also find it less rewarding, as they generally do not achieve examination grades similar to what they would obtain for European languages” (p. 92).

When it comes to beginning second language learners, Zhang and Li (2010) argue that teachers should consider the learning demands from the learners’ perspectives. They contend that it is necessary to take into consideration “the reality that language learners may have different needs for these four skills and may indeed develop these skills at different stages of learning”, which four skills are refer to listening, reading, writing and speaking (Zhang & Li, 2010, p. 93). This would seem to require
teacher-researchers to come up with pedagogies and content that speaks to the foreign language learners’ interests, desires and need for learning success. Furthermore, with these difficulties students identified how to make Chinese learnable for my students who are beginning learners is essential.

2.3 Lesson preparation through choosing teaching materials

This section focuses on the issue of teaching materials. It starts with the critique of textbooks and how to select materials in order to compensate for the drawbacks of textbooks.

2.3.1 Critique of textbooks and ideas of selecting materials

Teaching materials is an important part of lesson preparation. Masuhara and Tomlinson (as cited in Wyatt, 2011) state the view about the definition of learning materials of ESL in order to support language acquisition:

Learning materials should provide exposure to English in authentic use in meaningful ways, promote such use and provide opportunities for feedback. They should interest the learners, engage them effectively and cognitively, stimulate discovery and set achievable challenges. They should also sustain positive impact, encouraging the culturally appropriate and meaningful use of the international language outside the classroom (n.p.).
Textbooks have been regarded as a traditional source of providing standardised and reliable teaching materials for decades. Meanwhile, there are questions raised about “the best medium for delivering language-learning materials” (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 157). There are plenty of opponents who demonstrate that the textbook has more drawbacks than merits. Because of its standardised content, the demands of both teachers and learners are hardly being met and sometimes even are ignored. Moreover, the textbook delivers the uniformity and authority, which is too difficult for teachers and learners to adapt to, and may restrain their critical thinking. In addition, Tomlinson (2012) states a fact that many SLA researchers argue that the textbook “overprotects learners and does not prepare them for the reality of language use outside the classroom” (p. 161). Wyatt (2011) also demonstrated a story about his participant of research to show that how textbooks disappointed teachers. His participant, a teacher prepared a reading lesson about a narrative and tried to select some materials from the teachers’ book. Instead of offering resources, this textbook really frustrated the teacher with the monotonous emphasis on how to make sentences. According to this real experience, it is apparent that teachers and learners do not accept the textbook due to its drawbacks.

Agreeing on both advantages and disadvantages of the textbook, Tomlinson (2012) gives his personal view about this issue. Although the textbook saves time and offers plentiful materials, the major problem is the less consideration given for engaging learners. He also points out that we need more flexible textbooks with localisation.
and personalisation. Therefore, it is difficult to achieve flexibility on textbooks, so selective teaching materials became a prevalent choice among teachers.

In order to achieve these goals in the language classroom, teachers have to master the ability to make materials flexible. Gilmore (2012) believes “tailoring materials” can suit “specific groups of learners” (p. 251). Tomlinson (2012) even defines an assumption of the “textbook-free course” (p. 159) that teachers can prepare materials for learners if they have the confidence and experience. It is easy to fit students’ level and stimulate their interests with diverse types of materials. With the recent increase in new technologies as the popular and acceptable medium, making and adapting materials is easily accessible. Gilmore (2012) mentions the huge “influence of technology on materials design” (p. 251) and Tomlinson (2012) indicates new technologies provide teachers and learners with flexible choices of materials and diverse approaches to deliver materials.

**2.3.2 Current issues of teaching materials in TCFL education**

Australia currently faces problems due to the lack of a national curriculum that are framed in terms of the tenets concerning cross-sociolinguistic learning. Likewise, in the UK, the “major problem with Chinese is that no adequate syllabus has been set up which meets the needs and objectives of overall curriculum requirements as well as reflecting how L1 English speakers learn Chinese” (Zhang & Li, 2010, p. 92).
That is to say, teacher-researchers do not have an appropriate guidance for making Chinese learnable in the ways this research suggests. In Tam’s (2012) research in Hong Kong concerning teaching Mandarin, teachers also criticised the insufficient support from government “in terms of the provision of an appropriate curriculum, teaching materials, and research findings, without which it was unlikely to make a smooth transition from Cantonese to Putonghua instruction” (p. 115). Orton (2008) complains the outdated curricula that have not been updated since 1993.

The unsuitability of textbooks that fit students’ demand is another issue. Zhang and Li (2010) complain that even though there are plenty of textbooks available in the market, they are not designed based on the British context. Wang and Higgins (2008) state the current textbooks that produced in China or Australia are out-dated and believe that British publications are unwilling to publish Chinese textbooks based on the British context due to the limited market value. Scrimgeour (2012) mentions language programs in Australia that “are often resourced by a single set of textbooks designed for the assumed second language beginner-learner, who in many settings may actually be in the minority in the classroom” (p. 313). In another words, textbooks that these programs adopted were not designed for the real beginning learners in local contexts. Even for teachers in USA who teach Korean also confront the same challenge that “the piles of lesson plans, student workbooks, and other classroom materials available to the public were not always helpful to the teachers in
the particular context of HL schools” (Lee & Bang, 2011, p 390). Therefore, it has been a common issue for foreign language education.

Teaching materials for the foreign language learners have many similar problems. First, only a few teaching materials satisfy “the needs of British curriculum design and the requirements of the British education system” (Zhang & Li, 2010, p. 93). In Wang and Higgins’s (2008) research, half of the teachers found out the available teaching materials were unsatisfied and unsuitable for the context in UK. In US, the materials that schools chose for students were designed for learners who are in Chinese speaking environment so that teachers expect the suitable materials for second language learners (Liu, 2013). Further, the teaching materials are monotonous for students and cannot meet the demands of different standards across the education systems of different countries. Orton (2008) mentions that plenty of imported materials from other countries are only suitable for first language learners rather than Australian students that learn Chinese as second language. Some materials may have value in teaching, but this very much depends on the knowledge and capabilities of teacher-researchers. Furthermore, Zhang and Li (2010) summarise the issues of teaching materials in CFL education, which basically means that inappropriate materials are hardly to meet local students’ learning needs and teaching context:

Most of the available teaching materials were designed from the point of view of the Chinese language itself rather than the needs of the learners and users, so that learners, especially beginners, are made to feel that Chinese is
inaccessible and impossible to learn. The problem also manifests itself in the content of these teaching materials, as little consideration seems to have been given to how learners would use the language and could learn about the culture in an environment in which there is a very limited exposure to both the Chinese language and Chinese culture (p. 93).

The designers of teaching materials have not considered the foreign language learners or what might help them to connect with Chinese. Zhang and Li (2010) imply there are low quantities of teaching materials that are designed based on the research about the comparison of learning Chinese and learning another European language. They believe the comparison may make learners feel Chinese is easy to access. These problems reflect the need for teacher-researcher to explore how to make Chinese learnable. Zhang and Li (2010, p. 94) suggest that “an experienced teacher can make up for lack of adequate teaching materials by adapting existing materials or even creating his or her own materials to meet the needs of students and curriculum”. But Australia and the UK have few experienced Chinese teachers of their own; this is why the ROSETE teacher-researcher team is so important. However, with all these difficulties, it is perhaps not surprising that beginning second language learners are more likely to believe it is worthless to invest time in learning Chinese.
2.4 Teaching strategies from learners’ perspective

This section provides possible ideas of teaching strategies to make Chinese learnable and reduce negative feelings for beginning learners. It starts with the analysis of two negative emotions in the foreign language classroom, which is anxiety and reticence. Then the critique of monolingualism and CLT about using TL exclusively and possible teaching strategies including L1 TL similarities, English as medium and interaction strategy that can be implemented in foreign language classroom are described.

2.4.1 Anxiety and reticence in second language classroom

As two challengeable phenomenons in foreign language learning, anxiety and reticence normally happen in the classrooms that restrain learners to develop language skill. Shao, Yu and Ji (2013) show the result of the study that at least one third of Chinese college students experienced language anxiety in ESL classroom even they have achieved a middle or high level of English. Krashen (as cited in Shao, Yu & Ji, 2013) concluded that the negative consequence of high-level second language anxiety could impact learners:

When second language learners’ anxiety is high, their affective filter is raised and they become less able to process language input, fail to take in
the available target language messages, and do not progress in their language acquisition (p. 918).

Anxiety can be regarded as one of the reasons that lead to reticence. Reticence is commonly identified in Asian countries. Cheng (2000) expresses that “Asian (especially East Asian) students of English as a second/foreign language are reticent and passive learners” (p. 436).

There are plenty of reasons that lead to anxiety and reticence of learning the foreign language. Wilson (2013) identifies one as failure to recall familiar linguistic resources. Similarly, Motallebzadeh, Mirzaee and Baghaei (2012) describe ESL text-takers’ increasing anxiety as “unfamiliarity with performance-based tasks” (p. 86), which means learners could not find familiar resources in foreign language tasks. Besides, several considerations from learners are reasonable, such as introverted personality with communication apprehension, fear of both failure and being evaluated by other people. Similarly, Jackson (2002) lists the concerns that lead to reticence, such as the lack of self-confidence and fear of losing face.

However, both anxiety and reticence can be reduced if teachers take the responsibility to create a comfortable, stimulating and encouraging foreign language classroom for learners. Motallebzadeh, Mirzaee and Baghaei (2012) assert it is the teachers’ duty to “help learners minimise their anxiety and keep it at a moderate place which can motivate learners to perform better in their language classroom” (p. 39). They also
suggest that teachers can design activities to reduce anxiety. Therefore, finding possible ideas of teaching strategies for beginning learners, which can provide them with an acceptable and easy language classroom situations that are essential for the development of foreign language learning.

2.4.2 Critique of monolingualism

The theoretic-practical assumption for guiding foreign language education tends to privilege the teaching and learning process must be conducted in the target language:

In the case of second and foreign language teaching it is assumed that instruction should be carried out, as far as possible, exclusively in the target language without recourse to students’ first language (L1) (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008, p. 65).

This norm of monolingual language education excludes students’ first language (L1), and insists on them only using the target language (TL), supposedly to have them think in the TL with limited or no reference the learners’ L1 (Cummins, 2009). Monolingual language education is an impediment to learning L2 because it regards “students’ L1 (and, by implication, the knowledge encoded therein) as an impediment to the learning of L2” (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008, p. 68). Besides, for most students, the primary task for them is to maximize the use of TL, as “the classroom is the only opportunity they have for exposure to the language”. This is supported by
Krashen’s (as cited in Littlewood & Yu, 2011) influential argument that “languages are learnt most effectively” when learners are under the exposure of “comprehensible input” in a real communicative context (p. 66). If TL and L1 can be tried to keep separately, students are able to “think in the TL” without the influence of L1 (Littlewood & Yu, 2011, p. 66).

However, Macaro’s (as cited in McMillan & Rivers, 2011) study with pre-service teachers indicate that no correlation was found between the use of L1 by teachers and learners, and there was no distinct improvement of TL when it is used exclusively. It is also believed that the use of L1 may promote the improvement of learners’ TL:

‘emphasis’ does not equate to exclusivity, and indeed, principled L1 use should improve the quality and quantity of communication in the TL and assists learners in developing their communicative competence, be deemed an acceptable form of instruction in courses and programs based on a communicative approach (Macaro, as cited in McMillan & Rivers, 2011, p. 253).

Even though the emphasis on target language is essential, it is unnecessary to separate L1 and TL, as some aspects inside different languages are interlinked. Therefore, adoption of L1 will perhaps assist learners to have a better understanding of TL, especially the beginning learners who have low proficiency of TL ability may confront that anxiety with the exclusive use of TL. Besides, Littlewood and Yu (2011) argue that the tasks of TL should be chosen based on the knowledge students are
already familiar with, such as classroom routines that occur regularly. Therefore, students can easily understand the content of tasks.

After discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the monolingual principle, one suggestion is supported:

When we free ourselves from exclusive reliance on monolingual instructional approaches, a wide variety of opportunities arise for teaching bilingual students by means of bilingual instructional strategies that acknowledge the reality of, and strongly promote, cross-language transfer (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008, p. 65).

Instead of using TL exclusively, different methods provide different perspectives of learning and improving language. As my students are beginning learners, I believe the selection of TL should be fully considered. The use of TL exclusively may cause an increase in learning anxiety and a reduction of motivation for beginning learners. Although the improvement of TL is the priority, the proper use of L1 probably can be regarded as a facilitator to help learners to make progress.

2.4.3 Critique and difficulties of CLT

As “a harbinger of new era”, CTL affects the language teaching in an increasing numbers of countries (Ahmad & Rao, 2012, p. 28). The definition of CLT can be
divided into two parts, which is what teacher should do and what students can do.

Salomone (1998) described in details:

More recently, however, foreign language teachers tend to use a communicative approach to language learning-one that focuses on subject matter, tasks or projects, semantic notions and/or pragmatic functions, that is, what the student can do with the language: for example, asking for directions or accepting invitations. Students are encouraged to speak about their daily lives or other subject matter by using the foreign language whose grammatical system is only a means to this end (Salomone, 1998, p. 554).

It is undeniable that this approach with the emphasis on communication has plenty of advantages that promote learners’ TL. Compared with the teacher-centered approach that is the teachers playing the dominant role through the whole process of learning as speakers, CLT represents a modern and free learning style and establishes “a more social relationship between the teacher and learner” (Chang & Goswami, 2010, p. 4). The concentration is leading learners to play different roles through the process of communication. The use of CTL provides with a variety kinds of activities that encourage learners to practice TL through communication, which may help to enhance the acquisition of L2 or foreign language:

Group activities, especially in case of adult learners, make way to produce a large variety of interactions and ‘although learners cannot provide each other with the accurate grammatical and sociolinguistic input that native speakers can, they can offer each other genuine communication practice, including
the negotiation for meaning that is believed to aid L2 acquisition (Spada, as cited in Ahmad & Rao, 2012, p. 31).

CLT provides an opportunity to communicate with peers, which reduces the reliance on the teacher. Besides, this method leads to a different kind of assessment, which is assessed by learners themselves. The merit of self-assessment is to do the internal self-reflection rather than a wasting of time to wait external evaluation (Ahmad & Rao, 2012).

CLT aims at stimulating learners’ motivation to order to let them achieve active participation through activities of situational-context communication. CLT only allows the existence of TL in the classroom, such as ESL classroom, “English should be the exclusive language of the class room activities and no mother tongue interference should be allowed” (Ahmad & Rao, 2012, p.32). However, the exclusive use of TL is questionable for beginning learners. According to Chang’s (2011) research, learners have the resistance of participation and anxiety of low TL proficiency. It is agreed by Chang’s (2011, p. 9) interviewees that “CLT is more appropriate for high English (TL) proficiency students than low English (TL) proficiency students”. Students have difficulty in understanding of TL used by the teacher and classmates, and expressing themselves in the activities, which may lead to language anxiety and frustration so that increase the resistance of participation.

My students as beginning learners may have the same worry and I need to help them
to eliminate these concerns. Furthermore, time limitation is regarded as another factor that prevents me from adopting CLT. Chang (2010) asserted the involvement of students’ communicative task as time-consuming. Sufficient time is required for them to prepare the materials for tasks and practice. With a 30-minute lesson for each week in my research site, it is extremely difficult to implement CLT for beginning learners as they may take more time to get ready. Breach (as cited in Chowdhury & Le Ha, 2008) noticed that students are apt to consider communicative activities as entertainment so that no knowledge is acquired. Musthafa (2012, n. p.) states that “the absence of communicatively-designed testing instruments coupled with the fact that the English language is not used in our day-to-day social communication has made communication-based instructional materials lose their pedagogical values”. This makes me realise the truth that students still use first language in daily life so it is unnecessary to concentrate only on CLT. Therefore, incorporating L1 into their Chinese learning may become an aspect that attracts their attention.

2.4.4 Using learners’ first language to learn Chinese

One potentially effective way to conquer the difficulties for making Chinese learnable is to use what foreign language learners see as similarities between English and Chinese, and then basing one’s teaching on these (Wilson, 2013). This means the inevitable differences between their first language and Chinese would be taught in
relation to something they know. Pedagogically, this principle means, “when students are being educated through a foreign language (either in second/foreign language instruction or in bilingual/immersion programs) instruction should explicitly attempt to activate students’ prior [sociolinguistic] knowledge and build on this relevant background knowledge as necessary” (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008, p. 68). Based on their research, Ringbom and Jarvis (2009) argue that due to learners’ limitations in understanding the target language at the beginning stage of learning, it is necessary to consider the linguistic similarities between the languages, and use these as an initial resource. Moreover, Cummins and Hornberger’s (2008) research point to the importance of students’ first language in second/foreign language learning and teaching that “students’ L1 can be a powerful intellectual resource” (p. 74). Teaching for cross-linguistic transfer is potentially a key to making Chinese learnable for beginning second language learners, given “the role of pre-existing knowledge as a foundation for learning” (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, as cited in Cummins & Hornberger, 2008, p. 67). This study investigated the use of English, the first language of many Australian beginning foreign language learners. It is the sociolinguistic similarities between English and Chinese that were studied for its value in the teaching – and the students learning - of Chinese.

However, when students start to learn a foreign language based on similarities with their first language, the pedagogical ways in which a teacher-researcher deals with this new input is crucial. Liddicoat (2005, n. p.) declares, “new input should be
introduced through participative tasks which encourage the learner to compare the new culture with their own practices”. It is also important for students to notice and think about the sociolinguistic similarities - and the differences embedded in these similarities “by recognising and labelling languages, the children demonstrate that they are attuned to differences and similarities in sound, meaning and script” (Naquvi, McKeough, Thorne & Pfitscher, 2012, p. 23).

By exploring similarities between two languages (e.g. sound), and the differences within what is seen to be similar (e.g. meaning and script), “learners create their own cultural assumptions as they learn” (Kramsch, as cited in Liddicoat, 2002, p. 9). However, these cultural assumptions are not always correct, and these are where an understanding of the differences must be taught. Ringbom and Jarvis (2009) report that there are disparities between ‘actual similarities’ and ‘assumed similarities’:

Indeed, in the foreign-language learning setting, the disparity between actual and assumed similarities can be great, and this results from (1) learners’ failure to notice a number of the actual similarities that exist across languages, (2) learners’ misperception of the nature of many of the similarities that they do notice, and (3) learners’ assumptions that there exist certain similarities between the languages that actually do not exist and which the learners have correspondingly never previously encountered (Ringbom & Jarvis, 2009, p. 107).

With the ongoing process of teaching L1/L2 transfer, the metacognitive feedback about the target language means the students are likely to find a “third place: a place
of comfort between their first language and culture and their second” (Liddicoat, 2005, n. p.). As learners acquire the target language they come to better understand it from the perspective of native speakers, and shift the balance of focus between the two languages. However, it is not necessary for second language learners to acquire native like proficiency “instead of aiming for a native speaker norm, language teaching can more profitably aim for a bilingual norm, which is, developing a speaker who is comfortable and capable in an intercultural context” (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 10). In other words, the goal of teaching the target language is to help learners to become increasingly bilingual with the added benefit of intercultural competence. Liddicoat (2002) argues that the primary factor for the development of intercultural linguistic competence is “reflecting on one's own linguistic behaviour and that of one's interlocutors” (p. 10). Therefore, how to combine foreign language learners’ knowledge of their first language with Chinese, poses pedagogical challenges for what teachers can do to help them to build their capability for intercultural linguistic competence. This has become the urgent issue to be addressed by teacher-researchers.

2.4.5 Interaction strategy in the classroom

In terms of teacher interaction strategy in the classroom, much discussion over teacher-centred and learner-centred has existed for a long period. Teacher-centred strategy has been favoured by Asian countries especially in China. One reason that
leads to the preference of this strategy is the culture root that teachers do not adequately encourage students to participate due to the culturally situated role of the teacher (Chowdhury & Phan, 2008). Students pay the respect to the authority of teachers’ role in the classroom so those teachers take the dominant role for granted. Another reason probably is the large size of class with limited teaching time so those teachers want to cover the knowledge as much as possible in a short class. Lee and Ng (2010, p. 302) argue that the results show “even if it is not the sole factor, teacher strategy is a major determinant of student reticence in classroom”. Yuen and Hau (2006) believe that teachers just transmit the knowledge directly to students without any chances for students to explore.

Yuen and Hau (2006) state that “there is no doubt that with the teacher-centred approach more material could be covered in a shorter time, but students might not necessarily remember everything taught” (p. 288). Therefore, learner-centred approach is welcomed because students take the responsibility of choosing the context and deliver methods so that they can act as active roles in the classroom and achieve high participation level with stimulation. Schools in Western countries adopt this strategy normally as they have a small size of class with outgoing and creative students who have the high willingness of expressing themselves. However, it requires extra time for students to prepare and finish the whole discussion and even sometimes students regard it as the time to have fun instead of gaining knowledge.
It is obvious that these strategies have advantages in classroom and neither of them can be dismissed. Therefore, Lee and Ng (2010) combined these two strategies and concluded that facilitator-oriented strategy with learner-centred classroom as the appropriate interaction strategy, which teachers provide in a learner-centred classroom allowing students to have freedom but they still act as facilitators to guide students towards right direction of exploring knowledge. Lee and Ng (2010) state its advantages as below:

The use of this strategy in a teacher-fronted classroom enables both teachers and learners to collectively construct a pedagogically goal-oriented event, allowing the teacher to strike a balance between the formal feedback/form focused instruction and content-based follow-up/meaning-focused communication, resulting in students’ stronger motivation and greater participation opportunities (p. 307).

Yuen and Hau (2006) also describe an approach called “Constructivist teaching” where “students use their initiative to build up their knowledge with the help of the teacher’s guidance and students’ collaboration” (p. 280), which is similar to facilitator-oriented strategy as discussed above. They confirm that this strategy benefits students’ active participation and collaboration, which assist them to achieve deeper progressing of knowledge.
2.5 The development of teaching abilities as beginning bilingual volunteer teacher

2.5.1 Current problems of qualified teachers

Although people’s enthusiasm of learning Chinese has increased rapidly and the number of graduates majoring in TCFL from universities in China achieved significant growth, there is still a huge demand of TCFL teachers who have qualification in other countries that fit the local learning need. Wang and Higgins (2008) state the reality that “eleven of the teachers had master’s degrees and 10 had bachelors’ degrees but only two had a language teaching qualification and none were qualified teachers” (p. 94). Zhang and Li (2010) identify a relevant issue as “lack of qualified and experienced teachers of Chinese, which has in fact become a bottleneck that constrains further development of Chinese teaching in the UK”. They mention the importance of experienced teachers that related to the teaching materials issue that has been discussed before. Teachers with experience have the ability to adapt existing materials to fit students’ need and even create their own materials to fit local context. (p. 94). Xu (2012) complains about the shortage of certified Chinese language teachers and relevant education program that lead to teachers are not trained for American context. Scrimgeour (2010) also notices the huge demand for qualified TCFL teachers. Hence teacher-training programs have an increased need, as the program provides the appropriate training that teacher can rely on to improve towards
a qualified teacher who can offset the absence. This dissatisfactory situation reminds me of the ROSETTE program that I am participating in. The existence of this program offers the opportunities for Chinese graduates to have professional trainings that like myself without experience but is willing to devote into TCFL career. More programs are required to create a chance for nurturing qualified teachers.

2.5.2 Teacher’s identity as bilingual

TCFL teachers mainly can be divided into two groups that are L1 teachers of Chinese who are native Chinese speakers and L2 teachers of Chinese who actually are Anglophones. The debate about which type of teachers are more suitable as TCFL teachers has never stopped. Liddicoat (2005) argues that a native speaking language teacher, such as teacher-researcher is not always the best person for teaching it as target language, because it requires teachers to know both cultures so that they can explore cultural differences with students together. Orton (2008) discusses this issue as well that L2 teachers always complain about L1 teachers’ teaching belief and practices they developed in China, which is inappropriate in local school context.

However, it is also undeniable that L1 teachers have huge advantages that can benefit learners. With equipped cultural knowledge and high proficiency, L1 teachers are likely to provide more accurate pronunciation, explanation of vocabulary and real
culture in both ancient and modern China. The cultural differences with local students allow L1 teachers to enjoy both teaching Chinese and learning English at the same time. However, regardless of the benefits L1 teachers have and the critique from L2 learners, how L1 teachers position themselves in this situation is essential. Wenger (as cited in Achugar, 2009) provides a way to find the identity that “we define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through participation” (p. 67). As the truth that most of the L1 teachers of Chinese have learnt English for many years in primary, secondary even high-degree education, a new identity of a “bilingual” can be defined that “allows some teachers to construe themselves and their future students as legitimate L2 users rather than as failed native speakers of the target language” (Pavlenko, 2003, p. 251). With this bilingual ability, teachers are able to combine the different knowledge and find the balance for improving the students’ learning of the target language.

2.5.3 Challenges as beginning bilingual volunteer teacher-researcher

Beginning foreign language teacher-researchers’ perceptions of technological, pedagogical and content knowledge, and related skills are necessarily relatively limited. In my case I have acquired considerable theoretical knowledge about Chinese linguistics and how to teach it to foreigners in my studies in university. However, I do not have the theoretic-pedagogical knowledge for making Chinese
learnable for foreign language learners in Australia. In this era of dramatic transformations in Australia/China/local/global relations, teacher-researchers are key actors in second language education; they are “expected to face up to numerous new expectations, challenges and uncertainties in the discharge of professional duties of preparing young charges for success in the new century” (Choy, Chong, Wong & Wong, 2011, p. 79).

Undertaking these new challenges, adapting to new roles and meeting the new demands of new era are the priorities for beginning bilingual teachers. It is therefore not surprising, that in the first year of teaching, dissatisfaction and frustration always accompanies beginning teachers. Culture shock still harassed me and I had aware of the difficulty of living in another country. Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping and Todman (2008) indicate the reality that “this is difficult enough when the newcomer is aware of the differences in advance, but even more difficult when the newcomer is unaware and falsely assumes that the new society operates like their home country” (p. 63). Lack of understanding of local school context and failure to meet students’ various learning needs – and inexperience in classroom management and teacher/student interactions - can present overpowering problems for beginning teachers. The shock of learning to be a teacher through everyday teaching, through teaching every day – and actually being fully responsible for students’ learning causes beginning teachers to realise that the real world of teaching imposes many wdemands that for some may “lead to a state of paralysis that renders teachers unable to transfer to the classroom
the skills they learned during teacher education” (Choy, Chong, Wong & Wong, 2011, p. 80). Scrimgeour (2010) concludes the challenges that bilingual teachers may encounter in teaching Chinese, such as failure of knowing local school culture, neglect of considering from others’ perspectives, unaware of responsibilities to engage learners, and low proficiency of English. These challenges need bilingual teachers to concentrate on finding solutions.

Luckily, experienced teachers in schools can serve as mentors and inductees, being able to help beginning teachers to “perform particular tasks without having to devote too many additional resources to achieve them and at the same time able to rethink key ideas, practices, and even values to respond to novel situations” (Choy, Chong, Wong & Wong, 2011, p. 80). Scaffolding is a practice used to help beginning teachers better satisfy students’ learning needs.

However, Le Maistre and Pare (2010) report that the attitude of experienced teachers to helping beginning teachers is unpredictable because mentoring is time-consuming and they want to concentrate on their own classes. Therefore, “no matter how thoughtful and supportive the supervising teacher or mentor, the beginner has to come to terms with satisfying herself if she is to make a painless entry into professional life” (Le Maistre & Pare, 2010, p. 563). Beginning teachers have to maintain low expectations about students learning and their own teaching, and employ teaching practices that proceed gradually with noticeable improvements in
students’ second language learning.

2.6 Gaps in present knowledge and understandings

To sum up, I review several gaps emerged in present research-based knowledge and understandings as these relate to my research questions. During the statement of the current situation of Chinese language, the literature expresses learners’ views about learning Chinese and the challenges that they encountered without any solutions about how to reduce their anxiety of Chinese. Therefore, their concerns have to be considered in further research to find out how to make Chinese learnable based on learners’ demands. In relation to teaching materials, the critique of the textbook about its old fashioned standard structure has been revealed along with the issues of teaching Chinese materials. How to use materials creatively needs to be analysed. For beginning learners with low proficiency, the exclusively use of TL is unacceptable, as it causes the frustration of learning. The possible idea that how to make Chinese learnable and reduce anxiety by using L1-L2 similarities can be explored to see if this can help students to learn Chinese, and thus find it rewarding, interesting and desirable to learn. The facilitator-oriented interaction strategy is mentioned in the literature as the appropriate strategy to minimise reticence in the classroom. Chinese teaching classroom also wants to adopt it to prove if it is effective. In terms of professional learning as a beginning bilingual teacher, which has identified the
problems of qualified teacher, teachers’ identity and challenges, I wanted to focus on my personal experience as a member of ROSETTE program to illustrate how I realise my identity and dealing with challenges to conclude suggestions for other beginning bilingual teachers.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the relevant literature of research questions that inspired this research project. The current situation of Chinese language was introduced with both bright future and impediment. With the huge rate of dropping out of Chinese learning from learners, their opinions about why Chinese is difficult were illustrated. Then comes the critique of textbook due to its out-of-dated resources and fixed pattern that could not suit local school contexts. The lack of appropriate teaching materials was analysed. Besides, several possible ideas of teaching strategies to reduce anxiety and reticence, including L1, TL similarities and adopt of interaction strategy were described, after the critique of monolingualism and CLT using TL exclusively. In regard to development of beginning bilingual teachers, current issues of certified-teachers were explained together with bilingual teachers’ identity and challenges. Finally, gaps existed in present literature were indicated for this research. In Chapter 3, the research methodology and strategy, along with research site, participants, recruitment, data collection and analysis are provided.
Chapter 3

Justifying the research methodology and methods:

“Enquire widely, choose the best and follow it, observe widely and note it”

择其善者而从之，其不善者而改之

(Confucius, Analects)

3.1. Introduction

In this section, I provide an overview of the research methodology and methods that I used in this study in order to produce my Master thesis. The section includes a brief description of research methodology (Walliman, 2011; Rawnsley, 1998; Luo, 2011), research strategy (Richards, 2011; Yin, 2013; Swanborn, 2010; Silverman, 2000; Phelan, 2011; Cousin, 2005), ethics (Singh, Reid, Mayer & Santoro, 2011; Yin, 2013; Walliman, 2011; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000) and site. In addition, the research design leads to a discussion of the data collection methods, including interview (Walliman, 2011; Yin, 2013; Gillman, 2010), observation (Walliman, 2011; Yin, 2013; Farrell, 2011), reflection journals (Robson, 2002; Numrich, 1996) and questionnaire (Walliman, 2011; Gillham 2010; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Data analysis techniques (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995; Robson, 2002) were also described.
3.2. A research methodology for studying this particular field

Before starting this research, I have read and thought about what educational research really is. One answer holds that “research is about acquiring knowledge and developing understanding, collecting facts and interpreting them to build up a picture of the world around us, and even within us” (Walliman, 2011, p. 15). Thus, in my words, my research aimed at producing knowledge and developing a better understanding of how to make Chinese learnable. To do so I collected data and interpreted it to form evidence that build up a picture of foreign language learners’ acquisition of Chinese, which is now more than ever before, an integral part of the world around them. Thus, this research, my research, was expected to help produce educational innovations and in particular to improve students’ learning by assisting all those involved in foreign language education to move the field one step forward. I have been reading and thinking about how educational research can be used meaningfully in life and learning of my students.

This provided me with a growing philosophical stance as a teacher-researcher. It might be assumed that there is no relationship between educational research and philosophy. However, because everyone has a concept of the world, and it is the world that we are researching, we need to understand the ontological issues at stake here: “All philosophical positions and their attendant [research] methodologies, explicitly or implicitly, hold a view about reality” (Walliman, 2011, p. 15). Duffy and
Jonassen (as cited in Luo, 2011) believe that “philosophical assumptions with regard to epistemology and ontology are believed to influence the instructional strategies and methods” (p. 3), and affect how to conduct the research. Some basic philosophical concepts are integral to understanding the deeper meaning of research: “Traditionally, ontology and epistemology comprise discrete dimensions of the branch of philosophy called metaphysics” (Rawnsley, 1998, p. 2).

Ontology is about reality and the things that exist in reality. Ontologically, then my research raised questions about many aspects of reality: does China and Australia really exist? Do Chinese and English really exist? If so, what are they, and how are they to be known? Epistemology deals with “how we know things and what we can regard as acceptable knowledge in a discipline” (Walliman, 2011, p. 17). Thus, epistemologically, my research raised questions about how I can make Chinese learnable for beginning foreign language learners and what can I – and others who read my research - regard as acceptable evidence of my claims to have produced original and useful knowledge. According to Walliman (2011), metaphysics is concerned with the many of definitions about the world such as “who we are” and “what is knowledge” (p. 16). The metaphysics of my research concerned with the many definitions about language (and culture), and questioned about who are beginning foreign language learners (and teachers), and what constitutes knowledge of Chinese. Rawnsley (1998, p. 3) observes that research methods or “the practice of science, concerned with procedures for yielding information that is believable”,

whereas ontology, epistemology and metaphysics are part of the “philosophy of science”. Therefore, we might say that research methodology is concerned with the philosophic-practical aspects of research methods.

I believed these philosophic ideas could be used in this study to better instruct me about my research methods and inspire me to think deeply. The three concepts of ontology, epistemology and metaphysics are integral to the research process, just as culture is integral to language. What these concepts do is help teacher-researchers such as myself rethink the relationship between knowledge and reality. I needed to think through these ideas in the course of this research project, as I came up with new ideas and created fresh propositions about that I can claim to know about making Chinese learnable. Through the iterative testing of this relationship between research methodology and research methods I anticipated, I was able to provide a much better understanding of what is at stake here. The research methods I planned to use helped me to acquire data relating to the facticity of assumptions outlined in the theoretic-pedagogical framework, enabling me to map regularities in the pattern behind my initial perceptions of surface phenomenon. It is the combination of research methodology and research methods that constitutes the whole research process, with practiced being deeply influenced by philosophy, preferably consciously so.
3.3. Research strategy – Case study

In choosing case study as the research strategy for this project, my priority focused on developing a better understanding of what case study really is, which I believe is an ontological question. Besides, why choose this one as research strategy and how to define my research in details are also what I tried to explain.

3.3.1 Definition of case study

Richards (2011, p. 208) mentions that novice researchers are attracted by “case study” because its name seems to be simple but actually it is a challenge, however, “case study offers such comforting familiarity that by the time the novice begins to ask just what it is that counts as one, the many lines of response have already tangled themselves into an impossible.” Just like Yin (2013) estimates that case study “remains one of the most challenging of all social science endeavors” (p. 3), finding out what case study really is becomes the first important step. Therefore, as a novice researcher who shared the same confusion and concern, I had to conclude the definition of case study.

Gerring (as cited in Richards, 2011, p. 209) offers a succinct definition: “Case study research, by definition, is focused on a single, relatively bounded unit”. Similarly, Richards (2011) also mentions “a case study must involve a focus on a unit or units
and that there are in some sense fundamental” (p. 208). Cousin (2005) states case study research’s purpose as to explore a setting and get advanced understanding of it. Based on these statements that related to definition, case study needs to concentrate on one or more unites that are basic that belongs to a larger category and also relate to context exploration.

The definitions above offered me a general concept of what case study is. However, Yin (2013) concludes that case study reflects a twofold definition in details:

1. A case study is an empirical inquiry that
   a. investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when
   b. the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not clearly evident

2. The case study inquiry
   a. copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
   b. relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
   c. benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (p. 17)

Yin (2013) explains that case study is a perfect choice for researchers who want to understand a case in real world, which is assumed may involve context. The first part of the definition is the characteristics that make case study distinguishable from other
research methods. What the case study emphasises is researching a phenomenon that has blurred lines with context. The second part of definition highlights the features of case study, such as the demand of different sources of evidence and triangulation, guidance from previous projects to instruct data collection and analysis. In conclusion, Yin (2013) gives an evaluation:

In essence, the two fold definition – covering the scope and features of a case study – shows how case study research comprises an all-encompassing method- covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis (Yin, 2013, p. 17).

These two definitions explained the concept of case study in a comprehensive aspect, which guided me to find out what my case study is in this research project.

3.3.2 Case study for teacher-researchers’ professional learning

As stated above, case study investigates a phenomenon in the real context. Phelan (2011) regards case study as “in-depth review of new or unclear phenomena” (p. 221). Swanborn (2010) chooses a metaphor to state the connection between case and phenomenon:

In a case study on the causes of traffic accident (involving pedestrians (e.g. pedestrian/motor vehicle collisions) we may, for instance, select from documentary sources of, say, ten accidents that occurred within the boundaries of a selected city. Cause within this specific type of traffic
accident constitutes the phenomenon, and the ten accidents constitute the (ten) cases. Within the study of each accident, the regulations and specific features of the local situation as well as the characteristics of the participants involved and the actions of the local police are taken into consideration (p. 6).

This metaphor of traffic accidents provided a vivid description of what phenomenon and case are. Besides, what researchers have to focus on is “general phenomenon”, “and not in the more or less accidental case, or ‘instance’, in which the phenomenon manifests itself” (Swanborn, 2010, p. 8). Therefore, I should look for a universal case instead of a specific one.

In terms of this project, I planed to investigate a particular instance of a phenomenon, namely making Chinese learnable for beginning foreign language learners, who are monolingual English speaking students in an English speaking country. Further, to explore this phenomenon, the case I employed had three features. The first is about what content of Chinese that these learners are learning. In this study, the Chinese I taught for these students are the type of knowledge they can use in their everyday life in school and home, focusing on topic-based pronunciation, vocabulary and sentences. The next feature is what ‘learnable’ is. My learners were the students in kindergarten to year 6, with the range of age is from 5 to 12 years old. Most of them speak only English and they have not learnt Chinese previously. What I wanted to find out is how to make the content of Chinese learnable for these students. The last feature is about location. My research site is a primary school in NSW in Australia,
which is an English speaking country.

Overall, my case study is designed to proceed through a combination of logical steps, employing specific methods of data collection and data analysis techniques to figure out how to come up with the answers for making Chinese learnable for beginning learners. This case study addressed two interrelated elements. One is how to choose – or produce – teaching/learning materials and strategies for beginning students from their perspectives. Another is to investigate how I as a beginning teacher-researcher can improve my professional capabilities for teaching and research. I expected that both of these elements of this case study could make contribution to the learning and teaching of Chinese in Australia. This is important given the many challenges for Chinese language education that presently exists in foreign countries such as Australia and the UK (Zhang & Li, 2010).

3.3.3 Triangulation

The principle of triangulation was employed in this research; it means to “use different methods or sources to corroborate each other” (Mason, as cited in Silverman, 2000, p. 98). As mentioned before, one of the features that case study has is relying on various sources of evidence. Yin (2013) explains dual source of evidence is adopted on occasions like researchers have the preference to choose the most appropriate one as the focus of data collection. However, Yin (2013) also believes this
is not the recommendation as using various sources of evidence gained higher quality than only depend on sole source. In another words, “any case study finding or conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following a similar convergence” (Yin, 2013, p. 120). It is obvious that the use of diverse data sources may enhance the credibility and reliability of research because claims can be tested using various sources of data. Silverman (2000, p. 98) explains, “By having a cumulative view of data drawn from different contexts, we may, as in trigonometry, be able to triangulate the ‘true’ state of affairs by examining where the different data intersect”. In order to achieve triangulation, I adopted four methods of data collection, including questionnaire, interviews, observations and reflective journal entries, for generating evidence from multiple sources that are students, classroom teachers and I as a teacher-researcher (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Triangulation matrix: Case study data collection and analysis procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research questions</th>
<th>Data sources</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to make Chinese learnable from beginning L2 learners’ perspectives in a foreign, English speaking country such as Australia?</td>
<td>Students, Classroom teachers, Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Questionnaire, Interview, Classroom observation, Reflective journal</td>
<td>Open coding, Focused coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to prepare learner-centred lessons and</td>
<td>Students, Classroom</td>
<td>Questionnaire, Interview,</td>
<td>Open coding, Focused coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Data Collection Methods</td>
<td>Coding Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose appropriate teaching/learning materials to stimulate beginning</td>
<td>Teachers, Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Classroom observation, Reflective journal</td>
<td>Open coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learners to learn Chinese?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focused coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What teaching/learning strategies are acceptable to beginning learners</td>
<td>Students, Classroom teachers, Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Questionnaire, Interview, Classroom</td>
<td>Open coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to learn Chinese?</td>
<td></td>
<td>observation, Reflective journal</td>
<td>Focused coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can beginning bilingual volunteer teacher-researchers from China</td>
<td>Students, Classroom teachers, Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Questionnaire, Interview, Classroom</td>
<td>Open coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improve their skills in lesson preparation and teaching/learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>observation, Reflective journal</td>
<td>Focused coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 Case study research design

3.4.1 Research site

The school where I did my research is called Lanshu Public School, which is located in the middle of a beautiful mountain. Lanshu is a pseudonym in order to protect the privacy of teachers and students so that no one can identify them. Actually, the real name of Lanshu Public School represents a species of Australian trees. This school is located on the lower slopes of a mountain called “Blue Mountain”. It provides us a picture of an extremely beautiful tree standing on the blue mountain. Therefore, I came up with a Chinese name for this school, which is called Lanshu Public School.
In Chinese, blue is called “lan” and tree is called “shu”. Obviously, this name represents the location and the character of this school, which I was very satisfied with.

The place that Lanshu Public School is located in is a small town in New South Wales, Australia. The name of this place sounds very special and mysterious that came from aboriginal culture. About 75 kilometers away in the north-west of Sydney, this town is also located to the west of river on the lower slopes of the Blue Mountains. Because of the special geographic position, this town is surrounded by peaceful and comfortable atmosphere. This town has been developed to be a popular destination for tourists due to the convenient transport and beautiful scenery. Besides, the tranquility of this town attracts local people to rent farms and buy villas to stay for holidays when they want get away from the pressure of living in city. It is definitely the perfect place to spend leisure time.

Lanshu Public School is also a small school with about 200 students. Most of the students here are the residents of this small town. Curious with everything that is unfamiliar, they are eager to absorb new knowledge which is perfect for my implement of Chinese teaching. Lanshu Public School is a developing school and did not have any foreign language teaching until this ROSETE Partnership brought Chinese – and me - to it. A teacher told me that this school never had a foreign
language teaching until my project started. Students showed a strongly willing to learn language along with some teachers when I had the conversation with them. It also means that they are totally beginners for learning Chinese. The school posted the news under the headline ‘China comes to our school’ in the newsletter to welcome this exotic culture and language. All the teachers and students are very supportive. After several lessons, the students started to use Chinese greetings everyday. On the school website, they have established a section to describe the Chinese teaching and learning program. Their expectation is that as a volunteer teacher-researcher I can assist students, staff and community to learn Chinese and gaining a greater understanding of China’s culture.

3.4.2 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations always need to be taken into account when doing research. Research cannot be trusted if there are any ethical problems with it:

For teacher education researchers to justify the claim to be doing good research there is a need to provide an explicit and reasoned account of the strength of the connection between their researches, a sound concept of human well-being and the conditions they have employed to make this possible (Singh, Reid, Mayer & Santoro, 2011, p. 287).
When it comes to engaging human participants in research, ethical considerations are becoming ever more strict. Yin (2013) demonstrated that researchers “need to show how you plan to protect the human subjects in your case study” and “need to obtain approval for your plan, and you should not view such approval merely as a nominal oversight process” (p. 78). Hollway and Jefferson (2000) believes “the criterion of avoiding harm is a basic ethical principle: inflicting harm is unethical and contrary to rights and welfare” (p. 7). It is important to follow the relevant procedures to protect human subjects who are involved in a research project. Besides, paying careful attention to ethical procedures can help to strengthen the research and reputation of the researcher.

In this study, my participants included classroom teachers and students in primary school, where ethical considerations are highly significant because of the involvement of minors. I treated all the participants, and the students in particular with due ethical consideration, specifically “in the way [I] choose them, deal with them personally and how [I] use the information they provide” (Walliman, 2011, p. 47). Hollway and Jefferson (2000) state that research involves specific areas, which is often “required to get clearance from ethics committees before proceeding with a piece of research” (p. 3). When conducting this project, I followed strictly the ethical principles that are set by UWS and DEC to protect participants’ rights. This research project received approvals from both UWS Human ethics committee and DEC (see Appendices 1 and 2).
Prior to starting of any data collection, an information letter was sent to the principal along with the sample of questionnaire and interview questions to ask permission of conducting research in this school. Then, the administration office sent the information form and consent form to participating teachers, students and students’ parents or caregivers (see Appendices 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). Parents and caregivers of participating students had the rights to decide if they allow their child to join the research project. All the questionnaires for students were conducted in the normal Chinese lessons without any additional time. Classroom teachers decided whether they wanted to be interviewed and when they were available. Any participants could withdraw from the research at any time. All the primary data were kept secure and confidential in locked office draw and electronic versions were stored on computers requiring password access. All the information will be stored for five years after the project and then hard copies will be disposed and electronic versions will be deleted from computer.

As a teacher-researcher I was frank with all the participants about my research, and cared about anything that matters relating to confidentiality and anonymity. Making information about my research clear to the participants enabled them to assess whether they wish to participate, and make their choice to do so freely. In addition, I was acutely aware that my data collection questions should not cause concern, embarrassment or invade participants’ privacy. There is no personal information about participants that could be identified in this project. Above all, a vast of
measures has been taken to make sure the avoidance or minimization of any potential ethics issues.

3.4.3 Participants and the criteria for their selection

Participants’ recruitment had been an issue for me at the beginning of this research. I planned to invite all the students from Lanshu Public School to be participants so that I could select their work samples as data. Then, I tried to choose five (n=5) students from each year level to complete a questionnaire. However, when meeting with my supervisor, I realised it is too difficult to choose these five students fairly and probably make students’ uncomfortable and disappointed as most of students achieved fantastic performance. In addition, due to the age issue of stage 1 (kindergarten to year 2) students, I was concerned about their recognition ability to understand and answer research questions. Therefore, I changed the way to recruit participants with all considerations, which was selecting each class from stage 2 (year 3 and year 4) and stage 3 (year 5 and year 6). After discussing with the principal and classroom teachers, I decided to choose 3/4 R from stage 2, a combination class of year 3 and 4, and also the class of year 6 (6 B) from stage 3. The reason that I finally made the decision is that these two classes were the most highly enthusiastic students with Chinese learning in the whole school. Besides, the two classroom teachers are associate principals with experience and also extremely supported Chinese lessons. I felt I enjoyed every lesson with these two classes, so I
invited both students and classroom teachers of these two classes to be my participants.

There were 27 students in 3/4R and 28 students in 6B. As mentioned before, consent forms were sent to parents and caregivers. Then I got 25 permissions from 3/4R and 26 from 6B. All the students from 3/4R, including non-participating students, received a Chinese lesson with about 30 minutes per week while 6B received a 45-minute lesson fortnightly. The materials and strategies that I chose for the two classes were the same. After 10-week of learning, a questionnaire was prepared based on the content students have learnt in the whole term, aiming at providing feedbacks about Chinese lessons. The total period of data collection was two terms. Each questionnaire was finished at the last week of each term during the normal lesson time. Ultimately, due to multiple reasons such as absence, there were 21 students of 3/4R and 23 students of 6B finished the first questionnaire. Likewise, 19 students of 3/4R and 25 students of 6B completed the second questionnaire. Table 3.2 is the overview of the number of participants from each year level.

**Table 3.2 Overview of students as participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Participants students</th>
<th>Actual Number of Participants (Questionnaire 1)</th>
<th>Actual Number of Participants (Questionnaire 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>3/4 R (27 students)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Year 3 &amp; 4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, two classroom teachers also joined the project to have an interview with me. They are Rosemary who is responsible for 3/4R and Halina who is the classroom teacher of 6B. Both of them are associate principals in this primary school who have gained the high reputation. Rosemary is in charge of stage 1 and stage 2 (kindergarten to year 4). Also, she is the generous person that gave me a lift to school every Tuesday. In other words, we have deep friendship in private. I was also impressed by her relationship with the students. Most of the time, she is just like their friends and students like to talk to her about everything. However, when it comes to the behavior issue, she becomes a strict teacher and students listen to her totally. It is definitely the model that I want to learn from. Halina is in charge of stage 3 (year 5 and year 6). When I first went to this school, I was a little bit afraid of her because I thought she is a very tough teacher. However, after two terms of teaching, she became the one that I respect most. I totally want to be a teacher like her, who is strict with students and also build a fabulous rapport with them. Students really like and respect her. She also is the most supportive teacher. Not only did she help me in the appropriate time, but also offered me loads of suggestions that make me feel more confident. They gave the permission to have an interview individually with me about 20 minutes at the end of each term. Questions were sent to them in advance. They were also asked to finish two classroom observations sheets, recording the advantages and disadvantages of
specific lessons.

3.5 Generating the findings: Data collection methods

Based on the context of research site and characteristics of participants, I chose four methods to collect data, which are interviews and classroom observation for classroom teacher, questionnaires for students and reflective journals from myself as a teacher-researcher to generate the further findings. Each method has strengths and weaknesses so that the use of multiple methods probably helped to minimise the side effect of the weaknesses of these methods on data collection.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interview is a common method with which to collect data. According to Walliman (2011), interview is especially suitable for gathering in-depth information. The forms of questions can be very flexible, allowing teacher-researchers to probe interviewees so they can express their ideas appropriately. This means the participants involved the interview have a wide scope in making their responses, when compared to the standard questionnaire, which often includes forced choices with little scope for participants to elaborate on any nuanced understandings they might have to offer. Gillman (2010) summarises that interviewees have to be representative people and the content focuses on open questions that need to be
clarified. In order to get specific feedback from only two participating classroom teachers, interview seemed to be the appropriate method in this research to get abundant data.

There are diverse types of interviews including structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. From these I have chosen to use semi-structured focused interviews as it is possible is to have “standardised and open type questions” as well as probes to have interviewees provide examples and definitions (Walliman, 2011, p. 99). Standardised questions – about gender, age, and Year level - mean that I was to get the multiple answers for the one question, which make possible comparisons. More importantly, open-ended questions require no fixed pattern of response give interviewees more freedom to express their real feeling in various ways, and thus access too much deeper knowledge. Yin (2013) also lists several advantages of interviews, for instance, “targeted – focuses directly on case study topics and insightful – provides explanations as well as personal views” (p. 106). With fixed questions, interview definitely focuses on the topics firmly and participants can offer detailed explanation to support their views.

Multiple choices of interviews, including face-to-face interviews, focus groups and telephone interview, each of which has their own advantages and disadvantages depending on the nature and feasibility of the research. Due to the specificity of this project, I chose face-to-face interview, which has plenty of benefits. Face-to-face
interviews can be conducted in a variety of situations and modes: “in the home, at work, outdoors, on the move and can be used to interview people both singly and in groups. Using visual signs, such as nods, smiles etc., helps to get good responses” (Walliman, 2011, p. 100). During the 45-minutes face-to-face interviews, I recorded observations about interviewees’ facial expressions and instinctive reactions that might be necessary to better understand the emotions expressed by the interviewees.

In order to get teachers’ answers without missing any part, audiotapes were used to record the process of the interview with teachers’ permissions so that I could gather all the details. A sample of interview question (see Appendix 9) was sent to participating teachers prior to the interview day. They were basically asked about the backgrounds of students and themselves, the evaluation of students’ performances, and the opinions about my Chinese lessons so that I could improve my teaching and engage with students more. Participants were offered with freedom and time to share their views instead of simply answering. Finally, the interviews were transcribed into hardcopies for further analysis.

3.5.2 Observations

Classroom observation is a common way of helping teachers to reflect on their teaching and can help teachers to pay more attention to gaps between their assumptions and beliefs about their teaching and students’ learning, and evidence of
what actually happens. As a basic data collecting method, observation has some advantages:

Observation can record how people react to questions, and whether they act differently to what they say or intend. They can sometimes demonstrate their understanding of a process better by their actions than by verbally explaining their knowledge (Walliman, 2011, p. 100).

Instead of writing lesson plans and explaining the content, what I actually performed during the normal Chinese lessons transcripts better about my understanding of teaching and learning Chinese for students. The classroom teachers who worked with me observed and recorded the real process of my teaching. Just like Onggo and Hill (2014) assert, participant observation is a method that suits to record the collection process. Yin (2013) illustrates that direct observations “covers actions in real time” (p. 102), which means that what classroom teachers wrote down was detailed and accurate. Otherwise, aspects might be forgotten due to poor recall until the interview day.

Farrell (2011) suggests that the feedback from an observer, irrespective of whether it is a colleague or a supervisor can help teachers to improve their professional stance.

In my research, even though the classroom teachers I chose were not Chinese teachers, they still provided me with useful feedbacks to help me have the insight to know students and improve myself. Not only were they extremely experienced
teachers, they also had the responsibility to assist me to manage their classes and participate in the Chinese lessons. Therefore, their observational feedback is likely to be especially reliable and appropriate for developing my professional skills.

Prior to the lesson, classroom teachers received the sample of the observation sheet (see Appendix 12 & 13), containing four general aspects, which are teaching materials, strategies, teachers’ skills and students’ engagements with several hints behind. Both strengths and improvements were required.

3.5.3 Diaries/reflection journal

As a data collection tool, a diary can be considered as “a kind of self-administered questionnaire” (Robson, 2002, p. 258). A key reason as to why diaries are welcomed as a method for data collection, is that their authors have the personal drive, inclination or desire to generate data in abundance, often see the quantity of effort insignificant and as efficient means of professional learning. Bailey and Ochsner (as cited in Numrich, 1996) define diary study “as a first-person case study that is reports on affective factors normally hidden from or inaccessible to an external observer” (p. 131).

It is a useful method for novice teachers to start the first step of teaching as well. Numrich (1996) states that there are differences between “what we may think novice
teachers need to learn as they first set out to teach and what they see as most relevant to their needs may be two different things” (p. 131). In Numrich’s conclusion, a paragraph shows the significance of keeping diaries for novice teachers:

Without this analysis, I would have been unaware of some of the early preoccupations of novice teachers. I would not be aware of some of the reasons teachers choose to use or not to use particular teaching techniques with which they had been taught. And I am left more aware of their discoveries about effective teaching and their continued frustrations. These realizations have helped inform my own teacher education curriculum (1996, p. 148).

When keeping diaries, novice teachers may notice aspects that other observers missed, which help these teachers to reflect what happens in the classroom and the engagement of students of this lesson critically. As a beginning bilingual teacher, I was in the middle of exploration to find out my belief and direction towards becoming an experienced teacher. The personal theories I had and the teaching techniques I learnt were not perfect so that I was eager to criticise and improve my teaching. This is the method that identified my strengths and weaknesses through putting my lesson plans into practice, and thereby improved my teaching theories and strategies.

Diaries also have been important tools for data collection by the ROSETE team of teacher-researchers; they have recorded every further step of their teaching and
learning. Before each lesson, I wrote down a plan about the procedures and strategies and also my expectations about my students’ likely reactions. After class, I recorded what I have achieved by way of improving students’ learning and reflect on the pros and cons of my teaching. As the designer of the lesson, I had a clear understanding about how it might flow. Therefore, I was able to notice the gap between my expectations and reality, between my hopes and what actually happened. Meanwhile, I got the time to rethink about my problems, dig out the reason and consider the solutions. With this process, this evidence provided a basis for my professional self-improvement.

3.5.4 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a method for data collection, which allows people to express personal opinions and feelings, usually individually, and the results are aggregated. Wilson and Mclean (as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) describe “the questionnaire is a widely and useful instrument for collecting survey information providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse” (p. 377). Well-organised questionnaires can generate responses without the researcher having to meet personally with respondents, which allows for substantial anonymity. As a data collection method, “the questionnaire is very flexible tool, that has the advantages of having a structured format, is easy and convenient for respondents, and is cheap and quick to administer to a large number of cases
covering large geographical areas” (Walliman, 2011, p. 97). Typically, the questionnaire comes in two forms of questions. Closed format questions need respondents to choose from the given answers, which have been generated by the researcher. This form of questionnaire is easy to organise, but in this day and age not necessarily quick to acquire responses. Another form of questionnaire uses ‘open format questions,’ much like a semi-structured, focused interview. Such ‘questionnaires’ allow for free style answers enabling respondents to reveal more of their perspectives, providing they have the time and interest to undertake the writing these questionnaires usually require.

Due to the large amount of students in each class, the questionnaire is the best way to “organise the questions and receive replies without actually having to talk to every respondent” (Walliman, 2011, p. 97). Gillham (2010) also believes questionnaire is less-time consuming comparing with interviews, and has “a place at least in simple, factual information collection” (p. 59), which is easier for me to manage the large number of participating students to finish in a limited time. Besides, giving consideration to the ethical issues involved in my study, questionnaire is the perfect method for collecting feedback from participating students.

Considering my participants are primary schools students, I used both open format questions and closed format questions in my questionnaire. For the junior students (3/4R), the closed format questions were likely to be easier for them to understand
and answer, whereas the open format questions were suited for senior students (6B).
The questionnaire was administered as part of my normal lessons. Basically, they were asked to offer background information and express what they feel about Chinese lessons. These answers were the information that helped me to understand learners’ views and perspectives.

3.5.5 Statement of connection to research questions

As discussed above, four methods were used for data collection, illustrating the ways to gather evidence and lead to the answers for research questions. During the process of finding answers, all four methods (questionnaire, interview, observation and reflective journals) that tried to triangulate with each other were adopted for exploring each research question.

My first question is about lesson preparation based on learner-centred strategy, including choose appropriate teaching/learning materials for learners. Interviews focused on how classroom teachers choose materials in their teaching areas and how they evaluate my choices of materials. Likewise, classroom observations were also about evaluation of teaching materials I used in one lesson. In the questionnaire, I listed several topics and typical teaching materials to let students choose which one they like so that I could know if I understood their needs. The journals I wrote were reflections about the lesson plans and materials I used for each lesson in order to
notice the gaps and make improvement next lesson.

The second question is what teaching learning strategies are acceptable for beginning learners like students in my school. For interviews, like what I planned for first question, the concentration was on teachers’ preferences of strategies and how they evaluate my strategies based on the observation of students’ engagement. I assumed the students liked each strategy and let them to decide whether they agreed or not, and finding out which one they accepted. Besides, I required students’ self-evaluation about learning Chinese through my teaching strategies. For instance, it was improvement and engagement. In my diaries, I recorded my observation of students in the lesson and self-reflection. I tried to find the gap and make progress.

Last question is the improvement of teaching skills. In the interview and classroom observation, I asked teachers to evaluate my overall performance of teaching Chinese and give me suggestions about specific skills I need to improve. In the questionnaire, it is difficult to ask students to offer direct suggestions about how to become a better teacher. Therefore, they were required to describe overall impression of Chinese learning and answer if they want to continue learning in order to find out my improvement as a Chinese teacher. However, there were plenty of self-reflections in my diaries that were important which detailed about the progress I have made and improvement I need to achieve in the future.
3.6 Verifying the conclusions reached in the proposed thesis: Data analysis techniques

3.6.1 First level analysis with coding

Coding is a way for analysing data in educational research. It is “more creatively of linking up specific events and observations to more general analytic categories and issues” (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, p. 154). According to Robson (2002), it was my use of the theoretic-pedagogical framework outline above that provided the core of my data analysis. After gathering the data discussed above, I generated categories for each unit of analysis or evidentiary excerpt, and then mapped the interconnection between each category in order to reach the stage of conceptually driven analysis. There are various approaches to coding; Robson (2002, p. 493) nominates the following: open coding to find the categories; axial coding to interconnect them; and selective coding to establish the core category or categories. Following Emerson, Fretz and Shaw’s (1995) advice I undertook a first cycle of coding which included the following two types, namely ‘open coding’ and ‘focused coding’.

Open coding is a form of data analysis, which is “essentially interpreting rather than summarising” (Robson, 2002, p. 494). According to Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995), as a teacher-researcher I need to “seek to generate as many codes as possible, at least initially, without considering possible relevance either to established concepts
in one’s discipline or to a primary theoretical focus for analyzing and organizing this ethnography” (Emerson & Fretz & Shaw, 1995, p. 151). Through this process of analyzing data, open coding provided me with a clear view about the range of categories, and helped me to decide which are especially significant, which might have not been anticipated by my questions but important for me and which could be dropped as irrelevant to my research questions. Going through all the data I collected from participants using four methods, I found that most of data are probably useful and ready for the next step of coding. During the process of coding, I started to clear the categories that I was exploring.

The next step is focused coding, which is important for establishing categories and sorting the data accordingly. It offered me to consider how to generate and make selective use of all the data:

In focused coding, the researcher constantly makes comparisons between incidents, identifying examples that are comparable on one dimension or that differ on some dimension and hence constitute contrast cases or variations. When the ethnographer identifies such variation, he asks how the instance differs and attempts to identify the conditions under which these variations occur (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, p. 161).

My purpose at this stage was “to identify patterns and variations in relationships and in the ways that members understand and respond to conditions and contingencies in the social setting” (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, p. 162). In focused coding, I
identified patterns from a range of categories generated through open coding, to provide for basis for selecting relevant data. With the categories were identified, selective data were ready for analysis.

3.6.2 Second level analysis -- Evidentiary unit conceptual analysis

After the first level of data analysis, I undertook the secondary data analysis, which focused on evidentiary unit conceptual analysis. This data analysis technique is derived from the work of Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) who explain that:

A fieldnote-centred analytic commentary does a number of things. It focuses attention through an analytic point; illustrates and persuades through a descriptive excerpt introduced by relevant orienting information; and explores and develops ideas through commentary grounded in the details of the excerpt. We use the term excerpt-commentary unit to characterize this basic component of ethnographic writing (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, p. 182).

This technique of analysis involves four elements, namely an analytic point, orienting information, excerpt and analytic commentary. Thus, after going through the first level of data analysis, I focused on the conceptual driven analysis of my evidence as it related to my research questions. Stepping up to this level of analysis, I generated and classified the evidence in terms of key concepts. Each concept was introduced in a short sentence. The next step in this analytical process was explaining
the source of the evidentiary excerpt and linking it to the key concept. Then I presented the evidentiary excerpt. This was followed by a conceptual commentary where I used the evidence to give meaning to the concept. This analytic commentary was grounded in the evidentiary excerpt, while also contributing to moving forward my ideas in relation to one of my research questions. To illustrate – and rehearse - this analytical technique considers the following conceptual analysis of my reflections on PULSE (the performance by Western Sydney Region students).

Cultural difference is a key concept in education, especially Australia’s learning culture. To explore this idea I have selected an evidentiary excerpt from my reflection journal, made just days after my arrival in Australia:

Yesterday, we went to the Sydney Opera House to watch PULSE for the very first time. When I received my invitation, I found that PULSE actually represents five words, namely Performing Arts, Understanding and Learning by Showcasing Excellence. I was interested in these words. I wondered how they would express these ideas to us. Last night I was totally surprised by the talents of these excellent students. They were very confident and generous in showing us what skills they have. Although they were not professional performers, the students offered their diverse performances and thoughts from hearts: choirs, bands, solos, and dances. However, it seems to me that the Chinese performances (by students from Shanghai and Ningbo) were much more ‘traditional,’ they played the piano and sang a traditional song. However, Australian students were more fashionable. The ‘Black Widow’ dance was so fascinating. The background music for this dance is my favourite song, ‘Paradise’ by Coldplay, a UK band. But all the performances are excellent and
During the break, a teacher said that she found it interesting that all the performers’ names and the schools they are belong to were written in the PULSE concert program. That is quite different from China. Because one character of Chinese performances is that a lot of people perform on the stage. It can make the performance very spectacular. However, it means that the booklet has not enough space for the names of all the performers. They usually use ‘etcetera’ to refer all the names. This issue of population is just one part of the differences between the Chinese and Australia cultures. (Yue Yi, female, 23 years old, teacher of Chinese as a foreign language, 02/08/12, Sydney Opera House)

From this evidentiary excerpt, I have taken the concept of ‘cultural differences’ as the main ideas I wish to comment upon. Cultural differences mean the different customs of living including the ways of how the people talk, communicate and work. Based on the phenomenon described in my reflective journal, it is evident that some culture differences were reflected in PULSE. For the Australian students, the emphasis of personal value plays a pivotal role in their life as performers whereas for the Chinese students there was more focus on the entire group. This may have been merely a function of how the event was organised; we do have individual performers – singing stars – in China. However, all the Australian children’s names could be found in the concert program; this expressed the education community’s praise for the students’ personal dedication to their art form and their contribution to this Australia/China concert. However, the Chinese students were not listed in the program. This could have been due to the timing of printing and the selection of the
Chinese students. However, it also reflects the size of the Chinese population, which leads to a focus on the team; everyone gets praise for being part of a team.

3.7 Summary

This chapter stated the methods in this research project. It started with the methodology adopted for the project. The research strategy was introduced with details about how it was used in terms of this research. Then the explanation of research site, ethical considerations, participants and recruitments were described. Various data sources and multiple data collection methods were used to provide a trustworthy evidence base. Two levels of analysis of data led the direction to further exploration of finding answers for research questions. In chapter 4, the data analysis of lesson preparation and teaching methods are demonstrated.
Chapter 4

Lesson preparation through lesson design and choosing materials

4.1 Introduction

Before starting to teach, how to prepare lessons is the prior consideration. This chapter analyses data from various sources and focuses on how I prepared Chinese lessons, addressing the first contributory research question: How to prepare learner-centred lessons and choose appropriate teaching/learning materials to stimulate beginning learners to learn Chinese? In order to answer this question, three aspects are described. Prior to lesson preparation, getting to know learners (Scrimgeour, 2012; Iwashita & Sekiguchi, 2009) is necessary, including students’ background information, learning purposes and characteristics. Then comes the design of lesson (Reinders, 2011) with principles, and the sample lesson plan. Lastly, my ways of selecting teaching/learning materials (Zhang & L1, 2010; Scrimgeour, 2012; Schmid, 2010) and classroom teachers’ feedbacks are provided.

4.2 Knowing foreign language learners

In the literature part, current learners’ views about Chinese were discussed. They...
advocated that Chinese has intrinsic difficulties that lead to low achievements. Therefore, making Chinese learnable based on learners’ background information and their demands probably could assist them to gain a high level of achievements. As the significant part of foreign language education, getting to know the learners is the first step to prepare language teaching. Scrimgeour (2012) notices the significance of acknowledge the background and needs of learners. He advocates that “the increasing diversity of students in different learning contexts has led to calls for a better understanding and adequate recognition of the needs of learners participating in Chinese language education in schools” (p. 313). The more a teacher knows about the learners, the more suitable lessons can be prepared. In this section, the backgrounds and the characteristics of learners that I was teaching are stated. It also provides details about why they wanted to learn Chinese and their expectation of future learning. Table 4.1 shows the general themes and data information of this section. Theme describes what the main idea of this data.

**Table 4.1 Themes and data information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data sources</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Find out if students have learnt Chinese previously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposes</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Find out students’ purpose of learning Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Classroom teachers</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Teachers’ view about students’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before starting to teach Chinese, I wanted to know if learners have prior knowledge about Chinese. Therefore, I asked them a question in the questionnaire in order to know their backgrounds, which is if they have learnt Chinese before. Table 4.2 presents the evidence from stage 2 and stage 3 in Lanshu Public School. In the Table, three faces represent three different responses are provided for students to choose. The first face is a smile representing extremely agreement. The second and the third face express agreement and disagreement respectively.

**Table 4.2: Language background survey**

(a) **Language background by stage 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have I learned Chinese before?</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(31%)</td>
<td>(69%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) Language background by stage 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊 3 (13%)</th>
<th>😊😊 5 (22%)</th>
<th>😊😊😊 15 (65%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Based on the Tables, it can be concluded that 69% of students in stage 2 and 65% in stage 3 have not learned Chinese before I came to school as a Chinese teacher, which basically fits the circumstance in this school that I was the first foreign language teacher. However, there are still 31% and 35% of students who claimed that they have learned Chinese before, which surprised me because I did not find any students who knew how to speak Chinese except two or three students who transferred from another school that provides Chinese lessons. Even a student, who was very happy to tell me she is a Chinese-Australian but unfortunately, cannot speak any Chinese language. Scrimgeour (2012) discusses heritage learners as learners with related background and have acquired heritage language before. Therefore, she is not a heritage learner even with half-Chinese descent and could be treated as the same as other Australian beginning foreign language learners. Afterwards, I happened to know why this result came about when communicating with students. In their curriculum, Asian study has been related to different subjects like geography or religion. What they have learned is some knowledge about Asia that they considered as Chinese culture, not the language by itself. Iwashita and Sekiguchi (2009, n. p.) summarise that learners with language study background may achieve superior performance,
otherwise, the “study background itself made little difference to performance on various aspects of L2 writing”. With the result that the majority of students have not learnt Chinese language before, I was able to start to prepare a lesson focusing on making it easy for beginning learners to accept.

4.2.2 Purpose of learning Chinese

The purpose of learning Chinese can be considered as the direction to guide the whole Chinese teaching process. In order to know their purposes, I asked the students their expectations about Chinese lessons if they continue to learn in the future. Table 4.3 shows the answers from stage 2 and stage 3 students in Lanshu Public School.

Table 4.3 Future expectations of Chinese

(a) Future expectations of Chinese from stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the future if I continue learning Chinese, I expect to be able to?</th>
<th>Have a conversation in Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greet and respond in Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talking fluently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Say long sentence and speak it like I speak English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Say more words in Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak Chinese easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak Chinese better and teach others about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say a basic sentence and know a lot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a full conversation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend a few months in China without any troubles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get a very good job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Future expectations of Chinese from stage 3

| In the future if I continue learning Chinese, I expect to be able to? | Speak 20 Chinese words |
| | Say a lot in Chinese |
| | Learn Chinese words |
| | Speak Chinese |
| | Speak Chinese and teach Chinese |
| | Make friends and write Chinese |
| | Read simple Chinese book |
| | Talk a little bit at home daily |
| | Have a conversation in Chinese |
| | Learn Chinese symbols |

According to Table 4.3, it can be seen that the answers from both stages are diverse but leading to one purpose, which is achieving high proficiency of speaking Chinese. A vast number of students expressed their interests about learning more Chinese and speaking it fluently. Even several students wrote that they want to teach Chinese or get a good job in the future, which are totally beyond my expectation. Consequently, as beginning learners of Chinese, students did show their favors in learning Chinese, which is impressive. By getting to know their goals, I surely knew how to choose contents related to their daily communication, which could meet their learning needs.
4.2.3 Characteristics of learners

Knowing the characteristics of learners is another aspect that a teacher should have been aware of. Based on my observation in the classrooms, I did notice that students are more energetic and curious than I expected but answers from locally experienced classroom teachers can be comprehensive. The question about what key characteristics primary school students have was asked to teachers from stage 2 and stage 3.

Yi: Can you tell me your opinion what the key characteristics of primary school students are?
Rosemary: Key characteristics of primary school students vary. Every child is different. But on the whole, they just want to be loved and nurtured.
Halina: They are very enquiring. They open to a lot of new ideas very much. So they also, also need a lot of guidance. And they need a lot of structure, I think, as well with primary school. I think that will cover that one.

From the answers, Rosemary mentioned the variety of each student and their demand of love from teachers. Halina used “enquiring” “new ideas” “need guidance and structure” to describe primary students. It is obvious that students here are different, open-minded and eager to learn while they also need teachers’ guidance to lead them to the right track. It is different compared to the students in China based on my experience. They are more disciplined but sometimes maintain reticence with
low-motivation to participate in a lesson, which probably because of the culture differences that Asian people are a little bit introverted while Western people are more outgoing. Lee and Ng (2010) also mentioned this characteristic of Asian students in the foreign language classroom, “reticence is a common problem faced by ESL/EFL teachers in classrooms, especially in those with mainly Asian students” (p. 302). Another possible reason is teacher-centered and student-centered approach issue. We prefer the previous one in China and latter method favored in Australia. These conclusions remind me to abandon what I saw and learnt about students in China and focus on interacting with students in a lesson in the Australian classroom context.

4.3 Design of a lesson

Before teaching, design a structure about what and how to deliver a lesson is necessary. This part shows my framework of designing a lesson with details. It also emphasises a factor I noticed during the process of design, which is sequence. Table 4.4 shows the data information of this section.

**Table 4.4 Themes and data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My design of lessons</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Lesson plan</td>
<td>How I design a lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>The effect of lesson plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of sequence</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Lesson plan</td>
<td>The finding of sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>Classroom observation</td>
<td>Confirmation of this finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.1 My design of lessons

Designing a lesson is the first step to actually implementing foreign language education. Reinders (2011) encourages teachers to plan ahead with any lesson. Based on the background information survey results, I concluded the framework of my lesson plan, which aims at fitting learners’ level and learning goals. Table 4.5 is a sample lesson plan of my very first Chinese lesson in Lanshu Public School.

Table 4.5 Sample of Chinese lesson plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 1 Greeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn how to say “hello, my name is” in Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Related cultural competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have an understanding of the culture of Chinese names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia: first name + last name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China: last name + first name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson outline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Revision of last lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (New) Language learning, practice and interaction activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Video to start the very first lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This video is about a Chinese American little girl who is using Chinese to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
introduce herself. Students will watch this video and answer several basic questions. This video aims at stimulating and encouraging students to learn Chinese.

b. Introduction of Chinese names culture

Introduction
Using my name as an example to introduce the culture of Chinese names, which is the reverse order comparing their names.

Practice
Using names of some Chinese popular celebrities to practise recognition of first name and last name.

c. Learning a greeting sentence structure

Introduction
Teaching students how to introduce themselves in Chinese “Hello, my name is…”

Practice (Game: catch the koala)
Students stand up and it starts with my personal introduction in Chinese and then I throw the toy koala to another student, who is going to introduce himself or herself in Chinese. Then goes to another student.

3. Knowledge consolidation

Worksheet
Write down their names after the Chinese characters of “hello, my name is” and draw pictures of them.

Lesson production
Students will understand the culture of Chinese people’s names, which is last name, comes first and first name at the end. Then they will learn the easy greeting words in Chinese. Using video and famous Chinese celebrities as a start will help them to get a good impression about Chinese. Worksheet makes sure they get exposure of this new sentence.
From this lesson plan, it has a clear structure contains lesson purpose, outline and production. Both language purpose and culture competence related to this topic need to be stated. In this lesson, specifically being aware of the reverse order of Chinese names was the culture part and learning how to introduce the name in Chinese was language goal. The lesson outline part is able to help me to know each step of my lesson. Basically, this part demonstrates the content about how to revise previous knowledge, introduces the language and strategies to practise with details. I prepared a video to start a new topic and also planned both introduction and practice in each lesson purpose. Several questions were asked to make sure they understand this cultural difference. A game was adopted in order to practise the sentence structure between students. The last part is my assumption and expectations about lesson production. The achievements of this lesson were to let students have first contact with Chinese and build up confidence. Have this part to be written down is helpful for me to reflect this lesson after it is finished, which is easy to find out what I did not achieve and how I can improve the lesson preparation. In this lesson plan, every step in the outline is basically trying to focus on student-centered method, which includes a vast interaction between students and the teacher and also among students.

Revision, as being mentioned before, the first step of a lesson, is also the part I try to emphasise on its significance. Repetitions can be considered as boring sometimes. However, in this specific context each class has one Chinese lesson once a week for about only 30 minutes in Lanshu Public School. It definitely plays a pivotal role to
help students to recall what they have learnt and further diagnoses if they truly acquired the knowledge. Apart from providing different activities to achieve revision before the introduction of a new topic, a whole lesson as revision is also my strategy that is adopted frequently. To find out what opinions that students hold about having a revision lesson, I asked whether they want to have it or not after learning new knowledge. Table 4.6 shows the answers from stage 2 and stage 3 students.

**Table 4.6 Opinions about revision lesson**

(a) Opinions from stage 2 about revision lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. I like to have a revision lesson after learning new knowledge.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(84%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(16%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Opinions from stage 3 about revision lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. I like to have a revision lesson after learning new knowledge.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 4.6, it is obvious that the majority of students showed preference about having a revision lesson after learning new knowledge, with 84% students from stage 2 and 92% students from stage 3 support this idea. Therefore, not only did I
notice the importance of revision lessons but also that students needed it from the perspective of their demands, as they felt the time limitation of learning new knowledge. Whether having a revision lesson or not depends on students’ performances evaluated by classroom teachers and me. Students can be stimulated to engage with the revision lesson when it is interesting, which sometimes may contain new knowledge as bridge to revise several topics at the same. Table 4.7 is the sample of lesson plans that stimulated students’ interests using the combination of new knowledge and previous knowledge.

Table 4.7 Sample of revision lesson plan contains new knowledge and several previous language topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 9 Revision lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Language</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise the words of family members. (Main purpose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn how to say, “This is…” in Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise the words of classroom and schoolbag topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Related cultural competence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson outline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Revision of last lesson</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work: separate students into four groups and let students work together to find out the answers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the smartboard, the left side will have pictures of dad, mum, big sister, little sister, big brother, little brother, grandpa, grandma; the right side will have the Chinese words of these pictures in a wrong order. They need to match the word with the picture together. After 5 minutes, each group selects a representative to write the answer on the whiteboard and check together.

Part 2:
After the group work, I will guide them go through all the words of family members using the PowerPoint.

2. (New) Language learning, practice and interaction activities
a. Learn how to say “this is …” in Chinese
Teach them how to say and then use family members as examples to let students have a try to pronounce.

b. practice Group work:
Each group will get a piece of paper which has several words in Chinese comes from the topics of this term (classroom, schoolbag, family members). Some pictures that selected from the words in the paper will be provided on the smartboard. Students need to tick the word that shown on the board in their worksheets. Then, each of groups needs to use the sentence “this is…” in Chinese to show their answers to the class.

3. Knowledge consolidation
Worksheet (word match)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will revise the words of three topics that they have learnt and also know how to say “this is…” in Chinese.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This lesson plan (Table 4.7) used the sentence structure “this is …” to link the words of family members; classroom and schoolbags so that students were able to revise these words follow the structure to speak a full sentence. In my reflective journal,
“students were really engaged with this lesson and learnt so quickly that mastered this sentence after only one example” was written to evaluate their performances. Therefore, revisions meet students’ needs and also maintain interests, which is a significant part of planning a lesson.

4.3.2 Importance of sequence in organising activities

The key word ‘sequence’ was found out when I was planning a revision lesson of topic schoolbag. Before that, I did not realise the necessity of thinking about the order and organisation of activities until finishing this lesson plan, I notice that well-organised activities with order help to adjust the atmosphere of the classroom. Table 4.8 shows the plan of this lesson.

Table 4.8 Sample of lesson plan showing sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson plan</th>
<th>Schoolbag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson purpose</strong></td>
<td><strong>Related cultural competence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn how to say 6 words that chosen from schoolbag in Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know the four treasures of the study (brush, paper, ink, ink stone)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson outline</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Revision of last lesson</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flashcards: Go through six words of classroom again to recall their memories by using</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
flashcards.

Game: First, I ask them to close eyes. Then I stick flashcards to the wrong place. For instance, I stick “whiteboard” to the door of their classroom. They need to fix all the mistakes.

Quick response (two rounds):
First round: I say Chinese and students point out the real stuff in classroom.
Second round: I say English and they say the word in Chinese.

2. (New) language learning and practice

a. Language practice

Guess game:
I prepared some numbers and each word behind a number. There are two groups in the classroom. Each round, a volunteer from a group needs to stand back to the smartboard, and another group need to choose a number for their competitors. The rest of the team will see the picture behind this number, and have to say this word in Chinese. The volunteer need to say this word in English based on the Chinese that the team members said. Both the right Chinese and English will win one point. If the opponent can choose the number in Chinese, which they have learnt, they also can get one point. It is an activity and also a test for students.

b. Culture exposure

Four treasures of study
Firstly, students will be asked to guess what four treasures of study are in China. Then, they will receive a worksheet with some question that can be answered when watching the video. Each question will be read and explained in order to make sure they understand. After the video, some students will be selected to answer the questions and I will also give them a standard answer. At the end, students have to think about what four treasures of study they can define in Australian classroom now. This is a part of culture comparison and also tests them if they really understand the meaning of culture concept.

3. Knowledge consolidation
First of all, it started with flashcards review that they only need to use their brain with sitting on chairs. Then, two interactive games needed some of students to walk around and move bodies. When learning new words, repetition kept them back to the traditional way of study that sitting and listening. Then, the next group game made them excited with tense and fierce competition. Finally, sitting on chairs, watching a video and completing worksheet would finish this lesson. The whole lesson made students feel like sitting on a roller coaster, which started from calm, then reached peak with excitement and finally went back to calm again. I believe students will receive fulfilment after this lesson. After this lesson in stage 3, Halina wrote down this sentence in the observation sheet, “Variety of strategies used. Pace change in activities utilized effectively. Order of activities well thought out” (Appendix 13), which made me excited that she noticed what exactly I was thinking. I also wrote a journal about this lesson:

I am very satisfied about the whole lesson. Firstly, this lesson was fully
prepared with good organization from the perspective of students. They learnt knowledge and enjoyed the happiness of learning Chinese at the same time. I am sure the sequence of activities plays an important role in the lesson. It is the part that I should pay more attention on when planning a lesson. (7/5/2013)

Both feedbacks from students and teachers were very positive that strengthen my confidence to arrange the sequence of activities in every lesson plan in order to enliven the atmosphere of classroom and engage with students.

4.4 Choosing appropriate materials to stimulate students’ learning

Appropriate materials play a pivotal role in lesson preparation. Especially the available textbooks in the market about teaching Chinese as foreign language are not designed for local context (Zhang and L1, 2010; Scrimgeour; 2012), therefore, selection of materials is the essential capability for TCFL teachers. Learners can actually acquire the knowledge if materials are chosen properly. This section discusses the possible principles to choose appropriate materials. Making materials relevant to students’ everyday knowledge definitely meets their learning purposes. Diverse and updated materials stimulate their interests and keep them want to learn. Designing and adapting materials, which are a necessary teacher’s capability, make materials to fit different learning levels of students. Table 4.9 shows data information of this section.
### Table 4.9 Data information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevant to everyday knowledge</td>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Find out if teachers support this idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse and updated based on students’ interest</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Find out if students like the materials I chose for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Their views about specific materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Their views about how to select materials and my choice of materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting materials to fit each levels</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Worksheet samples</td>
<td>Students’ engagement of teaching materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>Self – reflection based on observation and improve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to conclude several basic roles of choosing materials, the experience from classroom teachers is highly important. I asked two classroom teachers about how they choose the materials for their students. The answers are showed below.

**Yi:** Can you tell me how do you choose materials for students? What are your rules of choosing materials?

**Rosemary:** Do you mean teaching resources?

**Yi:** Yes.

**Rosemary:** I…am…always trying matching the resources to the interesting and ability level of the child for most things.

**Yi:** OK. Can you tell me how do you choose materials for students? What are your rules of choosing materials?

**Halina:** I teach differentially. I teach the child not the class. I’ve never, never taught class anyway. You look at the needs of the students and you
select thing for the students. You are restricted by the amount of funding you get obviously, because there are be a lot of things I’d like to get but I can’t have. Because of the resources, you know, the cost of resources. But generally, that’s how I do. I look at the students first what their needs are and then see how we can get materials organized for them. These days, with the Internet, there is no reason why you can’t have the specific things for kids, for children. You just go on the Internet and you can find something that will suit those children perfectly. It’s so much out there. So, that’s what I do.

Rosemary focused on how to make the materials interesting and also suit for the students’ level. Halina mentioned the most important rule is getting to know students’ needs and then organize the materials. Even though the fund of buying resources is limited, however, with the proliferation of Internet, variety of materials can be found that suit for children perfectly. Therefore, based on my own experience and answers from classroom teachers, several rules are concluded to state in details.

4.4.1 Relevant to everyday knowledge

Everyday knowledge refers to what occurs frequently in learners’ daily lives, such as the language in the classroom, in the playground and also at home. Making the learning content related to what learners have in their lives is definitely easier for beginning learners to acquire spoken language and engage with them in every lesson. I found out Rosemary also mentioned the relevance with everyday knowledge when
she was asked to answer how to engage with students.

Yi: Can you tell me in your opinion how to engage with students in learning? And in learning Chinese in particular?

Rosemary: it’s a hard one. I think…to make it relevant. What you have been doing is great. So giving them, you know, key phrases, and greetings and then making it relevant to them like what you did last week with the animals. Um, because they all have a dog or they all have a cat. And (blah, blah) we did before. So make it relevant to them. If the words they don’t have any contact with, it’s useless. But you’ve done a great job, Yi.

Rosemary expressed her view that the most effective way to engage with students is making content relevant. She used one of my lessons as example, which is the lesson about pets, to confirm my achievements about making content relevant. About that lesson, I asked students to share the experience with pets and all the students were eager to talk. Then I chose three ordinary pets and taught them how to say in Chinese. Finally, I held a vote to find out which pet among these three is the favorite pet in the class and all the students have to give one vote by saying it in Chinese. Students were active throughout the whole lesson, which impressed Rosemary.

Apart from teacher’s view, I also have to find out what students think about the content related to their lives and if they like this idea. In the questionnaires, students were requested to answer if they like to learn Chinese that was related to daily life and other subjects they are currently learning. Table 4.10 illustrates the answers from stage 2 and stage 3.
Table 4.10 Views about content related to everyday knowledge

(a) Views from stage 2 about content related to everyday knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊😊</th>
<th>😊😊😊</th>
<th>😊😊😊😊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. I like to learn some Chinese that related to my daily life.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>(90%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I like to learn some Chinese that is related to what I am learning in other subjects.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(95%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Views from stage 3 about content related to everyday knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊😊</th>
<th>😊😊😊</th>
<th>😊😊😊😊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. I like to learn some Chinese that related to my daily life.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I like to learn some Chinese that is related to what I am learning in other subjects.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the two Tables above, it is quite satisfying that both feedback about Chinese content related daily life and other subjects in school are highly positive, with supports from majority of stage 2 students and all the stage 3 students. Moreover, in order to testify students really understand what I am trying to explain in the question, they were requested to write down topics that they wanted to learn in the future Chinese lesson. Table 4.11 shows some topics that students wrote in the questionnaires to answer this question.
Table 4.11 Topics that students want to learn in the future learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The topic/s I would like to learn in the following Chinese lessons are?</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Traditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree</td>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Animals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More greetings</td>
<td>Chinese New Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora and fauna</td>
<td>Family members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>Greetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese discoveries</td>
<td>Ancient China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Famous people</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>Customs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does Christmas look like in China?</td>
<td>Instruments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names</td>
<td>The warriors and dragons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>Evil spirits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>People</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the list, all the topics were related to what they see and talk in lives. For instance, students wanted to know food, animals, people, and instruments in China, which are totally relevant to their daily lives. One of students even wrote, “What does Christmas look like in China”, which showed students’ interests about China are all on the basis of their knowledge in life. They took it for granted that China should celebrate Christmas just like they do. Therefore, choosing content that related to life in Australia and also introduce cultural difference may help students to learn Chinese
effectively. Besides, the results meet the students’ purpose of learning Chinese, as they want to speak it fluently. Content related to daily life are able to attract students’ attention and easy for them to actually use in daily conversation. They can easily go to shops that are owned by Chinese people in Australia and have a short conversation in Chinese.

4.4.2 Diverse and updated materials based on students’ interest

As I was interviewing Halina, the classroom teacher of stage 3, she mentioned two key words to make students want to learn when answering the question of how to engage with students, which are diverse activities and motivation. She talked about this question in details.

Yi: Yes. And can you tell me in your opinion how to engage with students in learning? And in learning Chinese in particular?
Halina: Well, you motivate them. You get them interested. You find out what it is, what it is to motivate them. What it is to make them want to learn. So you have to somehow work out what it is that makes them want to learn the language. What it is that makes them want to have you in front of them. It’s a difficult thing. You can do all sort of different things. You can show them the video and that will be enough to get them going and want to do some more. You can make them do role play. (Yi: Role play, yes.) And activities some sort, that is really good as well. And that motivate the whole class, as well as the children to select. You can, you can anything you like, but you need to find out what it is that they are interested in. And make that, make that the beginning of your
lesson. Well, you don’t have ‘Well we have Miss Yue today, so we are gonna doing Chinese’. They need to be going ‘Well, we have Miss Yue today. Fantastic! Because we are going to do this, this and this.’ The games that you played is one motivation, is good motivation. Well, they are saying they can play some sort of games and learn at the same time. So, it’s to get them and that’s the big word, motivation.

Halina believed the priority of learning is the motivation. Teachers have the responsibilities to conclude what students’ interests are and keep them constantly wanting to learn. Then, diverse materials and activities should be used in the lessons to stimulate their interests. These two key words were also my crucial considerations when preparing the topics and materials along with making it relevant.

During my teaching period, different topics were taught to students, such as names, family, numbers, etc. Meanwhile, diverse materials had been chosen to extend the learning of these topics, for instance, smartboard activities, games, videos and classroom displays. After all, students’ feedbacks about all the topics and materials I chose for them can help to prove whether my diverse materials motivate them or not. Table 4.12 show students’ evaluation about the Chinese lessons and their performances in term 1 in 2013.
Table 4.12 Stages of students’ feedback about Chinese learning in term 1, 2013

(a) Stage 2 students’ feedback about Chinese learning in term 1, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊😊</th>
<th>😊😊😊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Classroom displays helped me to remember Chinese words</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(81%)</td>
<td>(19%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I found the worksheets are easy to do.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(52%)</td>
<td>(48%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. These activities help me to learn Chinese in an easy way.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(71%)</td>
<td>(29%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I like to learn Chinese words</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(90%)</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I like to learn Chinese culture, such as Chinese New Year.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(76%)</td>
<td>(24%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Stage 3 students’ feedback about Chinese learning in term 1, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊😊</th>
<th>😊😊😊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Classroom displays helped me to remember Chinese words</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(87%)</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I found the worksheets are easy to do.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(48%)</td>
<td>(52%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. These activities help me to learn Chinese in an easy way.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(74%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I like to learn Chinese words</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(96%)</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I like to learn Chinese culture, such as Chinese New Year.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(74%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results obtained from the preliminary analysis of questionnaire of stage 2 and stage 3 students are shown in Table 4.12. Apparently, all the feedback of each are positive except the data of strongly agreement and agreement is different. About the effect of classroom displays, 81% students from stage 2 and 87% students from stage 3 respectively strongly agreed it is useful to memorize Chinese words. Stage 2 and stage 3 sharing similar number (around 70%) that strongly support activities to help Chinese learning. Around half of the students in both stage 2 and stage 3 strongly found out worksheets are easy to do. I was surprised by the result, as I believed that the time limitation of each lesson and each week impeded the effect of learning and students’ self-confidence. Actually, from my perspective, they achieved fantastic performances in such a limited time every week. However, they just did not realise it. After all, worksheets were planned to strengthen their memories instead of testing.

Overall, after learning of this term, 90% of stage 2 students and 96% of stage 3 students liked to learn Chinese words. Likewise, more than 70% of both stages students liked to learn Chinese culture. Therefore, it can be said that my relevant topics and diverse materials were actually accepted and favored by students, which made me feel satisfied.

In order to get abundant evidence, I also asked students to answers some questions based on the Chinese learning in term 2, 2013 to find out if they enjoyed the topics and materials. In term 2, life in school and home is the topic of whole unit. Then words about classroom and schoolbag was taught and practiced through different
ways of repetition. Culture competence of tones and four treasures of study were explained. Table 4.13 shows the feedbacks with details about learning Chinese in term 2.

**Table 4.13 Stages of students’ feedback about Chinese learning in term 2, 2013**

(a) Stage 2 students’ feedback about Chinese learning in term 2, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Disagreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. I like the topic of Tones and I am interested in tones.</td>
<td>14 (74%)</td>
<td>5 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel the game helped me to memorize words and raised my interest in learning Chinese (e.g. the guessing game).</td>
<td>17 (90%)</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like watching video to learn Chinese culture (e.g. video of four treasures of study).</td>
<td>17 (90%)</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I prefer to know more about modern life in China rather than Ancient China.</td>
<td>12 (63%)</td>
<td>7 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I prefer to learn the unique part of Chinese culture rather than the same part as Australia.</td>
<td>15 (79%)</td>
<td>4 (21%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Stage 3 students’ feedback about Chinese learning in term 2, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Disagreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Stage 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I like the topic of Tones and I am interested in tones.</td>
<td>24 (96%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel the game helped me to memorize words and raised my interest in learning Chinese (e.g. the guessing game).</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like watching video to learn Chinese culture (e.g. video of four treasures of study).</td>
<td>24 (96%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I prefer to know more about modern life in China rather than Ancient China.</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
<td>13 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I prefer to learn the unique part of Chinese culture rather than the same part as Australia.</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Tables above, it is undeniable that tones is favored by the majority of stage 2 students (74%) and stage 3 students (96%). Games received almost everyone’s votes about its effect for facilitating to memorize language words in this term, with 90% of stage 2 students’ support and all the stage 3 students’ agreement. Watching video to learn Chinese culture was accepted by more than 90% of students in both stages. Besides, I also used two questions to investigate their interests about culture part. Around half of students in both stages wanted to know more about modern life in China instead of Ancient China and 79% of stage 2 and all the stage 3 students preferred the unique part of Chinese culture rather than the sharing similar aspects with their own country. I read several reasons about these surprising answers. Most of students believed the culture of ancient China as being mysterious and interesting.
than modern China. It provided me with direction for preparing more culture related contents about ancient China to fulfill their curiosities. In conclusion, students gave quite positive feedbacks about term 2, which confirmed my success of choosing diverse materials.

Even I got satisfied feedbacks, as to how to motivate students’ interest using their favorite material, which is still worth to search. Knowing students’ interests helps me to avoid using undesirable materials that will lead to an ineffective lesson planning and delivering. They were also requested to circle the materials they feel useful as much as possible, which have been listed in the questionnaire. Table 4.14 shows the votes of each kind of materials from stage 2 and stage 3.

**Table 4.14 Votes for different materials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13. I like to practise Chinese words in the following methods.</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart board</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>Smart board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PowerPoint</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>PowerPoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Displays</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>Videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flashcards</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>Classroom Displays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worksheet</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>Worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>Flashcards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

119
Obviously, game was their favorite without any doubt with 100% agreement in stage 2 and 92% agreement in stage 3. Next comes to the smartboard with more than 80% of votes in both stages. There are several other materials they also liked, such as videos, PowerPoint, etc. All the types of materials were welcomed by all the stages of students. Smartboard, is the special equipment that I have never seen or used in China. It has another name called “interactive whiteboard” as IWB that teachers can use freely to design activities and where students can interact directly with the computer. However, Schmid (2010) argues that the increasing availability of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) in language classrooms across the world has triggered the debate on the potential threat of this technology to the principles of socio-communicative language teaching. I still hold the view that using smartboard was the most amazing new experience I had about designing activities in Australia as long as it is not being overused. With this votes result, I was able to consider students’ motivation when choosing materials.

4.4.3 Design and adapt materials to fit each levels

As there are vast of drawbacks in the marketed textbooks and also the shortage in fund for buying materials that Halina mentioned in the interview, designing materials or adapting existing materials seem to be the normal methods for teachers to get
appropriate materials. As a new school, my school did not have any textbook about Chinese language, which required me to prepare all the materials and resources about Chinese lessons. This condition pushed me to design materials. Moreover, as the only Chinese volunteer teacher in the school, I had the responsibilities to teach Chinese to every year level so that I had to design, then adapt materials to fit different year levels. Figure 4.1 is the worksheet that I designed for stage 1 and Figure 4.2 is the worksheet for stage 2 and 3.

**Figure 4.1 Sample of worksheet for stage 1**

Chinese worksheet

Name:          Class:

Cut the characters underneath and stick to the right place.

Hello, my name is

 semua nǐ hào

You are welcome!

wǒ jīào

xièxiè

bù yòng xiè

你好 我叫 谢谢 不用谢
Both the worksheets were designed for topic greetings. It can be seen that Figure 4.1 has several adorable cartoon characters that suit the interests of this age. The instruction of this worksheet was easy to follow. This was accomplished by simply cutting the characters and pasting them to the right squares to match Chinese with English meaning. The worksheet (Figure 4.2) for stage 2 and 3 contained complicated conversation arrangement and also culture parts, such as how to say hello to a friend and to a person you need to show respect. Students were able to practise daily communication and notice the culture through this exercise. Different materials have to be designed and adapted in order to fit different year levels and achieve effective learning purpose.
4.4.4 Teachers’ feedback

After almost one year of choosing materials for Chinese lessons follow the rules that I have stated before, teachers’ evaluation about my performance of choosing materials so far is useful to help me testify if I did choose appropriate materials for my students. I asked classroom teachers to evaluate the materials I chose for students and they offered me positive feedbacks.

Yi: What do you think about the materials that I chose for students?
Rosemary: Towards the end as your progress, they became much more relevant and much more interesting, so that was great. They were very engaged.

Yi: What do you think about the materials that I chose for students?
Halina: Excellent. Excellent. The variety of media you use especially for the students. Well, it’s not just paper. It’s not just, you know, the whiteboard all the time. You gave them a lot of, a lot of different ways to work with things. You gave them handouts. You gave them cards. All of that sort of thing, absolutely excellent. Outstanding, which is very very good.

Rosemary thought my materials gradually became more relevant and interesting this year as compared to last year. Halina used “excellent” to describe my improvement. She was really impressed by my use of diverse media, instead of only using paper and whiteboard.
4.5. Discussion

In this chapter, what I concentrated are the understanding of learners and lesson preparation through learners’ view. Based on my experience as a Chinese teacher here, I realised the significance of knowing learners so that I can give more considerations about how I should teach lessons from learners’ point of view. Just like the New Zealand Ministry of Education (as cited in Edwards, 2012) recommended that “the principle of knowing the learner is considered of such importance that it is listed as the first of seven principles of effective teaching and learning” (p. 109). Then learners can be stimulated and engaged to learn Chinese even more. By contrast, what I learnt from university courses in China was that it did not emphasise anything about learners. I believed that TCFL basically considered learners as mature adults who want to learn Chinese systematically and achieve proficiency like native speakers. I have never received any lectures about how to teach differently based on the condition of learners. Perhaps focusing more on learners can be a new topic for this major in university study.

About lesson plans, I did remember I have some lessons about how to design a Chinese lesson for learners. Actually, this content is also a part of the final examination, which was to design a lesson based on the material given and write down immediately on the examination paper. I was taught is follow the framework that contains pronunciation, words and grammar whereas I constructed my own framework
that included introduction, revision, practice and consolidation as I mentioned in the chapter after my teaching experience in the Australian school. It can be seen that the framework I was given in China was more about language itself while my concluded framework concentrates on how to offer students with diverse language learning. In terms of teaching materials, my teachers just recommended plenty of existing textbooks without any guidance about actually choosing specific materials. Therefore, based on the comparison, I believe I started to adjust myself to the concept of student-centered education and abandoned the traditional viewpoint based on language itself.

4.6. Summary

Chapter 4 has reported the process of lesson preparation based on the analysis of students’ questionnaires results and teachers’ interviews. To begin with, students’ background knowledge has to be surveyed. These creative and outgoing students in Lanshu Public School are basically beginning learners of Chinese who want to achieve high proficiency of speaking Chinese. When designing a lesson, the framework of the lesson plan is used, which basically contains learning purposes, revision, language learning and consolidation. Besides, the sequence of organisation of activities should be emphasised to stimulate students’ interests. Choosing materials is a crucial part of lesson preparation, which needs to consider several principles. Lesson topics have to be decided according to students’ everyday knowledge and materials need to be
diverse to motivate students. Besides, designing and adapting materials are necessary in order to fit different year levels of students. In the next chapter, several teaching strategies and students’ engagements are stated.
Chapter 5

Teaching strategies and students’ learning strategies

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at answering the second contributory question: what teaching/learning strategies are acceptable to beginning learners to learn Chinese? Firstly, the two common phenomenon that happened in the foreign language classroom are illustrated, which are anxiety (Shao, Yu & Ji, 2013; Wilson, 2013) and reticence (Xie, 2010; Lee & Ng, 2010). Then several possible teaching/learning strategies including L1 FL sound similarities, English as a communicative tool (Awan, Azher, Anwar & Naz 2010), teacher interaction strategy (Zhang & Head, 2010; Lee & Ng, 2010) and group work strategy (Chang, 2012) that may help to reduce anxiety and reticence are analysed. Finally, both students and teachers’ feedbacks about these possible teaching/learning strategies are analyzed to prove the effect of them. Besides, diverse attitudes (Lee and Bang, 2011) from students about learning foreign language are described in detail.

5.2 Factors restrains foreign language development
Apart from the intrinsic difficulties of Chinese that learners complained about, foreign language learning itself is a challenge for non-background beginning learners. At the initial stage of learning foreign language, learners are always prone to have a sense of anxiety or even keep reticence in the classroom, especially for learners with introverted personalities. Table 5.1 is the data information about students’ anxiety and reticence.

**Table 5.1 Data information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>Why anxiety happened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reticence</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>Why reticence happened.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2.1 Anxiety in foreign language classroom

Anxiety is a common phenomenon in foreign language learning that restrains students’ progress. Shao, Yu and Ji (2013) listed plenty of negative feelings that affect acquisition of foreign language, one of which is anxiety that “can compromise learners’ optimal learning potential and largely reduce their language learning capacity” (p. 918). It reminds me of my ESL experience that confronting a different language often brought about fear and concern especially when I was required to speak this language at the initial stage of learning English. In the previous weeks, I also saw these negative feeling from my students, even though they expressed interest...
in learning Chinese. Some of them were reluctant to imitate pronunciation when listening to this different sound comparing to English. The following reflective journal shows anxiety of my beginning learners.

Today, I was trying to teach them how to say simple greeting words, like good morning. It was not very hard to follow. I used flashcards to teach them and a game called board race that help them to identify the characters. When they were following my pronunciation together, they did fantastic job. However, when I asked individuals to pronounce, most of them just stand there with a smile. They were not intend to try until I set an example and asked them to imitate. None of them tried to say the word independently. I can tell that they were nervous about asking them to pronounce without my pronunciation first. Even when they followed me, they always copied my sound with a question in eyes, seemed to acquiring my positive evaluation on their pronunciation. It is understandable that they are nervous and uncertain about what they are learning and speaking. (21/8/2012)

“Success in language learning is largely connected with how teachers take care of students’ emotional needs (Wang, as cited in Shao, Yu & Ji, 2013, p. 919). Students may focus on the language learning once their emotional needs can be met. This is what I was considering in order to reduce anxiety of beginning learners’ foreign language learning through several teaching strategies that make them feel relaxed and comfortable without pressure. Wilson’s (2013) standpoint about students having negative feelings of anxiety on foreign language learning due to “being asked to speak in the foreign language or the feelings of disempowerment when unable to call on familiar linguistic resources” (p. 298) inspired me to work on a possible idea of
strategy that connecting learners’ English knowledge with their Chinese learning.

5.2.2 Reticence in foreign language classroom

In most literatures, reticence is mentioned to describe an ESL lesson in Asian countries especially in China. Asian students always give the impression of low-motivation for voluntary participation and prefer to sit in the corner. In Xie’s (2010) research, there are several cultural factors that lead to this phenomenon. For instance, being modest affected by Confucian value and the fears of making mistakes may result in losing face. However, reticence is barely discussed with reference to western country students. Most images of Western country students that we have are active and creative, but I also witnessed their ways of expressing reticence several times at the beginning of my teaching period. Unlike Chinese students who prefer to keep reticence all the time although they have the ability to deal with the tasks that teachers give, my students are willing to participate when they know how to respond to the teacher. When they cannot understand the knowledge or miss the point due to unnecessary distraction, they tend to use reticence to answer my question. For instance, when I pick someone, he or she still likes to keep silence with a smile until I ask other students. This kind of situation makes both the teacher and student feel awkward. One of my reflective journals records this type of situation.

Today, I was surprised by what I observed. At the beginning of lesson, I asked if they remember how to say how are you in Chinese, no one raise hand up and all the students just stared at me. I was very
disappointed because I thought they remembered. Then I repeated it and picked up a student. She said she did not put hand up and did not want to answer. I felt a little bit awkward. It reminded me of another lesson I taught last week when I tried to teach them how to say what is your name. After leading the pronunciation of this sentence, I wanted to know if they pronounced well. Therefore, I asked if there is a volunteer who want to try to pronounce this sentence but no reply was received in the classroom at all. So I picked one randomly and the girl said she did not want to have a go. I was shocked a little bit but I encouraged her to try with my leading. Luckily, she did not say no this time and had a try. Actually, she pronounced very well. I was thinking that maybe this sentence was too difficult. However, what I felt right now is probably some of the students, even in Western country, have the reticence issue as well. (11/9/2012)

According to this piece of journal, these awkward reticence moments happened several times in the class that I was teaching. But during my observation period, I did not see it in other lessons of remaining subjects. On the one hand, they probably lack self-confidence because learning Chinese might be too different from what they are learning currently. On the other hand, Lee and Ng (2010) provide the answer for this situation, “how teachers conduct their lessons and how they interact with their students can influence learners’ communicative behaviour in classrooms” (p. 303). It is obvious that language teachers should take the responsibility to change the strategy they conduct a lesson considering more about learners’ need and adjust the way of interaction so that stimulating students’ willingness to speak.
5.3 Possible teaching strategies for beginning learners to reduce anxiety and reticence

Teaching strategies are the ways to deliver a lesson, which directly affect how students learn the knowledge. Adopting effective strategies is important for foreign language education. This section shows three strategies I used for my students based on their specific background. Using English as a medium and finding some similarities between L1 and TL makes foreign language easier and acceptable. An appropriate teacher interaction strategy may stimulate learners’ high participation. Group work offers them chances to learn a language together without feeling embarrassment and fear. Table 5.2 illustrates the data information of this section.

Table 5.2 Data information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 FL transfer</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Receive feedback from students about if they accept this strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ engagement about this strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as medium</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Receive feedback from students about if they accept this strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ engagement about this strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction strategy</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>Appropriate strategy to overcome reticence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Find out if students accept this strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teachers</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ views about this strategy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.1 Finding similarities between L1 and FL

Wilson (2013) identifies one of the reasons that lead to anxiety of foreign language as failure of “call on familiar linguistic resources”, I believe that working on how to recall students’ familiar linguistic knowledge might help foreign language learning which is an aspect that teachers should work on to reduce anxiety. As beginning learners who still experimented in the exploration of foreign language, the first language can be used as the bridge to lead learners to acquire foreign language. Just like the pronunciation of the foreign language, it is difficult to actually pronounce the sound precisely. Therefore, sound similarities between first and foreign language can actually help to pronounce a close sound. When planning a lesson, I tried to find a similar sound of Chinese word so that students can imitate the sound closely. If I could not find one, I might ask students’ ideas, as they are good at pronouncing English. For instance, I have used “may” to pronounce little sister “mei” in Chinese. Then they were requested to evaluate the effectiveness of this method. Table 5.3 illustrates the answers from stage 2 and stage 3.
### Table 5.3 Evaluation about method of similarities

#### (a) Evaluation about method of similarities (stage 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel sound similarities between English and Chinese help me to memorize Chinese words better. (e.g. little sister in Chinese sounds like ‘May’, grandpa sounds like ‘yeah’).</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(84%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### (b) Evaluation about method of similarities (stage 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel sound similarities between English and Chinese help me to memorize Chinese words better. (e.g. little sister in Chinese sounds like ‘May’, grandpa sounds like ‘yeah’).</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the results above, both stages 2 and stage 3 were really satisfied with these methods and confirmed its effectiveness, with 84% and 100% support respectively. Students did realise the use of first language is easier to understand the complicated pronunciation of foreign language. The similar sound actually helped them to imitate pronunciation closely. Sometimes the similar sounding pronunciations would be designed/incorporated into my teaching materials in advance. Table 5.4 shows the
selected six slides of PowerPoint of the topic family members.

**Table 5.4 Six slides of PowerPoint about family members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>爷 (yé) 爷 (ye)</th>
<th>奶 (nǎi) 奶 (nái)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yeah!</td>
<td>Nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>哥 (gē) 哥 (gē)</td>
<td>弟 (dì) 弟 (dì)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burger</td>
<td>D D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>姐 (jǐ) 姐 (jiě)</td>
<td>妹 (mèi) 妹 (měi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jelly</td>
<td>May May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this Table, I prepared the words that students need to learn with a picture and also the similar sound that assist them to pronounce. For instance, “爷爷” /ye ye/ (grandfather) sounds like “yeah” and “奶奶” /nai nai/ (grandmother) sounds like “ni” in “nice”. Moreover, sentences can be created as a tip to memorise words based on
similar sounds. For example, “哥哥” /ge ge/ (big brother) sounds like “ger” in burger so that they can remember 哥哥 likes to eat burge; 妹妹 /mei mei/ (little sister) sounds like May, so 妹妹 was born in May. With these tips, students probably are more interested in learning Chinese and pursue pronunciation closely.

On the other hand, overuse of this strategy may cause the dependence on use of first language and acquire inaccurate accent. However, we have to lower expectations for beginning learners so that they can be encouraged and receive more motivation to learn foreign language. Once they reach a higher level, dependence on first language can be reduced gradually.

5.3.2 English as a communication media

Using first language in a foreign language lesson or not is always a heated debate. For instance, according to the theory of communicative language teaching approach, target language is exclusively adopted in the classroom, which is considered as an effective method for learners to have more exposure. However, Awan, Azher, Anwar and Naz (2010) state that ESL learners “express their fears and a feeling of uneasiness against learning English as a foreign language” due to their exposure “to English only in a language class” (p. 33). In another word, target language only is one of the reasons for causing anxiety that teachers try to reduce. Besides, many researches have
proved that first language actually promotes acquisition of foreign language. Apart from research achievements, I would like to know what students feel in Lanshu Public School about using their English to assist Chinese learning. Table 5.5 expresses the answer from stage 2 and stage 3 students.

Table 5.5 Feedback about using English to learn Chinese

(a) Feedback about using English to learn Chinese from stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞😊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. I like to use English to help me learn Chinese.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(89%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(11%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Feedback about using English to learn Chinese from stage 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞😊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. I like to use English to help me learn Chinese.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(96%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the answers in Tables, it is obvious that students wanted to use English as a tool to help Chinese learning, with 89% support from stage 2 and 96% from stage 3. I surely understood students’ concerns and why this idea received so many agreements. As beginning learners, curiosity occupies their minds along with the worries. They were eager to learn Chinese but worried about the difficulties they
might meet. Using only Chinese during the lesson for these beginning learners caused more anxieties and fears, which definitely impeded their confidence of learning Chinese and the process of learning a lesson, as they could not understand any Chinese at all. Instead, using English to explain the instructions reduced the difficulties of communication between students and teacher. When their level of proficiency improved, the combination of English and Chinese can be used in the classroom until finally they have the ability to accept Chinese only. The proportion of English and Chinese language is adopted always depends on how comfortable and acceptable students feel. Just like when I was a beginning learner of English in primary school, I felt anxious and frustrated when teachers said English than I could not understand at all. Therefore, I suppose that students would like to use English, which is their first language to assist them to understand Chinese and build up confidence.

5.3.3 Teacher interaction strategy for beginning learners

Interaction is a crucial part of a lesson. The interaction strategy that the teacher choose for students has an influence on the effect of learning, especially for beginning learner who needs appropriate strategies to receive achievement of learning and build up self-confidence. Otherwise, reticence may occur during the lesson and retard learners’ progress. According to previous literature, both teacher-student interaction
and student-student interaction are able to help students to learn foreign language but they also have the weaknesses.

As stated above, reticence occurred a few times in my lessons, has become a factor that may limit the progress of Chinese learning for beginning learners. A teacher in Zhang and Head’s research (2010) had the same consideration, “reticence to participate in speaking activities was preventing her learners form making progress and achieving the outcomes intended for the course” (p. 1). Therefore, what I want is to try to figure out appropriate interaction strategies for beginning learners to engage and interact more with both teacher and classmates then they may be able to gain confidence to have strong willingness to participate. In Lee and Ng’s research, they discussed about how to deal with this issue that offers me a direction to analyse my own class.

It is believed that the interaction strategy(ies) adopted by a teacher can promote/reduce reticence in classrooms because they are believed to be able to determine the communicativeness of the classroom, which is characterised by:
1. Participation rights: how much a teacher and students talk in classrooms.
2. Role of teacher and students: whether a teacher plays an instructional or facilitator role, and whether students can take charge of their own learning.
3. Organization of classroom interaction: whether the interaction pattern is teacher fronted or learner initiated (Walsh cited in Lee & Ng, 2010, p. 304).
Based on the three items above, these two scholars also define three types of interaction strategies, which are teacher-fronted strategy, facilitator-oriented strategy and learner-oriented strategy. It all depends on how teachers, a director, a facilitator or a spectator act in a lesson. After a series of analyses, Lee and Ng (2010) concludes:

The pedagogical value of facilitator-oriented strategy in a learner-centred classroom is confirmed, indicating that facilitator-oriented strategy could serve as a type of scaffolding support to ensure participation in and the smooth running of learner-centred activities (p. 312).

It is definitely the best strategy for learners, as it provides the proper freedom for students to explore knowledge and the opportunity for teachers to give necessary assistance. However, it is a challenge to adopt this strategy for beginning learners at the initial stage of their learning due to their lack of basic knowledge. Besides, imitation as an important component of foreign language needs teachers’ pronunciation demonstration. Therefore, at the early stage of students’ learning, I adopted a facilitator strategy with the teacher-centred preference to help students have exposure first then towards language learning. The following paragraph is selected from my early reflective journals, which shows how I figured out this strategy.

Today I started to teach them some new greeting words like how are you. I still can tell uncertain from their eyes when teaching the new words, making me feel like they are questioning the my pronunciation. I totally understand it has to be very strange to hear a different sound from their prior knowledge. After several times practices, they started to become active and confidence. So I decided to ask them to use these words play a game with a partner.
Then I walked around and found out plenty of students did not follow the rule to use Chinese. Some of them asked me to come over every few seconds and told them how to pronounce. I randomly asked several students the reason. They simply said they are not sure how to say these Chinese words accurately. So I just ended the game and guided the students to play together. I felt that students are not ready and confident enough to take a part of the control of a lesson. (4/9/2012).

However, the interaction with teachers can still be achieved so that the time that students just listening to the teacher can be reduced and more participation opportunities can be created. Even the right of selecting participants can be entitled to students by letting them volunteer to choose the next one. After gaining enough knowledge, students are able to have more freedom to explore by themselves. Therefore, the proportion of learner-centred strategy can be increased gradually, along with facilitator-oriented strategy, to help learners to have more participation and boost self-confidence. The following evidence indicates the implementation of facilitator-oriented strategy with learner-centred classroom when students gained necessary knowledge basis.

Last week, I have taught them how to say 0-10 in Chinese. This time I intended to give them the chance to find out how to say 11-20, as it has a math pattern based on the 10 numbers they learnt before. For instance, “一” means 1, “十” means 10, “十一” means 11, then the pattern just like:

\[
10 + 1 = 11 \text{ (math)}
\]

\[
十 + 一 = 十一 \text{ (Chinese characters)}
\]

Other number follows the same pattern. I just gave them the Chinese characters tip (second line above) ask them to think about how to say 12.
Actually, plenty of students understood this math pattern and even came up with how to say the rest of the words in Chinese. I was impressed. After the lesson, several students told me that this Chinese-styled math pattern is so cool. (13/11/2012)

It is affirmative that facilitator-oriented strategy with learner-centred classroom is useful to offer more opportunities of voluntary and exploration, especially for students who have only the basic knowledge of TL. In terms of beginning learners who have no background of TL, teacher-centred strategy can be regarded as main strategy first. When students are gradually gaining both knowledge of TL and developing self-confidence, the strategy can be changed from teacher-centred to facilitator-oriented strategy.

5.3.4 Learner-centred classroom strategy - Group work

Group work is one of the prevalent strategies that teachers usually adopt. It offers a chance for students to work with classmates to acquire knowledge and learn collaboration as well. Chang (2012)’s research “students stated that they felt less anxious when they worked with group member”, which fit my purpose of reducing learners’ anxiety. Separating students into pairs or groups is my preference to let students play games and practice language words. Likewise, the classroom teacher of stage 3 Halina shared the same idea with me. She also mentioned group work during the interview, which is her favorite strategy in the lesson.
Yi: And what are your preferred methods for teaching primary school students?

Halina: generally, I like working with groups. Group works. I work with either ability groups or social groups or interests groups. That’s how I usually work with my class rather than one big group. Unless there is an, there is an outcome that needs to be taught to all of them. And you do whole class lessons, or in share reading for example when you read the same text and you discuss the same text. But generally, it’s in groups. In groups whether students are in little groups or pairs, things like that. So, that’s the way I prefer.

Mostly, Halina prefers to divide the class into different groups like ability groups or social groups to discuss except when she wants to teach something for the whole class. She believed group work is convenient for students to have discussion and really join in conversation.

Apart from teacher’s view, students’ opinions about group work were also asked and their feeling about the group work activity when revising family members words in term 2 in 2013. Table 5.6 shows the answers from stage 2 and stage 3’s feedbacks.

**Table 5.6 Group work survey**

(a) Group work survey from stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😐</th>
<th>😞</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. I enjoyed the group work in the term</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) Group work survey from stage 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊😊</th>
<th>😥</th>
<th>😥😊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. I enjoyed the group work in the revision lesson of family members.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I like to work with my classmates in activities.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the Table 5.6, 95% of them show interest about working with classmates and 79% of them enjoyed group work activity of family members from stage 2. Likewise, higher rate has received from stage 3, with all the students want to work with classmates and more than 92% of them enjoyed the group work in family members’ revision lesson. Therefore, it is obvious that both teachers and students favour group work. Cooperating with others definitely improved not only specific knowledge but also the ability of how to become a member of a team. In specific language lesson, the competition or role-play conversation, group work provided students with more chances to practice and help each other to learn in the circumstance of time limitation. Besides, it is comfortable for students who have introverted personalities to speak Chinese in public. Similarly, group work in Chinese class is popular as well. Due to the large amount of students in each class, group work seems to be an effective way to engage as many as possible students into discussion.
Especially in ESL class, teachers are apt to divide students into groups to do role-play and practise conversation, then select several groups to perform so as to achieve the goal of language practice and save time. To conclude, group work is an effective strategy for students to participate in activities and practice in foreign language class.

**Figure 5.1 sample of group competition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Table 4</th>
<th>Competition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 家 jiā</td>
<td>1. Dad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 爸爸 bà ba</td>
<td>2. Little sister</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 妈妈 mā ma</td>
<td>3. Big brother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 爷爷 yé ye</td>
<td>4. Mum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 奶奶 nǎi nai</td>
<td>5. Grandpa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 哥哥 gē ge</td>
<td>6. Big sister</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 弟弟 dì di</td>
<td>7. Little brother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 姐姐 jiě jie</td>
<td>8. Grandma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 妹妹 mèi mei</td>
<td>A. Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Students’ engagement

Students’ engagement is the crucial part to reflect the result of Chinese lessons. Both feedbacks from students and teachers are able to evaluate lesson preparation and teaching strategies, as well as the process of whole lesson. Table 5.7 indicates the data information of this section.

Table 5.7 Data information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ feedback</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>If students satisfy Chinese lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ feedback about students’ performance</td>
<td>Classroom teachers</td>
<td>Interview, Observation</td>
<td>How classroom teachers evaluate students’ engagement and Chinese lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse attitudes about Chinese</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>Analyze the reasons lead to different attitudes about learning Chinese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.1 Students’ feedback

Students’ feedback is the direct evidence that reflects the effect of all the lesson preparations and strategies. After nearly one year of learning Chinese, students had acquired several topics of language words and culture. Based on this one-year learning, students were asked to answer several questions about how they feel about learning Chinese. Table 5.8a and Table 5.8b are feedbacks from stage 2 and stage 3.
### Table 5.8 Feedback of general impression about Chinese lessons

(a) Feedback of general impression about Chinese lessons from stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊😊</th>
<th>😊😊😊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Chinese is very interesting.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(83%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I like to learn Chinese.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(67%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(33%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I did well in the activities in my Chinese lessons.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(43%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(57%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I would love to continue Chinese learning next year.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(67%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(33%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Feedback of general impression about Chinese lessons from stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊😊</th>
<th>😊😊😊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Chinese is very interesting.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(83%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I like to learn Chinese.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(65%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(35%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I did well in the activities in my Chinese lessons.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(30%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(70%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I would love to continue Chinese learning next year.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(65%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(35%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to both Tables, all the findings are positive. 83% of students from stage 2 and stage 3 respectively thought Chinese very interesting without any doubt. More
than anything, gratifying results have been achieved, which is, more than half of students (67% from stage 2 and 65% from stage 3) extremely liked to learn Chinese and would love to continue Chinese learning next year. The rest of them were also liked it and wanted to keep on learning. In other words, everyone liked Chinese and wanted to continue learning which represented a huge success. Nevertheless, when it came to self-evaluation, the answers were not as satisfying as others. Only 43% of students absolutely believed that they did fantastic job of activities. Probably a few of them were very humble about judging their own performances. Besides, the time factor was another probable reason that leads to their dissatisfaction about their performance. Every week with only 30 minutes of learning, they forgot how to say language words easily. Then next week, recalling activities from memories, was certainly difficult to gain perfect results. However, my actual goal of doing activities is practising and strengthening knowledge. Probably, their unsatisfied performance just proved that they did not receive any practice when I was not in school and indicated they might improve more through these recalling activities. From my point of view as the teacher, they made progress every week in activities and I felt gratified.

Aside from standard question, I wanted students to have freedom to evaluate Chinese lessons using their ideas as well. They were asked to use several key words to express their opinions and feelings about the process of learning Chinese for the whole year. Table 5.9 is selected examples of answers from stage 2 and stage 3 students.
### Table 5.9 Impressions about Chinese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Extremely interesting and unusual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awesome</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really good</td>
<td>Fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantastic</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun to learn</td>
<td>Great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool</td>
<td>Different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super</td>
<td>Hard but interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love it! Great!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 5.9, sample answers of open questions have been listed. All of students offered high compliments with positive words, such as “good, fantastic, and awesome”. Some of them believed that it is fun to learn and they like it. Even several students asserted it is hard but interesting. Basically, all the students confirmed that they were stimulated to learn Chinese through one year of learning from my lesson designs and strategies.

#### 5.4.2 Teachers’ feedback about students’ performance

As experienced teachers in primary school, classroom teachers are probably the most qualified people to evaluate Chinese lessons and students’ performances from the perspective of profession. The paragraph below is what two classroom teachers
thought about my strategies that I used in Chinese lessons.

Yi: Do you feel that I made Chinese easy to learn using my teaching methods?
Yi: What do you think about the methods that I used in my Chinese lessons?
Rosemary: Well, I think they were great. At the beginning, there wasn’t much structure. But now, towards the end, there were lots of structure. You seemed to have a beginning and middle and end. And you engaged the students in the activities that you were doing at the whiteboard. And you also now providing a backup plan in case the technology fails.
Yi: Do you feel that I made Chinese easy to learn using my teaching methods?
Rosemary: In the beginning, no. Towards the end, yes. You’ve certainly improved on your journey. It is been a great journey to watch.

Yi: And what do you think about the methods that I used in my Chinese lessons?
Halina: I think method is good. I think you could be a little bit, a little bit more adventurous. Look at, perhaps a little bit of group work if it suits, you know, if it suits your lesson. That would be very good while they are constantly just listening to you while they are actually coming up with something themselves and you will (not clear) to them, that’s sort of thing. But, in delivering the language lesson, it’s (not clear) the language part of the lesson. I think the way you are doing is really good coz you use a lot of repetition for them. And you gave them a lot of different ways of learning the vocabulary they need to learn. So that’s really good. It works well.

At the beginning, Rosemary felt that my lesson lacked in structure. Then, I improved my lesson structures and students engaged well gradually. She also praised about my back up plan when technology failed. Halina suggested me to be more adventurous,
like doing more group work. It would help students to use their brain to conclude something by themselves instead of listening to teacher all the time. However, she realised that the language lesson required teachers’ attention to help students to speak more. She felt I did a good job of using different ways to do repetition and the outcome is great. I totally agreed with what she said. Although language learning needs repetitions and imitations, the strategies can be more adventurous to actually offer more chances for students to work by themselves. I believe what Halina expected more was to increase the proportion of facilitator-oriented strategy with group work as strategy. Therefore, students’ enthusiasm can be stimulated and study ability can be practised in the lessons.

Teachers were also requested to evaluate students’ performance in Chinese lessons, as they know their students more than anyone else. They can provide justified comments about their participation. How they feel about students’ performance in Chinese lessons was asked in order to receive comments from teachers.

Yi: How do you think the students’ performed in learning Chinese?
Rosemary: Better than me. They… they… um. Especially across the school, there are quite a few children especially in Kindergarten. The younger they are, they seem to be able to absorb more. But I always impressed with how quickly they caught on. They do a great job. And it is partly due to you and your fantastic teaching.

Yi: Thank you. And how do you think the students’ performed in learning Chinese?
Halina: Yes, I think your methods are fine. They performed well. I think with my class, I think some of them still want to laugh at pronunciation of Chinese, which they shouldn’t be doing. (Y: Yes.) Yep, that shouldn’t be happening. They should been understanding they are learning another language. There is nothing funny about another language and the pronunciation of another language. Spoke to them about that, because when we went to the high school, and they had a Japanese teacher. She is teaching Japanese. Totally different, because Japanese sounds funny to English speaker, too. I supposed like English sounds funny to other people. But they didn’t laugh there while they were laughing during the lesson with you, which I spoke to them many times. It’s just their attitudes for some reason. I can’t put my finger on it why they are laughing because they shouldn’t be by now. They’ve had the lesson for a while. So they shouldn’t be laughing at the way you pronounce something any more. I don’t know whether is because you are actually Chinese, and you are saying very properly whereas the Japanese teaches Japen, teaches Japanese in high school. She is actually Anglo but she teaches Japanese. So it might be that, I’m not certain. It could be that case, because your pronunciation is just did perfect, you are Chinese obviously, whereas she might have a slight Anglo sound to the words. That might be making them giggling a little bit. But they are picking words and as with your assessments did at the end of lesson, as you evaluate what you have done, you can see they are learning the words. So you are getting there, it’s just perhaps me who doesn’t like the fact that they are laugh. They can laugh, but not at the pronunciation words. I don’t think they should be doing that. But, cut the long story short, yes, they do learn the words, as you know, when you evaluated at the end of your lesson. So, they are getting there.

Rosemary mentioned again about the speed of students’ mastery of a new language in terms of the whole school and gave me the compliments about my teaching make it
happened. Halina praised my different ways of repetition and confirmed students did learn Chinese fabulously. However, she noticed a phenomenon that I did not realise, which is, students sometimes like to laugh when I pronounced Chinese. She believed that learning a Foreign language is serious, especially the pronunciation, no laughing allowed. She knew it is not my problem and summarised that the reason may be my accurate pronunciation as a native speaker. I accepted this situation because I understand students in this age are curious about everything that is new to them. They simply felt interested about pronunciation of Chinese which was different to their prior knowledge. In China ESL classrooms, students sometimes might also laugh privately about how English is pronounced strangely. However, I would be pleased if students are more serious about learning Chinese and I believed their perhaps will make significant progress once they become more conscientious learners. In general, two teachers confirmed that the majority of students engaged with Chinese lesson with enthusiasm.

5.4.3 Diverse attitudes about learning

Despite the positive feedbacks from the majority of students, it is undeniable that a few students showed low motivation and interests in Chinese lesson with providing negative feedbacks about the questions I asked. For instance, 33% of stage 2 students and 35% of stage 3 students expressed that they were less willing to continue Chinese in the next year (see Table 5.8). They learnt Chinese but were not as passionate as
other students. The paragraph below selected from my reflective journal records several students had low motivation during the lesson.

After these weeks’ teaching, I found that some classes have high participation of lesson than others. Besides, each class has several students who do not like to be part of the lesson. They like to watch the lesson and even a few students prefer to work on other subjects without any participation in language learning and participation. I am confused because I think each lesson gathered my best efforts. I truly do not understand why it happened. Today, I asked students to choose next participant to play smartboard game. He chose a student who did not raised hand, then that student refused to do the activity. Then, the same situation happened in another class, he was urged to participant. So he just picked an answer randomly and then went back directly. It made me feel embarrassed and frustrated. (5/3/2013)

Through my observations and communication with teachers, two factors might affect their participations in Chinese learning, which are teacher’s attitudes and parental attitude. As two groups of people who play a significant role in children’s development, teacher and parental attitudes and manners have a considerable influence on children’s behaviors.

Unlike primary schools in China where each class has different teachers who take responsibilities for different subjects, primary classroom in Australia has a general teacher who teaches different subjects to the class. Therefore, students spend most of the school days with one particular teacher so that they learnt everything from this
classroom teacher, especially students from stage 1 who are apt to imitate teachers, due to their developing cognitive abilities. In Lanshu Public School, due to my responsibilities of teaching all the classes, I certainly noticed that the development of each class about Chinese learning is different. Classes that had high participation and achieved huge success are due to classroom teachers’ support. The following piece of reflective journal stated how a teacher participated in Chinese lesson and set an example for her students.

Every time coming to this classroom to teach Chinese, I am carrying a feeling of joy and satisfactory. Even though students are in young ages, their achievements are more than senior students. This success has to owe to their classroom teacher who always supports my lesson. She liked to learn Chinese with students and asked me to leave teaching materials so that they can practise together when I am not in school. She was strict about students’ behaviors during the lesson and stepped out to help me manage the class in appropriate time. Besides, she gave me useful suggestions about what I can do to connect my lesson with students’ everyday lives. With her help, students in this class memorized words very fast. I like this class and it made my job easier. I felt touched and grateful for what she has been doing. (7/5/2013)

Noticeably, this teacher had a positive influence on students’ motivation and participation in Chinese lessons. Apart from her, most of the teachers in school have the realisation about the importance of foreign language teaching in children’s lives so that they use different ways to support the proliferation of Chinese learning in school. However, there were a few teachers who lacked any considerations about
my lessons. They only handed over the class to me and sat behind the desk to do their own business. Sometimes, they even asked students who are in the middle of my lesson to do something else. Apparently, students from this class fell behind compared to other classes. I understood that these teachers probably did not take Chinese lesson seriously and did not encourage students to learn a foreign language.

As a language teacher who worked once a week, I did expect more supports from classroom teachers, which could stimulate students’ higher motivation in Chinese learning.

Another influencing factor is how parents think about Chinese learning. I did not realise the significance that parents have on students’ attitudes towards learning Chinese until one conversation I had with a classroom teacher. I asked her if she could talk to students and help them to notice the importance of learning Chinese. She told me that she could do that but sometimes it also depends on the parents’ opinion. Then, she explained the environment and background of Lanshu Public School to me. Due to the isolated location from city area, the surrounding families are mostly local Australians with only a few immigrants from countries with different cultures. Several of these local Australian families may be narrow minded about learning about a different language or culture. They do not want to open up to new experiences so that their children also held resisting views about learning Chinese. Lee and Bang (2011) express a similar idea that “parents’ ambivalent attitudes Korean heritage language program and bilingualism” is a challenge for teachers who teach Korean in
USA (p. 391). In another words, parental attitudes affected the learning and acquisition of language. Therefore, although these students in my school learnt Chinese as well, their interest and engagement did not develop as much like others.

5.5 Discussion

In this chapter, several teaching strategies for foreign language teaching are listed and stated in order to overcome beginning learners’ anxiety and reticence in foreign language learning process. Using the similarities between English and Chinese can promote students’ understanding of Chinese. A combination of Facilitator-oriented strategy and learner-centred strategy is a useful interaction strategy in the foreign language classroom. Moreover, group work can be used to promote the interaction between students in order to practice language. To help better communication, English is adopted as the medium. This chapter reminds me of my experience of learning English as foreign language. When I was in an English class as a beginning learner, ESL teachers did not impart the idea about using Chinese to learn English at all. Especially pronunciation part, actually, teachers did not advocate to take advantage of it as they believe the connection of first language may impede pursue of accurate English pronunciation. However, according to my research, this strategy definitely can be used for beginning learners to imitate a close pronunciation in order to get the accurate sound once they notice the difference. Apart from the resistance of adopting similarities, the ESL teacher also prefer to use English only to give
instruction and then translated into Chinese once he or she found out no respond from students. It made me feel anxious and uncomfortable that I could not understand at all. Therefore, as a teacher, I believed in using the language that beginning learners are familiar with as an effective medium to establish confidence. Then with more acquisition of Chinese, the reliance on English can decrease gradually until the learners are comfortable to accept only Chinese in a lesson.

Based on ESL learning experience, reticence is a phenomenon in the class. “Asian learners are often considered to be more reticent than their Western counterparts” (Tsui, as cited in Zhang & Head, 2010, p. 2). When I first came to Australia, I still wanted to keep quiet during the workshops and seminar. However, I evolved as an effective speaker during the contact with different culture here, which is free and encouraging. Loads of literature have stated reticence in Asian countries, especially in China. Xie (2009) concluded a detailed description of this phenomenon happened in China, based on the example from Cortazzi and Jin’s research in 1996, also Jackson (2002)’s that Chinese students like to keep quiet in English class:

In most existing literature, Chinese learners of English are portrayed as reticent and quiet in class. They are reluctant to participate in classroom activities; they hardly volunteer replies; they seldom answer, let alone initiate questions; even if they answer, they give brief replies; they seldom speak up about their opinions even if they have one; and they hold back from expressing their views (p. 10).
As a Chinese who has learnt English many years, I still can remember the scene in the primary ESL classroom just like Xie’s description. The atmosphere was tense because everyone seemed to be scared of being selected to speak. Scholars searched the reasons that lead to silence in ESL classroom in Asian countries. Xie (2010) summarised the reasons as well, according to Peng (2007) and Tan (2008)’s findings:

1. Saving ‘face’ is given great importance in cultural and social life. To save their own face, a student did not venture an unsure reply for fear of making mistakes and being laughed at. To protect the face of their teachers and peers, they refrained from speaking up when they had divergent opinions.
2. They put collective benefits before individual interests and so avoided bothering teachers with questions which might only have concerned themselves. They only raised questions when they could not find out answers unaided.
3. Influenced by Confucian values of modesty, the students hesitated to contribute. Instead they waited for another student to set a precedent by speaking up first, allowing them to avoid being seen as the ‘show off’.
4. They respected the elder and senior by looking up to teachers as authority figures and not challenging or interrupting them with questions. Similar cultural themes have also been articulated in other researchers’ studies (p. 11).

I totally agree with these four reasons, they just like my thoughts that why I want to keep myself hidden in case being select. I was too afraid of losing face in front of my classmates and I also did not want to be the one who stood out. When coming to Australia, the majority of students do not have the concern like I did. However, there are several shy students especially girls in each class who have the similar
consideration so that they have low-motivation of participation, which needs my encouragement. A different type of reticence happened in my school, as I demonstrated before, this requires appropriate interaction strategy to stimulate students’ voluntary willingness.

In university study as a TCFL student, I had a unit called methodology of Teaching Chinese as Foreign Language, which explained different methods in foreign language teaching area. It always taught the origin, theoretical foundation, principles, procedures and characteristics of each method without explaining how to use them in different contexts. Honestly, I did not remember any details of these methods because the introduction of each method is monotonous and hard to understand. It did not help my teaching in Australia. Perhaps I can get more useful information if the introductions are more focused on what type of learners this method fit and how it may be implements in teaching Chinese specifically.

5.6 Summary

This chapter stated teaching strategies in order to reduce anxiety and reticence in foreign language learning and analysed both students’ self-evaluation and teachers’ feedback about students’ engagement. Using students’ first language as assistance to improve their foreign language acquisition, such as sound similarities, have been favoured by students and teachers. The connections made between two languages
reduce beginning learners’ fear of difficulties in a new language so that it became acceptable. Similarly, students wanted us to use English as a tool in Chinese classroom due to their lack of background of Chinese language at all but speaking English made communication easier. In addition, students’ questionnaires and teachers’ interviews pointed to most of the students’ high participation and engagement after nearly one-year Chinese lessons. The negative feedback were also analysed to conclude that teachers and parents’ perspectives affected students’ diverse attitudes towards learning Chinese. In chapter 6, the challenges that I encountered and the improvements I achieved as a beginning bilingual volunteer teacher through lesson preparation and delivery are demonstrated.
Chapter 6

Teaching skills as a beginning bilingual volunteer teacher

- Self-reflection and improvement

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at finding the answers for the third contributory question: How can beginning bilingual volunteer teacher-researchers from China improve their skills in lesson preparation and teaching/learning strategies? Firstly, my self-identity as beginning bilingual volunteer teacher (Singh, 2013; Yao & Han, 2013; Baker, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010) is described with reasons. Then challenges (Xu, 2012; Scrimgeour, 2010; Yao & Han, 2013; Sun, 2012) of acting this identity are listed. Finally, how I improved the abilities of establishing a rapport (Yao & Han, 2013; Barnes, 2013; Bax, 2003; Papi and Abdollahzadeh, 2012) with students and classroom management (Evertson, & Weinstein, 2011; Scrimgeour, 2010; Yao & Han, 2013; Bahous, Bacha & Nabhani, 2011) are expressed. The main data sources are interviews with classroom teachers and my reflection journals.

6.2 Self–identity as a beginning bilingual volunteer teacher

This section explains the partnership of the program that teacher-researcher is
participating in and the reason for choosing beginning bilingual volunteer teacher as self-identity. Basically, it is the background about the teacher-researcher. Table 6.1 shows how I collect data and the focus of analysis.

**Table 6.1 Data information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosette partnership</td>
<td>Scholars</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Introduce teacher-researcher’s background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning bilingual volunteer teacher</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>The reason that come up with this identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.1 ROSETE partnership

What I am participating is a program called the ROSETE program, which provides me with this opportunity to become a teacher-researcher and a bilingual teacher. It is a partnership established by Sydney and Ningbo that “a longitudinal (10 year) program of research oriented, school engaged teacher-researcher education”(Singh, 2013, n. p.). Yao and Han (2013) also describe this program as an “ongoing partnership between regional education departments and bureaus in China and Western Sydney and the University of Western Sydney”(p. 131). Bilingual teachers are selected to achieve a master degree in Education by conducting a research program based on their Chinese teaching in local schools in Western Sydney. Singh (2013) states the core of this program:
This partnership which is based on the synthesis of knowledge from the fields of teachers’ professional learning, HDR training and research impact has given rise to the concept of ‘SEEL research impact.’ Here SEEL research impact refers to the HDR training of teacher-researchers to produce for the public evidence-driven knowledge of their efforts to improve school students’ Sociocultural, Economic and Environmental Learning (SEEL) (Singh, 2013, n. p.).

Basically, this partnership focuses on training bilingual teachers towards achieving a high degree as teacher-researchers and improves Australian student’s Chinese learning at the same time.

6.2.2 Choosing beginning bilingual volunteer teacher as self-identity

I prefer to use beginning bilingual volunteer teacher to define my role. First of all, I just graduated from university, and had not started a teaching career yet. In other words, I have had no practice and experience at all. Even though I was taught at the university about how to teach Chinese as a foreign language as my major, I have not had an opportunity to work with children. That is why I define myself as beginning teacher because I am about to start a teaching career without any experience.

Different authors have diverse explanations about being bilingual. Bilingualism is stated as those “who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives”, with emphasis on “the regular use of language rather than fluency” (Grosjean cited in
Bilingual education is defined as “the use of two (or more) languages of instruction at some point in a student’s school career” (Cummins, as cited in Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p. 103). Yao and Han (2013) describe bilingual teachers in their research “refer to permanent or temporary migrants to these Anglo-phone nations who use both their home language and one or other variety of English as their communicative languages” (p. 127). Comparatively, the emphasis of a bilingual is someone using two languages frequently. The identity of myself as teacher-researcher can be not only a bilingual who uses two languages as communication tools in life but also a bilingual teacher who uses a language as medium to teach another language. Even as a bilingual teacher, I also have a preference between these two languages. It is undeniable that first language Chinese is the one I have full confidence with. In contrast, the fluency of second language English brings about concern to me. Coming to a new country and going through culture shock, I have to use a language that I have not mastered well to communicate with local students, which makes me lack confidence. Besides, being a “volunteer” in this research is specifically referring to teachers in ROSETE program who only teach students once a week as full time qualified teachers go to school to work every day. I was so worried that students could not learn anything in such a limited time especially a foreign language. This is why I define myself as a beginning bilingual volunteer teacher, which also reflect my concerns before going to the local school.

Classroom observation is necessary before I start my first lesson as a teacher. I was
arranged to observe and work with different years of students. These observations are the opportunities for me to learn from local experienced teacher about teaching skills and have contact with students in advance. Honestly, I felt my confidence has been built up again after actually participating in the school. A part of my reflection journal after my first day in school reveals my feeling:

Today is my first day in school. At first, I was so nervous and shy to communicate with teachers and students. I was so scared of using my poor English to talk to them and making them confused. However, ever since I stepped into the classroom with year 1 and the classroom asked me to play Bingo game with a group with students, all the considerations just gone. I felt in that moment I am a teacher who has to take responsibilities to make sure students are playing this game appropriately. So I started to try to talk and have fun with them. Besides, another experience with year 3 has to be mentioned, which makes me unforgettable. The classroom teacher in year 3 asked me to talk about China. To be honest, I felt panic a little bit because I have not prepared anything. A few seconds after, I wrote Australia in Chinese characters and asked the students to guess. And they were fascinated by these complicated characters and asked me to write down their names in characters so that they can bring back home. I felt their interests and passion about learning Chinese that makes me feel more relief (24/7/2012).

After first day at school, I did get my confidence back and started to expect students’ positive results and performances in Chinese lesson. They seemed very keen to learn more about Chinese and know how life is like in China. I thought with maintaining high interest, they would have a good experience of learning Chinese despite the
difficulty in learning the language.

6.3 Challenges as beginning bilingual teacher

This section states the challenges that a beginning bilingual teacher confronted. It expresses my feeling about how these two different cultures have influence on my views and believes, and the overview of the challenges I encountered as a beginning bilingual teacher. Table 6.2 is the summary of evidence information for this section.

Table 6.2 Data information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural impact after observation</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>Reflection of culture impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of challenges</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>Conclusion of all the challenges as beginning bilingual teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.1 Cultural impact from local school experience

Even though I had the knowledge that schools in Australia would be totally different compared to those in China, I still felt shocked by what I observed in classrooms. Xu (2012) stated the current situation about Chinese teachers in America who faced loads of challenges as they are in a different context from their experience of culture and
educational system even I felt the same way. Not only is the culture of school different, but also the role that teachers play in the classroom is unfamiliar. Teacher’s role is more of communicating with students and leads them to find out what they want to know instead of being an authority. It provided me with the impression that the teacher often likes to guide and assist students’ learning. In order to know more about teachers in Australia, I asked local classroom teachers during the interviews about the basic capabilities that a primary school teacher should have.

Yi: Can you tell me the basic capabilities that a primary school teacher should have?
Rosemary: Number 1 capability would be patience. And then, a lot of knowledge. And… and… providing that knowledge or facilitating that knowledge to the learners.

Yi: Can you tell me the basic capabilities that a primary school teacher should have?
Halina: Number one, they have to like children. It is really important that they really have a feel for the children themselves. They also have to be open to new ideas all the time, especially the changes we have in education these days. They have to be prepared to give up their family times as well. It is one of these things that with teaching it is not a 9 to 3 job. So they have to be able to organize themselves well enough in order to fit everything of things. I have to be flexible, be very flexible as well apart from all the knowledge they supposed to have about the various curriculum and syllabus things. So they should be doing all of that and constantly, constantly upgrading themselves and being aware of new things that going on.

Rosemary put patience first, and then it comes to having abundant knowledge and
finding appropriate methods of delivery to students. Halina believed teachers have to be genuinely concerned about children and have a wide range of knowledge and work towards improving themselves in all teaching strategies. She also mentioned about the sacrifice that teachers have to make. A teacher has to be flexible and well organised which means even giving up private time. These qualities are quite similar to what teachers should have in China. Here they did not mention any factors such as strictness and authority, which are considered as symbols in China’s education. It makes me feel different to being a teacher in here.

6.3.2 Challenges as a beginning bilingual teacher

Sun (2012) states the challenges that immigrant Chinese teachers faced in foreign language education, “both linguistic and cultural, in living and teaching in different contexts, which affect their professional identity” (p. 766). After several weeks of teaching, I started to feel frustrated because the process did not go well like what I was expecting. Students had passion to learn and I prepared each lesson with careful consideration. However, it leads to my confusion about why the learning outcome was below my expectation. A few ideas came up in my mind, such as we are both new to each other as teacher and students and they have not learn a foreign language before. It could be reason that both of us need more time to adjust to ourselves. The specific aspects of challenges have not been identified until I read several articles
about being a bilingual teacher and teaching Chinese in Australia. Scrimgeour (2010) summarises five challenges from reflections of student teachers as Chinese native-speaker teacher-trainees confronted Australian classroom context:

1. Lack of familiarity with the Australian classroom culture
2. Perceived low levels of learner motivation
3. Responsibilities in planning to engage learners
4. Seeing language learning from the learner’s perspective
5. Proficiency in English as medium of instruction (p.130 - 134).

Besides, Yao and Han (2013) have some suggestions based on the findings of their study for novice teachers. They believe that beginning teachers need to notice the individual difference of students and adapt into teaching; bilingual teachers have to pay more attention to the improvement of language competence in the classroom, such as how to use instructional language in specific occasions. Yao and Han (2013) also find that a technique that was probably ignored by Millrood’s (2004) research; after classifying the use of instructional English by bilingual teachers into different categories, which is ‘discipline’ in the classroom. Discipline, therefore, is probably a challenge that bilingual teachers need to focus on.

6.4 Establish a rapport with students

A rapport between teachers and students affects the delivery of a lesson. Krashen (as cited in Barnes, 2013) claims the significance of building rapport for teachers, which
is “practising and prospective teachers should be aware of the importance of building the classroom rapport necessary to weaken the affective filters that interfere with language acquisition” (p. 28). Three possible ideas were stated in order to establish a rapport with different background students based on the experience of preparation and delivery of a lesson. Table 6.3 shows the evidence information of this section.

Table 6.3 Data information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becoming familiar with classroom culture</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>How I get used to local school culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived low levels of learner motivation</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>How I accept students’ low motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities in planning to engage learners</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>How I realize and overcome this difficulty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Establish a rapport with students is a new quality that is added to my belief as a teacher due to my background study in China where teachers’ role are more authoritative without any doubt. It seems like teachers take the respect received from students for granted in China while Australian teachers have to establish a rapport with students if they want to earn respect. Yao and Han (2013) use an example to illustrate how to build up rapport through instructions, where teachers had a conversation following the topic that students are interested that made them feel happy. However, rapport not only happens during a lesson but also need to be
emphasised in off-lesson communication or through schools’ activities participation. I remembered the time I joined school’s athletics carnival and even sacrificed my own time to attend their music concert, which is a totally different experience and communication opportunity. I wrote journals about both two events about how I feel about the culture differences.

Today is the athletics carnival day. It is just like what we called 运动会 in China that students compete with each other of running, jumping, etc. In my primary school, I never had competition because I did not want to lose face and achieve bad score for my class. However, what I saw today is different. Every student joint the competition even the youngest student in kindergarten. They just enjoyed the competition with friends. Besides, plenty of parents came as well to spend time with their children, which never happened in my school. It made me feel like an event that children have fun and parents accompany children. I really like the atmosphere in the field, friendly and fun. (7/8/2012)

Today I went to their music concert that we also had it in China. The majority of my classmates had never got a chance to perform at the stage. Every student that got a chance should be a member of related association and trained for a long time. A kid without any training would not get the opportunity. However, every student of every class gets a chance to perform on the stage. Even the performances were not perfect; they just tried hard and received applause for the attempt. (15/11/2012)

Obviously, from both pieces of journals, the cultural differences really made an impact on me, but I also got the chance to know more about local culture. For instance, how they educated students and how these activities were organised. When I
came to school, I was able to talk about students’ performances and even link them to my Chinese lessons. Students were very excited once I talked about my attentiveness to their activities. I believe they had the feeling that the Chinese teacher is easily understandable and accessible. Attending more social activities in school definitely helps to build up the relationship with students.

6.4.1 Becoming familiar with the Australian school culture

Bax (2003) evaluates teaching as failing if a teacher comes to a new country without relevant knowledge and “any reference to the culture, learning context, student needs and wishes” (p. 279). Culture difference came up to my mind when I was observing lessons first in school. It did not catch my attention because I take it for granted, as I am a foreigner in this country who delivers a different language and from a different culture. However, I realised it could not be my excuse and privilege to refuse to adapt myself into their school culture when I was almost tricked by a student and made a mistake.

Today, I almost made a mistake, which helped realize that how important to familiar with their classroom culture. In a class of year 2, they were requested to do a worksheet with match game on it. A student came and asked if he can use pen to draw the lines. I said yes. Then other students said they have not got the pen license yet and they are not allowed to use pens. The classroom teacher saw my confusion and came to know what happened. She laughed and said that this kid was just
being naughty and trying to fool me. She explained that students could get a pen license in year 3 if their writings are neat and perfect. I felt very embarrassed because I do not remember any similar rule in China. I almost break a rule (6/11/2012).

It can be seen how frustrated I felt that a student tried to trick me only because I was not familiar with their rules in school. From that day, I tried my best to know more about the school and asked classroom teachers if anything confused me. Besides, I attended different types of school activities and got the chance to communicate with students when they were out of school, which made me become familiar with their life culture as well. I concluded through my experience of two different cultures that students are encouraged to do anything in Australia so that they are more creative. Therefore in the classroom, what I needed to do is abandon what we usually do in China and encourage students to try their best to find answers instead of getting an answer directly from me. All the examples above show the importance of knowing the culture of the local school which helped me to adjust myself into different culture easily.

6.4.2 Perceived low levels of learner motivation

As I mentioned in chapter 4 about the relationship between motivations and choosing materials, motivation is always an issue those teachers have to consider, especially for foreign language teaching/learning. Papi and Abdollahzadeh (2012) identify
“insufficient motivation” as one of “the most challenging problems in the eyes of language teachers and educators” (p. 571). Students can easily be motivated if foreign language learning is interesting. They also easily feel frustrated to lose motivation, as it is different to their own experience and difficult to understand. The following journal was written after a low-motivation lesson.

Today is totally a mess. My expectations are way too high for them. I prepared a lesson containing learning 10 numbers in Chinese in a 40 minutes lesson, which I thought that they have the ability of mastering 10 words using my diverse ways of repetition. Actually, they got confused even though there are different activities for them to practise. I felt so frustrated and came to realize and accept that learners’ motivations are low when learning difficult knowledge. They can be very passion about learning only it is interesting. Teachers have to accept the reality and find ways to stimulate students’ motivation. (23/10/2012)

It is difficult for me to realise this because of the cultural difference. In China, it is unnecessary for teachers to consider about students’ low motivations. Due to the fierce competition atmosphere in China, students have no choice but to force themselves to acquire knowledge as much as possible. That is the reason why I have not noticed this issue until experiencing this firsthand. Teachers have to take care of students’ low motivations to adjust lesson preparation and teaching strategies.
In Australia, I found that it is the teachers who have the obligations to prepare attractive lessons to stimulate students’ interests. However, born and raised in China, what I was familiar with is traditional education system, where the teacher dominates the classroom during most time of a lesson. Students just need to take notes about what the teacher is lecturing. Before actually going to school, I was concerned about the content I am about to teach them. However, I thought more about what they need to know instead of what they want to know. I did not realise this issue until I taught the lesson about Mid-Autumn Festival. As a very important reunion celebration for families, I felt this part of culture is worthy to be taught and the back-story is interesting. In order to make it easy to learn, I also found a video telling the story with pictures. Even though I felt my lesson is well prepared, the result turned out to be unexpected. Students seemed very lost during the whole lesson and I was frustrated. After this happened, I reflected on my preparation of lesson and realised that I ignored students’ interests and demands of learning. My focus should be what students want to learn instead of my own intention. They would engage with the lesson once they find it is interesting, which is obvious that teachers need to take the responsibilities to plan a lesson that makes students want to participate eagerly. Besides, I did not make the comparison between the two cultures which lead to difficulties for students to understand. They would not be motivated if it is not related to their lives. The following is a part of my reflection journal that can express my feeling:
I felt very embarrassed and frustrated today because I thought what I prepared is interesting and unique and they absolutely should like it. However, most of the students was talking to classmates and ignoring what I explained at all. The videos also did not work well. They were not attracted even with the English explanation and pictures. It was total mess and disaster. One thing that came to my head during the lesson is finishing it as soon as possible. (21/8/2012)

From this piece of journal, it can be seen that I did not realise the responsibility that I have to stimulate their participation at first because I regarded the engagement in a lesson as students’ obligations. It was a culture difference that I have to be concerned about.

6.5 Classroom management

This section states three parts of classroom management, which are instruction, reward system and support from classroom teacher. Instruction is a prevalent issue for beginning bilingual teachers. Evertson and Weinstein (2011) advocate the significance of classroom management.

“Beginning teachers consistently perceive student discipline as their most serious challenge; management problems continue to be a major cause of teacher burnout and job dissatisfaction; and the public repeatedly ranks discipline as the first or second most serious problem facing the schools” (p. 3).
To begin with, more attention should be give to giving instructions as the key discussion of classroom management. Reward, could be another aspect, which can stimulate students’ interests. This procedure specifically operated in my school. Besides, the influence of classroom teachers on their students should not be ignored. Finally, teacher’s feedback about the improvement of my teaching capabilities are listed. Table 6.4 indicates evidence information of this section.

**Table 6.4 Data information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>Reflect my instruction issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teachers</td>
<td>Interview, Observation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher’s view and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward system</td>
<td>Teacher-researcher</td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>Statement of Chinese reward system in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from teachers</td>
<td>Reflection journals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflect the influence of teachers’ support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ feedback</td>
<td>Classroom teachers</td>
<td>Interview, Observation</td>
<td>Their views about Chinese lesson and students’ learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5.1 Instruction in foreign language classroom

Instruction occupies an important position in managing the class. It can be regarded as the communication between teacher and students during the lesson, affecting the understanding of teaching procedures and students learning development. However, for me as a beginning bilingual teacher, it has been a worry due to the low proficiency of English. In Scrimgeour (2010)’s research, two participants concluded from their own experience “issues of non-native proficiency in English create particular challenges in effectively communicating and mediating learning in the classroom” (p. 134). They confirmed that the necessary of clear instruction to engage learners. The results of Yao and Han’s (2013) research “showed that 84% of the bilingual teachers admitted to having various language difficulties and most of them believed that these difficulties had adverse effect on their teaching” (p. 128). At first, I was extremely worried about my low-proficiency of English, concerned that students might not be able to understand me. Then after a few lessons, I found out students can understand it the majority of time, but when it comes to explanation of activity, it could be a disaster. The following paragraph is an example from my reflective journal showing an embarrass moment.

Today, I felt embarrassed as a teacher. Because students could not understand the rules of a game I planed. It seemed like I tried to explain clearly but forgot the logical problem so that students just confused. Even I explained again in another way, plenty of the still did not get it. Luckily,
classroom teacher saved me. She understood what I tried to explain and help me to give the instruction to students. I felt I am not a qualified teacher at all and lost the authority that what we called “威信” in Chinese. (27/11/2012)

When I was concerned about how to achieve the clarity of instruction, a colleague of ROSETE told me she learnt a skill from her mentor to reduce the anxiety of giving instruction, which is writing a lesson script in advance. It does not mean that the teacher needs to read or even recite the script. The effect of script for me is outlining the structure of this lesson and thinking about how to explain the procedures in a logical way. I kept writing scripts for two terms and it helped me to improve my instructional language skill. The following paragraph is selected from one of my scripts.

2013 term 1
Week 1 Chinese New Year

Script:
1. Today, our topic is Chinese New Year. In China, we called Spring Festival.
2. First, Let’s go back to 25th of December to think about How do you celebrate Christmas each year? What do you always do in Christmas? I need you to answer these questions based on the four aspects below: greetings, decorations, food and customs. Think about what do you usually say in Christmas when you meet friends? What things do you use to decorate your house? What do you eat in Christmas? What do you do to celebrate it?
3. The Spring Festival is the most important festival for the Chinese people and is when all family members get together, just like Christmas in the West. The Spring Festival falls on the 1st day of the 1st lunar month, often one month later than the Gregorian calendar. In 2013, Chinese New Year takes
place in February 10th.
4. Year of snake (蛇年 shé nián). The twelve Chinese zodiac signs are the twelve animals Chinese people customarily use to mark the year in which a person was born. The twelve animals and the order in which they are arranged are called "the twelve zodiac signs". The twelve animals are 鼠 shǔ (rat), 牛 niú (ox), 虎 hǔ (tiger), 兔 tù (rabbit), 龙 lóng (dragon), 蛇 shé (snake), 马 mǎ (horse), 羊 yáng (goat), 猴 hóu (monkey), 鸡 jī (rooster), 狗 gǒu (dog), and 猪 zhū (pig).
5. When we Chinese people visit family members or friends in the Chinese New Year, we always use the following greetings.

新年快乐！ xīn nián kuài lè Happy New Year!
恭喜发财！ gōng xǐ fā cái Wishing you happiness and prosperity.
万事如意！ wàn shì rú yì May all your wishes be fulfilled.
心想事成！ xīn xiǎng shì chéng may all your wishes come true.

Apart from writing script, another way that can be adopted to improve instructional skill, is learning from the observation of local classroom teachers, as they have the effective instructional language which students are familiar with. Yao and Han (2013) believed bilingual teachers like to hold the view “they identified their Anglophone peers as being flexible in teaching approaches and being competent in using communicative English, whereas they saw themselves as being qualified in social, cultural, emotional, or experiential aspects” (p. 128). It is obvious that bilingual teachers considered local Anglophone teachers as the models to achieve master of flexible instruction. Based on my experience with students, I highlighted two challenges for delivering instruction from Yao and Han (2013) as my priority issues to work on, which are “anchor success” and “disciplining” (p. 132-134). They also
identified the differences between bilingual teachers and Anglophone high school teachers when comes to these two aspects:

The BTs’ comments were more general which could give the impression of being less genuine, whereas HTs tended to be more specific when using appreciative words and expressions. (Yao & Han, 2013, p. 132). BTs’ utterances were general, brief, and conventional, whereas the HTs’ expressions were more specific, detailed, and diverse. The HTs not only adjusted their talk to address students’ different behaviors but also tended to provide reasons for doing so. BTs tended to use these expressions frequently, but without changing their tone to indicate a disciplinary technique. (Yao & Han, 2013, p. 134).

In general, the key words of bilingual teachers’ instruction always were brief, simple, less genuine, and similar while Anglophone teachers were specific, various and detailed. Similarly, the classroom teacher also used these words to evaluate my instruction during the interview (Appendix 14 & 15). She suggested me to give more specific instruction targeting on individual person or reason rather than using the same word “well done” or “stop doing this” so that students understood who I was talking to and why I needed to do it. Comparing all the key words, I figured out that it may still relate to the capability of English. Bilingual teacher might give more flexible and multiple instructions if they achieved high proficiency.

Despite bilingual teachers’ self-evaluation of English proficiency is unsatisfied, classroom teachers and students hold positive view about this issue. In Yao and Han’s
(2013) survey, students did not have any bias that lead to negative attitudes towards bilingual teachers and “believed that accent was not as important as ‘being professional’” and teachers believed other qualities are more important than “having English-speaking background, such as “rich teaching experience” (p. 128). From my experience, classroom teachers did not mention any instruction suggestion until I asked and they told me it could be improved gradually when gaining more teaching experience. Therefore, it is necessary for bilingual teachers to improve the skill of delivering instruction, but unnecessary to concern too much about the proficiency of English.

6.5.2 Chinese lesson reward system

Reward system is an important part of school arrangement system. “In some schools, language teachers use rewards to enhance motivation in language learning” (Schunk cited in Bahous, Bacha & Nabhani, 2011, p. 37). In Australia, schools have different reward systems in order to encourage students to participate in every lesson and praise their achievements in study. Also, each class has the different set of rules to implement the reward to students. It made me feel uncomfortable as a volunteer teacher who only came to school one day because I was scared of breaking the rules of allocating rewards. I tried to use snacks as rewards but it is risky as students might have allergy.
The assistant principal helped me to come up with a brilliant idea, which is establishing a little reward system specifically for Chinese lessons and then incorporated into school’s reward system. She told me that the first step of reward system in school is to collect ten tokens to exchange a silver reward. What we could do is to design a Chinese token for students, which just like other tokens that can be calculated into school reward system. In order to get a Chinese normal token, students had to collect five little Chinese tokens, which I could give them based on the performance to individuals. Besides, a Chinese certificate was given to a student who had best performance in school’s assembly each week. This reward system was well executed by classroom teachers and warmly accepted by students. This is a part of my reflection diaries that was written after the first day of implement.

Today is the first day of using these tokens. To be honest, I was worried yesterday about response from students and nervous about how I can manage the frequency of giving tokens. However, what happened today make me feel happy and satisfied. All the classes in the school were full of passion. They were eager to earn a token and also discussed with classmates about how many tokens they have earned. This reward system did inspire students to try their best to learn a foreign language. Even some specific students were very shy before wanted to have a go in order to win a token. I feel relieved that finally we established an excellent Chinese reward system that make teaching Chinese easier and more interesting than before. (8/10/2013)

Because the design of little tokens was based on 12 zodiac animals, students were very excited once they received a different pattern. Some students even asked if they
could take these tokens back home. It is obvious that their interests were raised due to implement of this special reward system.

6.5.3 Support from classroom teacher

As a volunteer teacher without a qualification to take full responsibility in classroom, support from classroom teachers is important. Generally, students are influenced by their classroom teachers’ attitudes. The class has great performance and achievement when the classroom teachers participate in my Chinese lesson themselves. A part of my reflective journals shows how classroom teacher influence students’ engagement in Chinese lesson.

Today in kindergarten classroom, everything went well and students were engaged with the lesson together with classroom teacher. Then a teacher came in to discuss a program with her and they just sat at the back of classroom and talked with each other. I noticed that plenty of students were attracted by the conversation and glanced back at their classroom teachers. Some students even kept glancing back. I was surprised by their dependence on classroom teacher. (19/02/2013)

As a volunteer teacher, it is necessary to encourage classroom teachers to participate in Chinese lesson so that they can develop positive attitudes about Chinese learning. Furthermore, when I was not in school, they could take the responsibilities to guide students to revise Chinese.
In my school specifically, as it is the first time they have a foreign teacher, loads of teachers were enthusiastic to participate in Chinese lessons whereas a few teachers might feel they cannot assist Chinese lessons. Because they know nothing about Chinese so they just decided to leave me taking over the class. However, when I realized how much influence that they have on students, I communicated with them and worked together to figure out how to promote Chinese learning in class. When it is necessary, they helped me to manage the students especially conducting activities so that I could learn some techniques about classroom management. The majority of teachers guided students to revise Chinese words daily and found extra videos to explore more knowledge for students when I was not at school. A few of them asked me to leave learning materials so that they made into classroom decoration. With their efforts, learning Chinese became easy for students with everyday practice.

6.5.4 Teachers’ feedback

Apart from self-evaluation, classroom teachers witnessed my improvement as a beginning bilingual volunteer teacher. They saw my merits that are being maintain and adjustments about drawbacks. During the interview, I asked them their views about qualities of non-native teachers in Australia.

Yi: Generally, what teaching skills do non-native language teachers need to have? How can they develop their skills? Can you give us some
suggestions?
Rosemary: Well, I think like we’ve talked about patience thing. (Y: Yes.) And also having a backup plan in case things go wrong. And also finding where each the student are and how you can engage individual student. Because if you get…if you engage the key members of the class, then you can engage all of them.

Yi: Thank you. Generally, what teaching skills do non-native language teachers need to have? Could you think about how they can develop their skills?
Halina: Oh, goodness. Well, you need to have your general teaching skills. So you need to aware of the whole group to begin with. So you need to be able to control the group to start off with. You need to able to motivate the group. It doesn’t matter whether you teaching language or anything else. It’s always your basic, your basic thing. The other thing that you need to have also is trying to develop some rapports with individual student. For you, it’s difficult, because you come infrequently. So if you can have them every day, it will be nicer. Well, I think we spoke about that before, it would be good if you knew their names, that sort of thing. (Y: Yes.) Um, that helps in your teaching, in language teaching. And I think it also helps, it helps if your English works on your English as well. With you specifically, class control is really important. You need to make sure that when you are speaking, they are not. Never. All right? You need to establish that sort of thing because they wouldn’t hear what you say if they are not listening. So that’s really important. And the repetition that you do was very good. You were teaching them to speak the language. That is really good. That is something you need to have, and you’ve already do have.
Yi: It’s like to be more tough?
Halina: Well, you have to be if you want the students to learn. If they are not listening they are not going to learn. (Y: Yes, that’s true.) If they are sitting and talking to each other while you are speaking, then they are
not hearing what you have to say. (Y: Yep.) So, yes, you do, you do need to have that discipline. It doesn’t have to be mean or anything. You know, they don’t have to be scared of you. But they have to understand that when you speak, they don’t or someone else’s speaking, they don’t speak. Because, they miss out a lot, they just don’t hear it.

As stated above, Rosemary mentioned the ability of patience again. Moreover, a backup plan is necessary especially when the technology fails. Last but not the least, the rapport with individual students should be built in order to engage them well in the lesson. Halina asserted that non-native language teachers should have the basic teaching skills first. They need to know how to control the students. Besides, how to motivate students is a basic skill that a teacher should have. Besides, building a rapport with students is a challenge. She realised that it is difficult for me because of the time issue, but it would be good if I can identify students individually, which makes it much easier to build up the rapport with them. She also advised me that I have to make sure that students did not interrupt me when I am talking, which belongs to the classroom management issue. It is not like to be mean or scaring them, but it has to be clear that students could not interrupt other people’s conversation.

At the end of interview, they were asked to evaluate my performances and provide with some suggestions.

Yi: Can you point out the pros and cons of my Chinese lessons? Could you please give me some suggestions about how to improve my teaching?
Rosemary: We basically have done that already with pointing out you do
need to go over what you have done in the previous lesson to engage them. And you need to focus what you are going to be doing and why you are going to be doing. And then you teach it. And at the end, you consolidate it and go over what you have done. It’s a lot of repetition but kids need that. So and as well as the behavior management has come along. In the beginning, you were very shy and you didn’t want to say stop talking, be quite. But, because our kids are not as respectful as Chinese students would be. But you’ve, you’ve. Last week especially, you stopped and waited “That’s enough. We need to move on”. So anything that I’ve told you to do, you’ve done. And it’s beautifully. So, well done, Yi.

Yi: Can you point out the pros and cons of my Chinese lessons? Like give me some suggestions?
Halina: Yep. Absolutely number one, number one you need to control the class totally, absolute total control. Don’t allow them to speak when you are speaking ever. So you have that going straight away. You can be (not clear), you can be laugh, you can do all of those things, you don’t have to be cranky or anything like that, but you must have them watching you and listening to you and no talking when someone else is talking, so that’s perhaps one of the things that you should work on a lot more.

Yi: Like when I see someone is talking, so like I should stop and wait?
Halina: Absolutely. Don’t wait. Remind them. (Y: Remind them? ) You can use that. It’s one method that I use sometimes while if they are talking, I just stand and wait and don’t speak any more and wait, but with some children, you could be waiting for a long time. So you decide how long you want to wait if you want to use that method. Like 10 seconds, 15 seconds, whatever it is. And then, tell them, you know, you are trying to speak, or we are trying get lesson down here and you are interrupting. You can remind them that it’s not polite to be talking when someone else is. You can do that sort of things, just general teaching of children in terms of the expectations of their behavior
when something, when your lesson is going on that part of your lesson. And as I said before, it would be good if you can do something about the names. So they are not just a big group when you actually say like ‘Well done, Sophie’ instead of just general ‘well done’. So that’s important to children (not clear) You actually do name them or give them a nickname if you want to. It doesn’t matter if they know whom you are talking to. That’s really important that you talk to the individual student. That’s something you should work on. You should work on that. In terms of your preparation, what you are doing with the lessons, you are doing absolutely wonderful job, really well. It’s really, really good that you prepared everything very well. So and you engaged the children. You got them working all the time except when they were talking. But that’s just general. They do that with other teachers, not just you. So, it’s not just you. They will do with the some other teachers. It’s something that you need to do with the class just make sure that if you don’t like them talking, then stop them straight away which way you like, whatever it’s comfortable for you. Have a rest, wait, they are still talking then you have to say ‘Ryan, whatever it is, Ryan, I’d like you to pay attention now because you are gonna miss out what we are doing next.’ or whatever. That part of it, you need to work on. Otherwise, you are doing everything, everything that I think is really, really good. Really good. True, you are. No, I’m not saying that just for the tape.

First, Rosemary praised my excellent teaching again. Then she provided me with several suggestions. The revision of knowledge is significant in order to strengthen students’ memory. The classroom management is an issue, for instance, working on how to deal with the interruptions from students. From Halina, the challenge for me is still the classroom management, which is how to control the class especially when
they interrupt my lessons. She taught me several ways of dealing with this issue. I have to establish the rule that they are not allowed to talk when I am talking. Knowing their names is one effective way as she mentioned again. Not only does it help me to manage the class, but also assist me to build rapport with students on an individual basis. However, she praised my preparation and origination of lessons. She also said sincerely that her compliments are not just because of the interview.

Yi: And which part or moments in the Chinese lesson impressed you most? Please tell me the reasons for this?

Rosemary: Well, lots of them impressed me. Um, just thinking back… just last week, how engage they were with the animals. And also when they were able to count to 10, that impressed me that they grabbed it so quickly. Um, what else… and the culture stuff as well. We’ve been learning about the, you know, the different aspects of Chinese culture. So we’ve got to see your school and that sort of dissipated, a quite few of preconceived (not clear) we had about Chinese schools. Because you do see on TV that they are very poor or they are very… but they are not. They are just… (Yi: yep.) You school is amazing.

Yi: Just a few of the schools, they are poor, like in the Western region.

Rosemary: We have a few poor as well.

Yi: Yep, but most of them, they are beautiful, I think.

Rosemary: Um, very much.

Yi: And which part or moments in the Chinese lesson impressed you most? Please tell me the reasons for this?

Halina: I think your organization of the lesson that really impressed. Well, you have movement going on all the time where you are not just standing there and talking to them. You talked to them, you showed them a video, you gave them a handout. So you’ve got movement going all the time and they are changing from one to another. And it’s always good. If you
are doing something, whatever you are doing, make them want to do more and stop, stop and move on. So they are always going to be wanting to go back to the other thing. That works very well. But with you, it’s just the fact that you use so many different media to deliver your lesson, to deliver basic the same message. That is really really good. Really good.

My offering of diverse Chinese language and words impressed Rosemary, which were totally different compared with their preconceived impressions about China. She is also pleased by the speed of students’ mastery of a new language. Halina showed preference about my organisation of lesson, and the movements I made instead of just standing in front of the class and talking all the time. Furthermore, she confirmed my efforts of arranging various types of repetition and Medias which make students want to continue.

6.6 Discussion

In this chapter, my improvement as a beginning bilingual beginning teacher is demonstrated. During this long period of teaching, I started with culture shock and then adjusted myself to overcome difficulties as this role and finally received achievements. This experience offered me a different perspective to consider teaching Chinese as foreign language. The first change that I made is considering myself as bilingual. Learning English in China, I always pursued accuracy in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar like native speaker. However, it only leads me to endless frustration. When coming to school, I found out that teachers and students still could
understand me even though I made mistakes. They were actually not concerned about it. Meanwhile, I learnt this word “bilingual” and gradually realised this is the identity that represented who I am. I can speak two languages but it does not have to be high proficiency.

Throughout the whole process, I felt that another success is finding my own position and trying badly to adjust my belief and strategies to fit local school culture. It does not matter how good I am at Chinese language system and grammar. Instead, the knowledge of learners and how to adapt to different cultural aspects are what the Chinese teachers need to pay attention to. However, my roommate in university once took examinations held by official department in order to select Chinese volunteer teachers for foreign counties. She explained several parts of the examination when we had a conversation online. She took the written examination, which is about pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar of Chinese language. Then, she had an interview about the evaluation of her personal skills. It is still about the Chinese language itself and her specialty of expressing culture, such as traditional dance and tea art. I felt very disappointed that teacher’s capability like adapting different culture and knowing learners are not incorporated into the test list. From my point of view, these are as important as the mastery of language. Wu, Palmer and Field (2011) state that Chinese heritage language teachers “expanded their teaching strategies to be more substantively inclusive of student cultures” (p. 49), which is what I was emphasising on. Therefore, having the experience of teaching in Australia changed
my belief in this area and helped me to open mind to what kind of teacher I wanted to be.

6.7 Summary

This chapter analysed the difficulties that I faced and how I improved my teaching abilities as a beginning bilingual teacher. Firstly, my personal background and the reason I identified myself as beginning bilingual teacher are stated in detail. Based on evidence from mixed sources, my improvement about establishing a rapport and classroom management is witnessed by students and teachers. Based on my self-evaluation, my skills as a teacher-researcher are promoted. In Chapter 7, a summary of each chapter is provided. In addition, key findings along with limitations and recommendations of this research are demonstrated as well. Finally, my reflections on becoming a teacher-researcher are written in detail.
Chapter 7

Findings and implications

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is the summary of all previous chapters. Firstly, the statement of the entire thesis and what each chapter has covered are described. It consists of introduction, literature, methodology, data collection and analysis with the focus of making Chinese learnable for beginning learners. Then, key findings are listed as possible ideas based on all evidence that I generated. After reflecting the whole process, limitations of this research along with implications for teaching and learning Chinese, and recommendation for further research are addressed. At the end, my self-reflection as a researcher is provided, expressing what I have learnt from conducting this research.

7.2 Summary of Chapters

This thesis states my efforts to investigate how a beginning bilingual volunteer teacher tried to make Chinese learnable for beginning learners in English speaking country from learners’ perspective. Meanwhile, I also benefited from this experience to improve professional learning both as a Chinese language teacher and a researcher.
In order to explore this phenomenon, a case study was established and three contributory questions were listed in previous chapters. The results of this case study were described from three aspects, which are lesson preparation through design and materials selection, adopting teaching strategies and improving teaching skills.

Chapter 1 started with a brief introduction of this research project. At the beginning of introduction, a method called “vignette” was used to explain how I teach my name to people who speak English, which showed the challenge that I encountered about teaching Chinese. Then the background of this study was described, including my personal experience at past and how I came to this research as a beginning teacher-researcher responsible for teaching Chinese to beginning learners in Australia. Based on the information of research site and participants, I generated a main research question and three contributory questions as structure to explore how to teach Chinese for beginning learners. Meanwhile, the significance of this study, which can contribute to Chinese teaching/learning field in English speaking country, was briefly provided. Next comes with preview of the literature, consisting current situation of Chinese in the world, knowing learners’ perspectives, lesson preparation with design and material selection, and professional learning as a teacher-researcher. Similarly, the preview of research method case study was introduced with research strategy, site, participants, data collection and analysis. Furthermore, a statement of this research was explained along with a figure (Figure 1.1) shows the procedures. The research design started from lesson preparation and then teacher could put into practice by
using teaching strategy and observed students engagement. Then teacher received feedback from both students and teacher along with self-reflection to improve lesson preparation and teaching professional learning at the same time. Finally, the structure of the whole thesis was outlined so that the content of each chapter were showed in advance.

In Chapter 2, the relevant literatures determined by research questions were reviewed and gaps in current knowledge were identified after review. The literature covered the current situation of Chinese language teaching and learning in the world, identifying present challenges that restrict the development of Chinese and what students’ views considering the drop out of Chinese learning. Then lesson preparation through teaching materials was described. With the lack of appropriate Chinese teaching materials, the urgent demand of selecting, adapting even creating materials was expressed. Before that, the critique of textbooks was presented, as it is old fashioned with resources that could not fit the current students’ need. There were several teaching strategies for teaching Chinese to beginning learners in order to reduce learners’ anxiety and reticence in foreign language classroom, such as the similarities between L1 TL promote TL learning and facilitator-oriented interaction strategy allows students to explore language with teachers’ essential guidance. However, it might cause students’ anxiety and frustration if only TL was allowed in the classroom. Therefore, the critique of monolingualism and CLT were necessary. In regard to professional development as beginning bilingual teacher, the lack of qualified TCFL
teachers were mentioned with only few relevant programs that support trainings. Beginning bilingual teachers’ identity and challenges were analysed. Finally, gaps in current literature inspired this research project.

Chapter 3 introduced the research methodology and methods. The philosophic concepts of ontology, epistemology and metaphysics with the interrelation were chosen as methodology. Due to the way that research questions were asked, case study was adopted as research strategy and the phenomenon was making Chinese learnable for beginning foreign language learners. In order to enhance the credibility and reliability of this project, multiple sources of data were used to triangulate with each other. Then, the design of case study was explained in detail. I introduced the research site with its history, environment and basic information and a new name was made for the site based on the introduction. Due to the strict principles of human participation, especially for primary students, ethical considerations with the rules that I followed were highlighted. Besides, the recruitment of participants and their background information were explained. The data collection consisted of questionnaire from students, interview and observation from classroom teachers, and reflective journals from teacher-researcher. The procedures of data analysis include open coding, focused coding and evidentiary unit conceptual analysis, which means separating data into different categories and writing a commentary as summary.
Chapter 4 was the first evidentiary chapter that focusing on lesson preparation based on the information of learners’ background, answering the first contributory question: How to prepare learner-centred lessons and choose appropriate teaching/learning materials to stimulate beginning learners to learn Chinese? The evidence was gathered from students’ questionnaire, teachers’ interview and my reflective journals as teacher-researcher. Students’ background and purpose were summarized and classroom teachers also provided with their views of students’ characteristics. Then my way of design a lesson was presented and I also emphasized the importance of well-organised sequence in design. My principles of selecting materials were listed to stimulate beginning learners’ interests of learning Chinese and teachers gave feedbacks about these principles. Finally, the discussion in terms of my self-reflection about the similarities or differences between what knowledge I acquired in China major in teaching Chinese as foreign language and what I learnt from experience in Australian school along with the a conclusion were indicated.

Chapter 5 mainly answered the second contributory research question: what teaching/learning strategies are acceptable to beginning learners to learn Chinese? This chapter examined appropriate teaching strategies for beginning learners and how they engaged with Chinese lessons based on the analysis of interview reflective journals, interview with teacher and questionnaire results from students. Two common phenomenons were identified in foreign language classroom, which are anxiety and reticence. In order to reduce negative influence on foreign language
learning, several effective strategies were introduced for beginning learners. Making use of similarities between L1 and TL and regarding English as a communicative media was accepted by beginning learners, together with adopting of facilitator-oriented interaction strategy with learner-centred classroom. Both teachers and students’ feedback was analysed to demonstrate students’ enthusiasm and participation in Chinese lessons. However, diverse learning attitudes from students were also noticed and factors that lead to the condition were indicated. Then, I discussed about the differences between the teaching strategies I adopted in Australian classroom and what I learned in my university lectures. Finally it comes to the brief conclusion of this chapter.

Chapter 6 answered the third contributory research questions: How can beginning bilingual volunteer teacher-researchers from China improve their skills in lesson preparation and teaching/learning strategies? This chapter concentrated on personal development of myself as a beginning bilingual teacher from China, making progress through classroom teachers’ feedback and self-reflection based on the experience of teaching Chinese lessons. It started with why I choose beginning bilingual teacher as my self-identity and the challenges I encountered when teaching in Australian school. Then, I improved my teaching skill to establish a rapport with students and also classroom management. The instruction issue for beginning bilingual teacher was identified. Besides, a Chinese lesson reward system was established and students were stimulated to achieve higher participation than before. The support from
classroom teachers was helpful for Chinese teaching was stated and feedbacks from these teachers were also indicated. Lastly, a discussion was argued about what necessary qualities of TCFL teacher need to have for Australian learners and how these qualities were introduced in university education.

7.3 Key findings

The findings have been discussed in previous chapters and summaries of key findings that emerged from evidentiary Chapters (4 to 6) are as follows:

7.3.1 Knowing about learners

In the literature, I analysed the reasons that learners want to drop out Chinese learning and how they consider the process of Chinese learning. Orton (2008) identifies learners’ low achievement in Chinese due to the intrinsic difficulties they encountered from Chinese itself that different from learners’ familiarity of L1. Zhang and Li (2010) point out the significance of considering learners’ needs and interests. Therefore, how to reduce the difficulties of Chinese and meet learners’ demands became the main research concentration in this project. Besides, when designing the learning content, learners’ background information, such as learning level, purpose and characteristics needed to be clarified.
The evidence collected from participants indicated how I define my students as beginning learners and their learning background information (see 4.2). I asked students if they have learnt Chinese before and the majority of students gave me a negative answer. Even a few students gave a positive answer; they did not mean Chinese language, according to my communication with them after the lesson. Therefore, I considered my students as beginning learners of Chinese. Then, with the results from students about learning purpose, even though there were some surprising answers, beginning learners mostly showed interest about achieve high proficiency of Chinese. Then due to my lack of familiarity of Australian primary students, classroom teachers were asked to give information about it. They described primary students as “enquiring”, “having new ideas”, and “need guidance and love”. With basic information from students and teachers, lesson preparation including design and materials, together with teaching strategies could be selected to fit students’ demands and characteristics.

7.3.2 Framework for preparing lessons and rules for choosing materials

The lack of teaching materials has been an issue that concerned by TCFL teachers for a long period. Tam (2012) complains about the lack of support from government to produce appropriate teaching materials to fit learners’ need and local school context. Zhang and L1 (2010) mention even though loads of textbooks are available in the
market because they were not designed for local learners. Furthermore, Tomlison points out the drawbacks of textbooks as well, means the textbook is no longer the appropriate choice of finding materials. For instance, the textbook is old fashioned with monotonous methods, which disappointed both teachers and learners. Therefore, Gilmore (2012) believes tailoring materials is significant. Even adapting or creating materials made teaching Chinese flexible and are able to fit learners’ demand with different levels.

My design of lesson and principles to choose materials based on students’ basic information was stated. In the sample of my lesson plan (see 4.3), three steps consisted of lesson purpose; outline and production provided me with a clear content of a lesson. Each lesson had a language learning purpose and a possible cultural competence. There were three aspects in “lesson outline” part, revision of last lesson, language practice and knowledge consolidation, which provided a logical procedure of a lesson. In terms of revision, the positive feedback from students showed their awareness of importance of revision part in a lesson. During the process of designing a lesson (Table 4.8), I found out about how to arrange each activity in an appropriate sequence actually might have better effect on students’ engagement in a lesson. It could be started with an activity that requires students to move around and then another activity that need them to sit down with silence. From the view of my reflective journal, it stimulated students’ interests to participate and adjust the learning atmosphere in Chinese lessons. Classroom teacher noticed this arrangement
in lesson and chose “pace change activity” to describe this idea.

Furthermore, three possible rules to select materials were expressed based on students’ background information. As described before, students were beginning Chinese learners and wanted to achieve high proficiency so that I decided to choose materials that related to their everyday knowledge with easiness and practicality. Students offered positive results in the questionnaire to support this idea. They were also asked to give some topics that they want to learn, and all the content they listed were related to life in school, family and society, which fitted this idea. Teachers shared the similar thoughts, mentioning stimulation issue, students’ demands and ability level in the interview. Then, due to their characteristics, I believed materials have to be varied and updated. In the questionnaire, I listed several topics from different categories that I have taught them, and asked if they enjoyed learning them. All the feedback was positive. They were also requested to vote several materials I had listed. It turned out to be games with diversity as the top one with almost one hundred percent, which expressed their preference about various materials. Smart board activities, as a new white board interaction media, won second place that implied how much students like technology. Therefore, teachers need to update the materials using the Internet; a brilliant technology can bring about convenience and wide range to materials selection. Besides, due to the weakness of current textbooks that cannot fit different levels of students’ learning demand, designing new materials or adapting the current one is another option for teachers. Most of time, I designed or selected two ability
levels of materials for one lesson because my students were from different stages. Finally, teachers provided me with their positive evaluation of my materials selection. During the discussion, I compared what I learnt in Australia and my knowledge as a student major in teaching Chinese as foreign language. I realised in my major education in China, there was no concentration of knowing students and analysis of people’s characteristics from different areas with different learning needs. With regard to lesson design and materials, I was taught to follow the content of textbooks, planning how to teach pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, which was quite monotonous. In Australia, I started to think from my students’ viewpoint and tried to figure out what they want for a lesson, which is different from Chinese education.

7.3.3 Teaching strategies from learners’ perspective

In respect to present literature, anxiety and reticence are considered as factors restrain the development of foreign language for learners. Shao, Yu and Ji (2013) demonstrate that plenty of Chinese students have experienced anxiety in ESL classroom lead to failure of making progress in English learning. Learners’ fear of making mistakes and losing face may result in reticence (Jackson, 2002). Motallebzadeh, Mirzaee and Baghaei (2012) emphasize teachers’ obligations of minimising anxiety and reticence. Few teaching strategies had been discussed about how to make it in TCFL classroom so that research on possible ideas of how to teach Chinese in terms of motivating
beginning learners is significant. One of the principles of monolingualism and CLT is using TL exclusively, which neglected the effect that L1 could bring about to improve the acquisition of TL. As a result, learners might accept the similarities between these two languages as a teaching strategy of promoting Chinese learning. Besides, interaction strategy affects the participation in foreign language classroom. Lee and Ng (2010) identify facilitator-oriented interaction strategy with learner-centred classroom is introduced as the appropriate strategy in the classroom, which could be used in TCFL along with group work to establish a learner-centred classroom. These ideas are worthy to confirm if they could be adopted in TCFL classroom.

First, my reflective journals showed how I encountered anxiety and reticence in my teaching. I described a different type of reticence that happened in Australian primary school. As stated in Chapter 2, reticence was regarded as a normal phenomenon in the Asian ESL classroom. However, from my reflective journals, reticence existed in the Australian classroom as well when students failed to give teacher response. Therefore, several teaching strategies were investigated to minimise these two negative feelings from beginning learners.

The evidence selected from the students’ questionnaire showed their positive feedbacks about using similarities between English and Chinese to learn pronunciation and memorize words. It was easy for students to pursue a similar sound, and then practise towards the accurate pronunciation. This strategy could be
incorporated in lesson preparation, which means teachers may need to find out the similar English word first and then planed a description about how to make use of it to learn Chinese through connection. Another strategy was using English as the media tool. This idea came from my own experience about learning English, causing loads of frustration and anxiety to me. Using this idea might reduce beginning learners’ anxiety in classroom. Students also provided agreements about this idea. Facilitator-oriented interaction strategy with learner-centred classroom was introduced to Chinese lessons. Based on the record in my journal, this strategy was helpful for learners to explore new knowledge and stimulate their willingness to achieve high participation. Group work, was identified as learner-centred classroom strategy. This strategy allowed students to work with each other as leading role in the classroom whereas teachers acted as facilitator that assisting students’ cooperation, which fitted students’ characteristics that a classroom teacher mentioned before in the interview. This classroom teacher also chose group work as her favorite strategy in her class. Students showed their preference about group study and working with classmates. Besides, students were asked to provide feedback about engagement with Chinese lessons after one year learning. The majority of students thought Chinese as interesting to learn and expressed their willingness to continue in the future. However, self-evaluation of performance in the lesson was not satisfactory, probably because they had limited time for learning Chinese each week. Teachers witnessed students’ improvement and gave praise about their progress. Finally, diverse attitudes from students towards learning Chinese were analysed as they could receive influence from
their teachers and family members.

In the discussion part, why reticence happened in Asian classroom especially in China was described based on literature and my ESL learning experience. For instance, fear of losing face, the priority of collective benefits, Confucian value and respect issue. Some students in Australia had the same issue because of their introverted personality. Therefore, teachers’ encouragement was essential to help them to participate in the lesson. As a TCFL student in China, plenty of methods were introduced without practice in teaching Chinese.

7.3.4 The development as a beginning bilingual teacher

In terms of development of beginning bilingual teachers, Wang and Higgins (2008) found out the shortage of qualified teachers, as well as Zhang and Li (2010). In regard to bilingual identity, Pavlenko (2003) believes teachers’ bilingual identity helps them to reconstruct themselves and transmit this identity to foreign language learners so that they do not have to experience the identity as native speakers, which might bring about frustration. Furthermore, there were challenges that were identified by Scrimgeour (2010), which needed some effective solutions.

My first finding of this chapter is the significance of bilingual identity for foreign language teacher especially for teachers who are native speakers of target language
that learners are planning to acquire. When I came to the school in Australia, I always tried to improve my English and hoped it could be fluent and accurate like I speak Chinese. This idea continued to bring about fear and frustration. Through this research, I gradually found the real identity, which is beginning bilingual teacher, helped me to build up self-confidence. Just like Pavlenko (2003) describes that with this identity I view myself positively and also “engage in active attempts to reshape the surrounding contexts” (p. 266). Then, I encountered challenges as a beginning bilingual teacher due to cultural differences, which probably other foreign language teachers are also facing with. Scrimgeour (2010) summarises these five challenges that I totally felt based on my experiences in Australian school, including “lack of familiarity with the Australian classroom culture, perceived low levels of learner motivation, responsibilities in planning to engage learners, seeing language learning from the learner’s perspective, and proficiency in English as medium of instruction” (p. 130-134). Having acknowledged the challenges that I might deal with, the next step of establishing a rapport with students became significant. I decided to start with their school culture, for example, attending more extra activities that school held in order to experience the different culture and have more opportunities to work with students. Then, one of my journals helped me to realise that a foreign language teacher has to accept the low motivation of learning language from students. At the initial stage of learning a different language, the students had curiosity that kept them interested. After a period of time, their enthusiasm waned so that I had to lower my expectations for learners. Besides, I should take the responsibilities of engaging
students and raising their willingness to learn language. Classroom management is another crucial part of teaching skills, especially for me as a beginning bilingual teacher who really need to strengthen this capability. Instruction has always been an issue for bilingual teachers.

At first, I was worried about giving unclear instruction that makes students confused. However, based on the evidence I gathered, both students and classroom teachers did not take it seriously as long as it could be explained clearly. After 18 months of teaching Chinese, classroom teachers did confirm that I made progress about giving clear instruction and still needed to step up to the next level. The reward system is an important part of school culture. The assistant principal inspired me to incorporate a reward for Chinese lessons exclusively into school reward system and it promoted students willingness of participation. Lastly, classroom teachers’ support affected students’ attitudes and participation in Chinese lesson, especially for primary students who spend most of time in a day with the same teacher so that they like to imitate teachers’ behavior. Above all, I confronted the challenges as a beginning bilingual volunteer teacher and improved my professional teacher capabilities, including building up the rapport with students and classroom management, which helped me to make progress in future lesson planning and teaching as well.

During the comparison of teaching skills improvement in Australia and knowledge educated in university in China as TCSL major, I noticed that my perspective had
changed. Firstly, I learnt to choose bilingual beginning teacher to identify myself and built up self-confidence, as I was not taught in university lectures about identity issues. Furthermore, I found out the importance of adapting to different culture as teacher’s ability, which changed my belief that potential TCSL teachers in China need to pay more attention on improve personal adaption ability instead of learning language system solely.

7.4 Limitations and delimitations of this study

There were several limitations and delimiting factors in this study, including time limitation, drawbacks of data collection methods design and arrangement. Time limitation was the main issue in this study. As a volunteer teacher, I only came to school once a week. Due to the huge amount of learners, stage 1 and 2 had Chinese lesson once a week while stage 3 had it once for fortnight. Therefore, the frequency of Chinese learning was limited. Furthermore, even though it was 18-month (6 terms) program as a teacher-researcher, the actual time of conducting this research was only about two terms. The first six months, I was busy with learning theoretical knowledge by participating workshops and observed lessons in order to have time to work with students and orient myself in school context. Students as beginning learners also needed time to adapt to exposure of new language. Besides, applications were applied to Human Researcher Ethics committee and DEC and processed for a period so that the rights of human participants could be protected. Then data collection could be
started and lasted approximate 2 terms for the completion, which is a short period. In conclusion, due to these time limitations, students only had a limited time of learning before participation in the questionnaire, which might affect the results.

The drawbacks of data collection methods design and arrangement were another issue. The first questionnaire (see Appendix 10) I designed contained both standard questions and open questions, but I found that students treated open questions casually with only one or two words as answer. When analysing the results of questionnaire, I could get the votes but without the reason why they gave this answer. The choices I supplied for them were three faces but students were not sure about their answers so that they were apt to choose the safe answer, which is the middle face. Their choices made me confused about how they really feel about the questions, positive or negative. The second questionnaire (see Appendix 11) was improved based on my experience of the first one, offering them four faces to choose. I also asked students to provide with reasons if they chose the last two faces. Therefore, the second questionnaire was more reliable than the first one.

The time arrangement of collecting data was unsatisfied. Due to the time limitation that discussed above, the questionnaires were conducted only twice in term 1 and term 2. Students only had a short gap between the two questionnaires, barely with any changes about feedbacks. Actually, I sometimes preferred to communicate with students after class to get relevant information and then received formal evidence in
the questionnaire. Besides, teachers’ interviews just conducted once at the end of term 2, which only gave the final feedback without the record of a period change. The results would be different if the data can be collected within a long-term gap so that the change could be revealed. In addition, the participants only contained two classes respectively from stage 2 and stage 3. Stage 1 was too young to have the cognitive ability to understand the meaning of questions. However, it would be more reliable if more classes could participate in this project.

7.5 Implications for teaching and learning Chinese

This study contributes to the development of Chinese teaching/learning and even foreign language field. The implication of this research can be utilised for three aspects: foreign language lesson preparation, teaching strategy and foreign language teachers’ professional capabilities.

Before teaching foreign language education, the survey of students’ background is essential. For instance, their learning level, purpose and characteristics, may help teachers to prepare a lesson engage with students. Then, a lesson can be designed from three parts, which are lesson purpose including language and culture, outline contains the whole procedure, and production. The second part can be designed in details with revision of last lesson, practice of new language and consolidation of knowledge. Revision was necessary as the starter of a lesson, accepted by students.
Besides, the order of activities has to be arranged with consideration. With pace changes, students may engage more with the lesson. Furthermore, three ideas are considered as possible principals to choose teaching materials. Relevance of everyday knowledge may fit students’ demand and easy for beginning learners to accept. Diverse and updated materials are able to stimulate learners’ motivation and keep them want to learn more. Designing and adapting materials are an option to adjust similar content to fit different ability levels of students. By contrast of Chinese education for TCFL teachers and my experience in Australia, I suggest that Chinese universities may pay more attention on cultivating potential TCFL teachers to attach importance to learners’ background and characteristics, and introducing information about people from different areas so that these potential teachers can improve their level of adjustability. Besides, dealing with materials in flexible ways can be emphasised based on learners’ information.

There are several teaching strategies that can be adopted in teaching foreign language to minimise anxiety and reticence. Using similarities between first language and target language helps students to imitate close sound of target language and then practise to reach the precise pronunciation. Learners may reduce the anxiety in target language classroom if their first language is adopted as media tool. Besides, facilitator-oriented interaction strategy with learner-centred classroom is considered as an appropriate teacher strategy for learners as they need guidance and more opportunities to participate in classroom. This strategy may maximise the strengths of
learners’ initiative to explore language along with teachers’ assistance. Group work is regarded as learner-centred classroom strategy so that every student can participate in activities and develop skill of cooperation. Teachers also need to accept students’ different views about learning foreign language. In terms of TCSL education in university, I believe that these strategies can be introduced in lectures as possible ideas in Chinese teaching. And other strategies that have been taught, should with more details and in TCFL education specifically.

The last implication is for beginning bilingual volunteer teachers who can develop professional skills from the following aspects. For bilingual teachers who are native speakers of learners’ target language, finding out the identity is the priority. Instead of being too strict about seeking high proficiency of foreign language skills, bilingual identity helps to reduce the frustration and build up self-confidence. However, as beginning bilingual teachers, there are some challenges that they have to confront due to the culture differences. There are possible ideas that they can absorb to overcome these challenges. Establishing a rapport is a necessary aspect, consisting getting familiar with school culture, acceptance of students’ low motivation of learning foreign language and taking the responsibilities to engage students during the lesson. Classroom management is another skill that beginning bilingual teacher need to improve through practice. Due to lack of self-confidence, bilingual teachers always worry about failure of giving clear instruction may cause students’ confusion. However, in Yao and Han’s (2013) survey, both students and local classroom teachers
showed no concern about this issue, as they did not feel any impediment from instruction issue during foreign language learning. Therefore, even though bilingual teacher need to improve bilingual skills, such as anchoring success and discipline, they should not be over concerned about this issue. Reward system is an effective method to stimulate students’ motivation and achieve high participation in language lesson. It is worthwhile to establish a special reward system that was incorporated into the school culture. Furthermore, inviting classroom teachers to be part of the language lesson and receiving their support is useful to achieve primary students high-level of participation as well. They also are able to provide with suggestions for improving teaching skills. These findings are guidance for foreign language teachers to identify themselves and develop professional teaching skills. There are also some implications for the development of TCSL major in Chinese universities. Perhaps helping TCSL teachers to realise their identity in advance is a better way to overcome culture shock quickly. Opportunities need to be offered to TCSL teachers, assisting them to improve ability of adapting different culture.

7.6 Recommendations for further research

This study attempted to figure out how to choose teaching materials and strategies considering learners’ perspective to make Chinese learnable. As this thesis is more like a summary of possible ideas to teach Chinese, each aspect of these ideas is worthy for further research. In this research, I only did survey about learners’
background, learning purposes and characteristics, which were general information. More aspects of learners can be investigated, such as gender, level, and even individual characteristics so that teacher can adopt different strategy to fit individuals. Then I designed a sample of lesson plan that can be updated based on different situations. The sequence of activities can be developed in further study to find out which kind of sequence stimulate students motivation the most. About choosing materials, apart from three principles I discussed, more can be explored to promote the area of teaching materials.

In terms of teaching strategies, the similarities between L1 and TL need further research to find out more types of similarities and put into different categories, as I focused only of pronunciation similarities. Even a list perhaps can be created with similar sound words both in Chinese and English as comparison. Furthermore, how to reduce the reliance on similarities once students improve their level of foreign language needs to be known. English, as a media tool is helpful for beginning learners. However, the time boundary about minimizing the use of this strategy gradually needs to be clarified.

About the aspect of teacher’s professional learning, bilingual identity issue needs further research so that it may help foreign language teachers to figure out personal identity quickly and easily. Apart from the challenges that I confronted, other challenges may occur as well due to my limited view. The issue about establishing
rapport with students has more aspects than the three that I have discussed. Instruction from classroom management part is necessary for further study due to its essential role in the foreign language classroom, suggesting finding the categories with more direct evidence. The influence of reward system on students’ motivation needs to be researched deeply so that students may engage with more foreign language learning and achieve high-level of participation.

In this research, the background and setting were special. First, participants are primary school students who have not learnt Chinese language before and classroom teachers have not worked with foreign language before. Therefore, the background of the teaching site is special and further research can chose different backgrounds of schools. Experienced participants with multiple levels of Chinese can be incorporate into a similar research. Besides, teachers’ background is also special. I arrived as a teacher-researcher graduate to Australia without any practice experience. The further research may involve diverse background learners with different levels of experienced teachers as well to increase the generalisability of the research.

7.7 Reflections on becoming a teacher-researcher

Before coming to Australia as a teacher-researcher, I was only a graduate major in TCSL without any practice experience, thinking about what I can do to start my teaching career. At that stage, I was not aware about getting a chance to go abroad and
have such an amazing learning and teaching experience. Comparing the previous graduates who went through culture shock and awkward moments, I improved myself as both a teacher through teaching experience and a researcher through conducting the research. Just like Torre’s (1999) conclusion that teacher research helps bilingual teachers to reflect upon themselves, improve teaching and learning and “interaction with practitioners outside bilingual classrooms and as a tool for professional development” (p. 467).

As a teacher, the improvement had been discussed in chapter 6. I came to Australia with TCSL theoretical knowledge that I learnt in China, and tried to put them into practice. I encountered teaching culture shock, which left me frustrated to be a foreign language teacher. Luckily, in the HDR workshop, I was introduced with a new concept of identity, which is “bilingual” (Pavlenko, 2003). It helped me to build up my self-confidence. Even though I was confronted with several challenges in teaching Chinese, I found ways to overcome them and made progress with teaching students and learning to be a teacher at the same time. I was exposed with local school culture and learnt to build up a rapport with students. I also improve my abilities of classroom management. A Chinese rewards system was established with my efforts. Above all, I developed a new belief and became a better TCSL teacher.

This experience also provided me with a new perspective about researchers. Before being a researcher, I always considered them as boring people who spend most of
time on doing experiment and research in laboratory. I never thought about researchers who can actually go to real contexts to collect data and conduct research. I was inspired by many concepts in HDR workshop, which aims at giving us an opportunity to discuss with colleagues. Then I learnt how to incorporate these ideas into research and explore answers to my research questions step by step. Furthermore, I collected data from various participants and designed questionnaire, interview questions and observation sheet.

It is worth mentioning that I did gain experience during the conduct of questionnaire. It was lack of organization of conducting questionnaire for students due to my high expectation of their cognitive abilities. I thought they could understand each question and answer it seriously. Therefore, I just gave questionnaires to students and asked them to complete it for me. After a while, the classroom teacher came to check their progress and told me that I should guide them to go through questions one by one. I did not take that into mind until I collected all the questionnaires after they finished. To be honest, I was surprised that some of them just ignored the instructions and totally did not follow the question. For instance, I made a list of materials and asked them to tick some that they thought are helpful. Some of them only ticked one and several students did not even notice this question at all and left it blank. Another mistake is about the first question asking them if they have learnt Chinese before, which is my mistake that caused the confusion. It was supposed to survey their Chinese language learning background before I came to this school as a Chinese
teacher. However, they thought I was asking them if they learned Chinese before conducting this questionnaire. Therefore, they calculated the time that learning Chinese with me last year into the answer. Due to this misunderstanding, most of them chose the opinion that they have learnt Chinese, which is not the truth and that lead to the invalidity of this question. Afterwards, I decided to guide students to participate in the second questionnaire for all stages. Another data collection method from which I learnt much is my reflective journals. Every time before a lesson, I wrote a lesson plan and then kept a journal to reflect my teaching after a lesson. These journals were the evidence that I can analyse to find out the advantages and disadvantages of my teaching. During the whole process, I developed my capabilities as TCSL teacher and also as a researcher, which impressed me as well.
REFERENCES


Teaching, 45(2), 250-262.


APPENDICES

Appendix 1. University of Western Sydney Human Ethics Approval

Our Reference: 12/025736

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

21 January 2013

Professor Michael Singh
Centre for Educational Research

Dear Michael

I wish to formally advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved your research proposal H9973 “Stimulating Australian primary students’ learning of Chinese through connections with their first language: Interested-based lesson preparation, methods and materials”, until 31 December 2013 with the provision of a progress report annually and a final report on completion.

Please quote the registration number and titled as indicated above in the subject line on all future correspondence related to this project.

This protocol covers the following researchers:
Michael Singh, Jinghe Han, Dacheng Zhao, Yi Yue

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Dr Anne Abraham
Chair, Human Researcher Ethics Committee
Appendix 2. State Education Research Approval Process (SERAP)

Approval

Ms Yi Yue
UWS Penrith Residential College
Locked Bag 1797
PENRITH NSW 2751
SERAP NO: 2012258

Dear Ms Yue

I refer to your application to conduct in NSW government schools (Western Sydney Region) a research project entitled: Stimulating Australian primary students’ learning of Chinese through connections with their first language: Interest-based lesson preparation methods and materials.

I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved and that you may now contact the principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation.

Your approval will remain valid until 1 April 2014

You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to the schools.

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

- 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 data must also be sought.
- The privacy of the school and the students 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.

Yours sincerely,

Karrie Ikin
School Education Director, The Hills
Western Sydney Region Education Research Manager
8 March 2013

NSW Department of Education & Communities – Western Sydney Region

230
Appendix 3. Participant Information Sheet (Students)

Participant Information Sheet (General)

An information sheet, which is tailored in format and language appropriate for the category of participant - adult, child, young adult, should be developed.

Note: if not all of the text in the row is visible please 'click your cursor' anywhere on the page to expand the row. To view guidance on what is required in each section hover your cursor over the bold text. Further instructions are on the last page of this form.

Project Title: Stimulating Australian primary students’ learning of Chinese through connections with their first language: Interosted-based lesson preparation, methods and materials.

Who is carrying out the study?
The Chinese teacher Miss Yi Yue is carrying out this study.

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Chinese teacher Miss Yi Yue. It will form the basis for the degree of Master of Education (Hons) in the University of Western Sydney under the supervision of Professor Moshad Singh, Dr. Deshong ZHU and Dr. Jinghe Han.

What is the study about?
The purpose is to investigate how a beginning non-native teacher using L2 learners’ first language to select efficacious teaching materials and methods in making Chinese learnable and interesting.

What does the study involve?
This study involved questionnaires, interviews and observations. Questionnaires will be conducted at the last week of each term about 5 minutes. Observation will be conducted during normal Chinese lessons. Interviews will be conducted at the end of each term about 20 minutes. Interviews will be conducted following classroom lessons. There will be no videotaping of performance. During the course of normal Chinese lessons, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire to give feedback about Chinese lessons. The questionnaires will be used as data in the study with your permission.

How much time will the study take?
The whole study will take one year and a half. Questionnaires will be conducted at the last week of each term about 5 minutes. Observation will be conducted during normal Chinese lessons. Interviews will be conducted at the end of each term about 20 minutes. All the people can know the results from Journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, etc.

Will the study benefit me?
All the participants in my project will benefit by learn or connect introductory Chinese and gain a better understanding of modern Chinese culture. You will benefit from me collecting and analyzing this evidence by helping me to become a more informed and skillful teacher.
Will the study involve any discomfort for me?
The study will not cause any discomfort for you. Participation is voluntary. If you decide that you are not to take part in, it will not affect you at all. If you change your mind about participation after the study started, you can withdraw at any time. All the information already collected from you will be destroyed.

How is this study being paid for?
This project is sponsored through UWS.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?
No one will be able to identify you from the results of the study. Only the researchers and her supervisors have access to the original data provided by you with the ethical permission. Your written feedback will be on paper and interviews will be on audio-tape. Paper information will be stored in files in a locked cabinet for 5 years, after which they will be shredded; computer file containing audio-tape interviews will require a password for access and be stored for 5 years, after which they will be completely deleted. Theses to be submitted for the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Honours); there are also likely to be journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, etc.

Can I withdraw from the study?
Participation is entirely voluntary; you are not obliged to be involved and - if you do participate - you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the study?
Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?
When you have read this information, Miss Yi Yue will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact:
Chinese teacher Yi Yue by calling 0435164580 or via E-mail yiyi@vernon@hotmail.com. Professor Michael Singh by calling 0411068539 or via E-mail by mj.sinh@uws.edu.au. Dr. Dacheng ZHAO by calling 0410830357 or via E-mail by d.zhao@uws.edu.au.

What if I have a complaint?
This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H9973.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel 161 2 4736 0229 Fax 161 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.
Appendix 4. Participant Information Sheet (Parents/Caregivers)

Participant Information Sheet (Parent/Caregiver)

An information sheet, which is tailored in format and language appropriate for the category of participant - adult, child, young adult, should be developed.

Note: if not all of the text in the rows visible please 'click your cursor' anywhere on the page to expand the row. To view guidance on what is required in each section 'hover your cursor' over the bold text. Further instructions are on the last page of this form.

Project Title: Stimulating Australian primary students' learning of Chinese through connections with their first language. Interest-based lesson preparation, methods and materials.

Who is carrying out the study?
The Chinese teacher Miss Yi Yue is carrying out this study.

Your child is invited to participate in a study conducted by Chinese teacher Miss Yi Yue. It will form the basis for the degree of Master of Education (Hons) in the University of Western Sydney under the supervision of Professor Michael Singh, Dr. Dacheng Zhao and Dr. Jinghe Han.

What is the study about?
The purpose is to investigate how a beginning non-native teacher using L2 learners' first language to select efficacious teaching materials and methods in making Chinese learnable and interesting.

What does the study involve?
This study involved questionnaires, interviews and observations. Questionnaires will be conducted at the last week of each term about 5 minutes. Observation will be conducted during normal Chinese lessons. Interviews will be conducted at the end of each term about 20 minutes. Interviews will be conducted following classroom lessons. There will be no videotaping of performance. During the course of normal Chinese lessons, your child will be asked to complete a questionnaire to give feedback about Chinese lessons. The questionnaires will be used as data in the study with your permission.

How much time will the study take?
The whole study will take one year and a half. Questionnaires will be conducted at the last week of each term about 5 minutes. Observation will be conducted during normal Chinese lessons. Interviews will be conducted at the end of each term about 20 minutes. All the people can know the results from Journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, etc.
Will the study benefit me?

All the students in this project, including your child will benefit by learn introductory Chinese and gain a better understanding of modern Chinese culture. Your child will benefit from me collecting and analyzing the evidence by helping me to become a more informed and skillful teacher. I am hoping your child will benefit from my learning how to connect my teaching of Chinese with your child’s existing knowledge of English.

Will the study have any discomforts?

The study will not cause any discomfort for the children. Participation is voluntary. If you decide that your child is not to participate, it will not affect your child. If you change your mind about participation after the study started, you can withdraw at any time you want. And any information already collected from your kids will be destroyed.

How is this study being paid for?

This project is sponsored through UWS.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?

No-one will be able to identify you from the results of the study. Only the researchers and her supervisors have access to the original data provided by you with the ethical permission. Your written feedback will be on paper and interviews will be on audio-tape. Paper information will be stored in files in a locked cabinet for 5 years, after which they will be shredded; computer file containing audio-tape interviews will require a password for access and be stored for 5 years, after which they will be completely deleted. Thesis to be submitted for the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Honours) there are also likely to be journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, etc.

Can I withdraw my child from the study?

Your child's participation in the study is entirely voluntary; you are not obliged to consent. The participation of this research is voluntary. They still are the students of this class and learn Chinese as usual. However, their works will not be selected as the data to be used in this research. They will not be chosen as the participants to do the questionnaire.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator’s contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, Miss Yi Yue will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact: Chinese teacher Yi Yue by calling 0435184580 or via E-mail yyiyue120@hotmail.com
Dr. Dacheng ZHAO by calling 0410933257 or via E-mail by d.zhaos@uw.edu.au
Professor Michael Singh by calling 0451065539 or via E-mail by m.j.singh@ucw.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [H9973]
Appendix 5. Participant Information Sheet (Teachers)

### Participant Information Sheet (General)

An information sheet, which is tailored in format and language appropriate for the category of participant - adult, child, young adult, should be developed.

**Note:** if not all of the text in the row is visible please 'click your cursor' anywhere on the page to expand the row. To view guidance on what is required in each section ‘hover your cursor’ over the bold text. Further instructions are on the last page of this form.

**Project Title:** Stimulating Australian primary students' learning of Chinese through connections with their first language: Interest-based lesson preparation, methods and materials.

**Who is carrying out the study?**
The Chinese teacher Miss Yi Yue is carrying out this study.

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Chinese teacher Miss Yi Yue. It will form the basis of the degree of Master of Education (Hons) in the University of Western Sydney. The study is being supervised by Professor Michael Singh, Dr. Dacheng Zhao and Dr. Jinghe Han.

**What is the study about?**
The purpose is to investigate how a beginning non-native teacher using L2 learners’ first language to select efficacious teaching materials and methods in making Chinese learnable and interesting.

**What does the study involve?**
The study involved questionnaires, interviews and observations. Questionnaires will be conducted at the last week of each term about 5 minutes. Observation will be conducted during normal Chinese lessons. Interviews will be conducted at the end of each term about 20 minutes. Interviews will be conducted following classroom lessons. There will be no videotaping of performance. During the course of normal Chinese lessons, you will be asked to observe the teacher-researcher’s teaching practice and student’s performance once every two weeks, as well as provide written feedback by completing a feedback form while you are observing. You will be interviewed to give your opinion about teacher-researcher’s teaching practice. Interview transcripts and written feedback will be used as data in the study with your permission.

**How much time will the study take?**
The whole study will take one year and a half. Questionnaires will be conducted at the last week of each term about 5 minutes. Observation will be conducted during normal Chinese lessons. Interviews will be conducted at the end of each term about 20 minutes. All the people can know the results from Journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, etc.

**Will the study benefit me?**
All the participants in my project will benefit by learn or connect introductory Chinese and gain a better understanding of modern Chinese culture. You will benefit from me collecting and analyzing this evidence by helping me to become a more informed and skilful teacher.
Will the study involve any discomfort for me?
The study will not cause any discomfort for the teachers. Participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher. If you change your mind about participation after the study started, you can withdraw any time you want. And any information already collected from you will be destroyed.

How is this study being paid for?
This project is sponsored through UWS.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?
No-one will be able to identify you from the results of the study. Only the researchers and her supervisors have access to the original data provided by you with the ethical permission. Your written feedback will be on paper and interviews will be on audio-tape. Paper information will be stored in files in a locked cabinet for 5 years, after which they will be shredded; computer file containing audio-tape interviews will require a password for access and be stored for 5 years, after which they will be completely deleted. Thesis to be submitted for the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Honours); there are also likely to be journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, etc.

Can I withdraw from the study?
Participation is entirely voluntary; you are not obliged to be involved and - if you do participate - you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the study?
Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator’s contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?
When you have read this information, Miss Yi Yue will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact:
Chinese teacher Yi Yue by calling 0435164580 or via E-mail yyiyu@on.com
Dr. Dacheng ZHANG by calling 0410080387 or via E-mail by d.zhang@uws.edu.au
Professor Michael Singh by calling 0451065539 or via E-mail by m.singh@uws.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?
This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [HE9/73].

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humansethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.
Appendix 6. Participant Consent Form (Students)

Participant Consent Form

This is a project specific consent form. It restricts the use of the data collected to the named project by the named investigator.

Note: If not all of the text in the row is visible please click your cursor anywhere on the page to expand the row. To view guidance on what is required in each section ‘hover your cursor’ over the bold text.

Project Title: Stimulating Australian primary students' learning of Chinese through connections with their first language: Interest-based lesson preparation, methods and materials.

I, ........................................, consent to participate in the research project titled [Stimulating Australian primary students' learning of Chinese through connections with their first language: Interest-based lesson preparation, methods and materials].

I acknowledge that:

I have read the participant information sheet [or where appropriate, have had read to me] and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher(s).

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to do the questionnaire based on my feeling about mandarin learning at the last week of each term.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s now or in the future.

Signed: 

Name: 

Date: 

Return Address: 11.21 School of Education, University of Western Sydney, Locked Bag 1797, Penrith NSW 2751

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Approval number is: H9973

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 7. Participant Consent Form (Parents/Caregivers)

Participant Consent Form for Parents/Caregivers

This is a project specific consent form. It restricts the use of the data collected to the named project by the named investigators. Where projects involve young people capable of consenting, a separate consent form should be developed. A parental consent form is still required.

Note: if not all of the text in the boxes visible please ‘click your cursor’ anywhere on the page to expand the row. To view guidance on what is required in each section ‘hover your cursor’ over the bold text.

Project Title: Stimulating Australian primary students’ learning of Chinese through connections with their first language. Interest-based lesson preparation, methods and materials

I, ____________________________, give consent for my child ____________________________ to participate in the research project titled [Stimulating Australian primary students’ learning of Chinese through connections with their first language: Interest-based lesson preparation, methods and materials].

I acknowledge that:

I have read the participant information sheet [or where appropriate, ‘have had read to me’] and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my child’s involvement in the project with the researchers.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I have discussed participation in the project with my child and my child agrees to their participation in the project.

I understand that my child’s involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about my child will be used in any way that reveals my child’s identity.

I understand that my child’s participation in this project is voluntary. I can withdraw my child from the study at any time, without affecting their academic standing or relationship with the school and they are free to withdraw their participation at any time.

I consent to the participation of my kid to do the questionnaires based on the feeling about Mandarin learning at the last week of each term.

Signed (Parent/carer): ____________________________ Signed (child): ____________________________

Name: ____________________________ Name: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Where projects involve young people capable of consenting, a separate consent form should be developed. A parental consent form is still required.

Return Address: 11121 school of education, University of Western Sydney, Locked Bag 1797 Penrith NSW 2751

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Approval number is: H9973

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 8. Participant Consent Form (Teachers)

Participant Consent Form

This is a project specific consent form. It restricts the use of the data collected to the named project by the named investigators.

Note: if not all of this text is visible please click your cursor anywhere on the page to expand the text. To view guidance on what is required in each section hover your cursor over the bold text.

Project Title: Stimulating Australian primary students' learning of Chinese through connections with their first language: interest-based lesson preparation, methods and materials.

I, __________________________, consent to participate in the research project titled [Stimulating Australian primary students' learning of Chinese through connections with their first language: interest-based lesson preparation, methods and materials].

I acknowledge that:

I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, ‘have had read to me’) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researchers.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to observe Miss Yue Yi’s teaching practice and students’ performance during Mandarin lessons once every two weeks, and complete a evaluation form while observing. I consent to be interviewed at the end of the study. I give my opinions about Miss Yue Yi’s teaching practice and students’ performance. I consent that my interview can be audio recorded.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researchers now or in the future.

Signed: __________________________

Name: __________________________

Date: __________________________

Return Address: 1.1.21 school of education, University of Western Sydney, Locked Bag 1797, Penrith NSW 2751

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Approval number is: H9673

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 9. Interview Schedule (Classroom teacher)

1. Can you tell me how long you have been a teacher?

2. Can you tell me your opinion what the key characteristics of primary school students are?

3. Can you tell me the basic capabilities that a primary school teacher should have?

4. Can you tell me how do you choose materials for students? What are your rules of choosing materials?

5. What do you think about the materials that I chose for students?

6. What are your preferred methods for teaching primary school students?

7. What do you think about the methods that I used in my Chinese lessons?

8. Generally, what teaching skills do non-native language teachers need to have? How can they develop their skills?

9. Can you tell me in your opinion how to engage with students in learning? And in learning Chinese in particular?

10. Which part or moments in the Chinese lesson impressed you most? Please tell me the reasons for this?

11. How do you think the students’ performed in learning Chinese? Do you feel that I made Chinese easy to learn using my teaching methods?

12. Can you point out the pros and cons of my Chinese lessons? Could you please
give me some suggestions about how to improve my teaching?
Questionnaire 1 (Term 1, 2013)

Name:  (1st name only)
Class:

Circle your answer. You may choose one or several answers or write down short answers.

1. Have I learned Chinese before?

2. I found the following materials are helpful for learning Chinese?

Power point       Pictures     Videos    Classroom displays    Smartboard activities   Songs    Worksheet   Games    Flashcards
I also recommend:

3. Classroom displays helped me to remember Chinese words (e.g. Chinese labels for door, window)

4. I found the worksheets are easy to do. (e.g. paper-cutting., matching, etc.)

5. The topic/s I liked learning about Chinese in last term?

Chinese New Year       Greetings        Schoolbag       Classroom

6. These activities help me to learn Chinese in an easy way.

7. I like to learn some Chinese that related to my daily life.

8. I like to learn some Chinese that is related to what I am learning in other subjects.
9. I like to learn Chinese words (e.g. greeting words in Chinese, etc.)

10. I like to learn Chinese culture, such as Chinese New Year.

11. The lesson that impressed you most was
   Chinese New Year  Greetings  School  Classroom  schoolbag

12. Chinese is very interesting.

13. I like to learn Chinese.

14. I did well in the activities in my Chinese lessons (e.g. games, smartboard exercise, etc.)

15. My impression on Chinese so far is…

16. I would love to continue Chinese learning next year.

17. The topic/s I would like to learn in the following Chinese lessons are? (e.g. what do I want to learn in Chinese? What aspects of Chinese culture I want to know about are?)

18. In the future if I continue learning Chinese, I expect to be able to…?
Appendix 11. Questionnaire for students (term 2, 2013)

Questionnaire (term 2, 2013)

Name: (1st name only)
Class:

Circle your answer. You may choose one or several answers. If you choose the last two faces, please write down the reason.

1. Have I learned Chinese before? (Only for 3/4R)
   😊😊😊😊😊

2. I like the topic of Tones and I am interested in tones.
   😊😊😊😊😊

3. I feel the game helped me to memorize words and raised my interest in learning Chinese (e.g. the guessing game).
   😊😊😊😊😊

4. I like watching video to learn Chinese culture (e.g. video of four treasures of study).
   😊😊😊😊😊

5. I enjoyed the group work in the revision lesson of family members.
   😊😊😊😊😊

6. I feel sound similarities between English and Chinese help me to memorize Chinese words better. (e.g. little sister in Chinese sounds like ‘May’, grandpa sounds like ‘yeah’).
   😊😊😊😊😊

7. I prefer to know more about modern life in China rather than Ancient China.
8. I prefer to learn the unique part of Chinese culture rather than the same part as Australia.

9. I want to learn to speak Chinese fluently.

10. I want to speak Chinese in my daily life.

11. I like to use English to help me learn Chinese.

12. I like to have a revision lesson after learning new knowledge.

13. I like to practice Chinese words in the following methods.  
   - Power Point  
   - Pictures  
   - Videos  
   - Classroom displays  
   - Smartboard activities  
   - Songs  
   - Worksheet  
   - Games  
   - Flashcards

14. I like to work with my classmates in activities.
Appendix 12. Unstructured observational feedback (Rosemary)

Topic of the lesson: School Words
Observer: R. RICHARDSON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Merits</th>
<th>Need to improve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching materials</td>
<td>Excellent use of IWB material</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E.g. evaluate the choice of materials,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the way of using them, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching methods</td>
<td>Games are a great idea!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E.g. evaluate the use of the teaching</td>
<td>Tell them the purpose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methods, impediments to the process,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the results)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour of students</td>
<td>Sometimes unsettled.</td>
<td>Ensure they are all selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Evaluate the responses from students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching skills</td>
<td>Yi speaks clearly.</td>
<td>Instruction needs to be clearer. Lesson need to have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E.g. evaluate the teacher’s instructions,</td>
<td></td>
<td>clear beginning, middle and end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interactions with students, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views about the lesson</td>
<td>Children really enjoy Yi’s lesson.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Please provide other feedback about this</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lesson)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

246
## Appendix 13. Unstructured observational feedback (Halina)

Topic of the lesson: School words  
Observer: Halina Bernacki

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Merits</th>
<th>Need to improve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Teaching materials (E.g. evaluate the choice of materials, the way of using them, etc.) | Whiteboard prep.  
Relevant & engaging  
Flashcards  
Worksheets  
Video | |
| Teaching methods (E.g. evaluate the use of the teaching methods, impediments to the process, the results) | Variety of strategies used.  
Pace change in activities utilized effectively.  
Order of activities well thought out.  
Questioning to ensure instructions are understood. | Instructions need to be given when facing groups. |
| Behaviour of students (Evaluate the responses from students) | Students generally engaged well.  
Some calling out but handled well. | Need to control group, especially during game.  
Stop for silence from all. |
| Teaching skills (E.g. evaluate the teacher’s instructions, interactions with students, etc.) | Instructions were clear and well timed.  
Engagement with students was excellent. | |
| Views about the lesson (Please provide other feedback about this lesson) | Planning and delivery was excellent. Students were productively engaged for the entire lesson. |   |
Appendix 14. Interview Transcript 1

Interview 1

Interviewee: Rosemary (represented by R)
Interviewer: Yue Yi (represented by Y)
Date: 25/06/2013

Introduction of interviewee
Rosemary is one of the two assistant principals, who in charge of junior students (kindergarten to year 4). Also, she is the generous person that gives me a lift to school every Tuesday. In other word, we have deep friendship in private. I was also impressed by her relationship with the students. Most of the time, she is just like their friends and students like to talk to her about everything. However, when comes to the behavior issue, she becomes a strict teacher and students listen to her totally. It is definitely the model that I want to learn from.

Y: Today is the 25th of June 2013. I’m Yue Yi, a teacher-researcher, who is doing a research project about Chinese teaching in Australia. Having a interview with classroom teacher is a part of my data collection. Now, I am going to interview the classroom teacher of Year 3 and 4, Rosemary.

Y: Can you tell me how long you have been a teacher?

R: I have been a teacher for approximately for 30 years.

Y: Can you tell me your opinion what the key characteristics of primary school students are?

R: Key characteristics of primary school students vary. Every child is different. But
on the whole, they just want to be loved and nurtured.

Y: Can you tell me the basic capabilities that a primary school teacher should have?

R: Number 1 capability would be patience. And then, a lot of knowledge. And…and…providing that knowledge or facilitating that knowledge to the learners.

Y: Can you tell me how do you choose materials for students? What are your rules of choosing materials?
R: Do you mean teaching resources?
Y: Yes.
R: I…am…always trying match the resources to the interesting and ability level of the child for most thing.

Y: What do you think about the materials that I chose for students?
R: Towards the end as your progress, they became much more relevant and much more interesting, so that was great. They were very engaged.

Y: What are your preferred methods for teaching primary school students? The teaching methods?
R: Um, you need to keep it. Um. Whatever method you use and whichever method you prefer, you can’t keeping use that method. You gotta to be diverse and keep them interested. But technology seems to the one at the moment. Using as much technology as you can.

Y: What do you think about the methods that I used in my Chinese lessons?
R: Well, I think they were great. At the beginning, there wasn’t much structure. But now, towards the end, there were lots of structure. You seemed to have a beginning and middle and end. And you engaged the students in the activities that you were doing at the whiteboard. And you also now providing a backup plan in case the technology fails.

Y: Generally, what teaching skills do non-native language teachers need to have?
How can they develop their skills? Can you give us some suggestions?
R: Well, I think like we’ve talked about patience thing. (Y: Yes.) And also having a backup plan in case things go wrong. And also finding where each the student are and how you can engage individual student. Because if you get…if you engage the key members of the class, then you can engage all of them.

Y: Can you tell me in your opinion how to engage with students in learning? And in learning Chinese in particular?
R: it’s a hard one. I think…to make it relevant. What you have been doing is great. So giving them, you know, key phrases, and greetings and then making it relevant to them like what you did last week with the animals. Um, because they all have a dog or they all have a cat. And (blah, blah) we did before. So make it relevant to them. If the words they don’t have any contact with, it’s useless. But You’ve done a great job, Yi.
Y: Thank you.
R: Oh, you are welcome.

Y: And which part or moments in the Chinese lesson impressed you most? Please tell me the reasons for this?
R: Well, lots of them impressed me. Um, just thinking back…just last week, how engage they were with the animals. And also when they were able to count to 10, that impressed me that they grabbed it so quickly. Um, what else… and the culture stuff as well. We’ve been learning about the, you know, the different aspects of Chinese culture. So we’ve got to see your school and that sort of dissipated, a quite few of preconceived (not clear) we had about Chinese schools. Because you do see on TV that they are very poor or they are very… but they are not. They are just… (Y: yep.) You school is amazing.
Y: Just a few of the schools, they are poor, like in the Western region.
R: We have a few poor as well.
Y: Yep, but most of them, they are beautiful, I think.
R: Um, very much.

Y: How do you think the students’ performed in learning Chinese?
R: Better than me.
Y: No.
R: They... they... um. Especially across the school, there are quite a few children especially in Kindergarten. The younger they are, they seem to be able to absorb more. But I always impressed with how quickly they caught on. They do a great job. And it is partly due to you and your fantastic teaching.

Y: Do you feel that I made Chinese easy to learn using my teaching methods?
R: In the beginning, no. Towards the end, yes. You've certainly improved on your journey. It is been a great journey to watch.
Y: OK. Thank you.

Y: Can you point out the pros and cons of my Chinese lessons? Could you please give me some suggestions about how to improve my teaching?
R: We basically have done that already with pointing out you do need to go over what you have done in the previous lesson to engage them. And you need to focus on what you are going to be doing and why you are going to be doing. And then you teach it. And at the end, you consolidate it and go over what you have done. It’s a lot of repetition but kids need that. So and as well as the behavior management has come along. In the beginning, you were very shy and you didn’t want to say stop talking, be quiet. But, because our kids are not as respectful as Chinese students would be. But you’ve, you’ve. Last week especially, you stopped and waited “That’s enough. We need to move on”. So anything that I’ve told you to do, you’ve done. And it’s beautiful. So, well done, Yi.

Y: Thank you. Thank you for your time.
Appendix 15. Interview Transcript 2

Interview 2

Interviewee: Halina (represented by H)
Interviewer: Yue Yi (represented by Y)
Date: 25/06/2013

Introduction of the interviewee
Halina is one of the two assistant principals. She is in charge of stage 3 (year 5 and year 6). She is also the classroom of year 6. When I first went to this school, I was a little bit afraid of her because I thought she is a very tough teacher. However, after two terms of teaching, she became the one that I respect most. I totally want to be a teacher like her, who is strict with students and also build a fabulous rapport with them. Students are really like her and admire her. She also is the most supportive teacher. Not only did she help me in the appropriate time, but also offered me load of suggestions that make me feel more confident.

Y: Today is the 25th of June 2013. I’m Yue Yi, a teacher-researcher, who is doing a research project about Chinese teaching in Australia. Having a interview with classroom teacher is a part of my data collection. Now, I am going to interview the classroom teacher of Year 6, Halina. Can you tell me how long you have been a teacher?
H: Over 40 years.

Y: Can you tell me your opinion what the key characteristics of primary school students are?
H: They are very enquiring. They open to a lot of new ideas very much. So they also, also need a lot of guidance. And they need a lot of structure, I think, as well with primary school. I think that will cover that one.

Y: Can you tell me the basic capabilities that a primary school teacher should
have?
H: Number one, they have to like children. It is really important that they really have a feel for the children themselves. They also have to be open to new ideas all the time, especially the changes we have in education these days. They have to be prepared to give up their family times as well. It is one of these things that with teaching it is not a 9 to 3 job. So they have to be able to organize themselves well enough in order to fit everything of things. I have to be flexible, be very flexible as well apart from all the knowledge they supposed to have about the various curriculum and syllabus things. So they should be doing all of that and constantly, constantly upgrading themselves and being aware of new things that going on.

Y: OK. Can you tell me how do you choose materials for students? What are your rules of choosing materials?
H: I teach differentially. I teach the child not the class. I’ve never, never taught class anyway. You look at the needs of the students and you select thing for the students. You are restricted by the amount of funding you get obviously, because there are be a lot of things I’d like to get but I can’t have. Because of the resources, you know, the cost of resources. But generally, that’s how I do. I look at the students first what their needs are and then see how we can get materials organized for them. These days, with the Internet, there is no reason why you can’t have the specific things for kids, for children. You just go on the Internet and you can find something that will suit those children perfectly. It’s so much out there. So, that’s what I do.

Y: What do you think about the materials that I chose for students?
H: Excellent. Excellent. The variety of media you use especially for the students. Well, it’s not just paper. It’s not just, you know, the whiteboard all the time. You gave them a lot of, a lot of different ways to work with things. You gave them handouts. You gave them cards. All of that sort of thing, absolutely excellent. Outstanding, which is very very good.

Y: Thank you. And what are your preferred methods for teaching primary school students?
H: generally, I like working with groups. Group works. I work with either ability
groups or social groups or interests groups. That’s how I usually work with my class rather than one big group. Unless there is an outcome that needs to be taught to all of them. And you do whole class lessons, or in share reading for example when you read the same text and you discuss the same text. But generally, it’s in groups. In groups whether students are in little groups or pairs, things like that. So, that’s the way I prefer.

Y: And what do you think about the methods that I used in my Chinese lessons?
H: I think method is good. I think you could be a little bit, a little bit more adventurous. Look at, perhaps a little bit of group work if it suits, you know, if it suits your lesson. That would be very good while they are constantly just listening to you while they are actually coming up with something themselves and you will (not clear) to them, that’s sort of thing. But, in delivering the language lesson, it’s (not clear) the language part of the lesson. I think the way you are doing is really good coz you use a lot of repetition for them. And you gave them a lot of different ways of learning the vocabulary they need to learn. So that’s really good. It works well.

Y: Thank you. Generally, what teaching skills do non-native language teachers need to have? Could you think about how they can develop their skills?
H: Oh, goodness. Well, you need to have your general teaching skills. So you need to aware of the whole group to begin with. So you need to be able to control the group to start off with. You need to able to motivate the group. It doesn’t matter whether you teaching language or anything else. It’s always your basic, your basic thing. The other thing that you need to have also is trying to develop some rapport with individual student. For you, it’s difficult, because you come infrequently. So if you can have them every day, it will be nicer. Well, I think we spoke about that before, it would be good if you knew their names, that sort of thing. (Y: Yes.) Um, that helps in your teaching, in language teaching. And I think it also helps, it helps if your English works on your English as well. With you specifically, class control is really important. You need to make sure that when you are speaking, they are not. Never. All right? You need to establish that sort of thing because they wouldn’t hear what you say if they are not listening. So that’s really important. And the repetition that you do was very good. You were teaching them to speak the language. That is really good. That is
something you need to have, and you’ve already do have.

Y: It’s like to be more tough?

H: Well, you have to be if you want the students to learn. If they are not listening they are not going to learn. (Y: Yes, that’s true.) If they are sitting and talking to each other while you are speaking, then they are not hearing what you have to say. (Y: Yep.) So, yes, you do, you do need to have that discipline. It doesn’t have to be mean or anything. You know, they don’t have to be scared of you. But they have to understand that when you speak, they don’t or someone else’s speaking, they don’t speak. Because, they miss out a lot, they just don’t hear it.

Y: Yes. And can you tell me in your opinion how to engage with students in learning? And in learning Chinese in particular?

H: Well, you motivate them. You get them interested. You find out what it is, what it is to motivate them. What it is to make them want to learn. So you have to somehow work out what it is that makes them want to learn the language. What it is that makes them want to have you in front of them. It’s a difficult thing. You can do all sort of different things. You can show them the video and that will be enough to get them going and want to do some more. You can make them do role play. (Y: Role play, yes.) And activities some sort, that is really good as well. And that motivate the whole class, as well as the children to select. You can, you can anything you like, but you need to find out what it is that they are interested in. And make that, make that the beginning of your lesson. Well, you don’t have ‘Well we have Miss Yue today, so we are gonna doing Chinese’. They need to be going ‘Well, we have Miss Yue today. Fantastic! Because we are going to do this, this and this.’ The games that you played is one motivation, is good motivation. Well, they are saying they can play some sort of games and learn at the same time. So, it’s to get them and that’s the big word, motivation. (Y: Motivation.) Yep.

Y: And which part or moments in the Chinese lesson impressed you most? Please tell me the reasons for this?

H: I think your organization of the lesson that really impressed me. Well, you have movement going on all the time where you are not just standing there and talking to them. You talked to them, you showed them a video, you gave them a handout. So
you’ve got movement going all the time and they are changing from one to another. And it’s always good. If you are doing something, whatever you are doing, make them want to do more and stop, stop and move on. So they are always going to be wanting to go back to the other thing. That works very well. But with you, it’s just the fact that you use so many different media to deliver your lesson, to deliver basic the same message. That is really really good. Really good.

Y: Thank you. And how do you think the students’ performed in learning Chinese? Do you feel that I made Chinese easy to learn using my teaching methods?
H: Yes, I think your methods are fine. They performed well. I think with my class, I think some of them still want to laugh at pronunciation of Chinese, which they shouldn’t be doing. (Y: Yes.) Yep, that shouldn’t be happening. They should been understanding they are learning another language. There is nothing funny about another language and the pronunciation of another language. Spoke to them about that, because when we went to the high school, and they had a Japanese teacher. She is teaching Japanese. Totally different, because Japanese sounds funny to English speaker, too. I supposed like English sounds funny to other people. But they didn’t laugh there while they were laughing during the lesson with you, which I spoke to them many times. It’s just their attitudes for some reason. I can’t put my finger on it why they are laughing because they shouldn’t be by now. They’ve had the lesson for a while. So they shouldn’t be laughing at the way you pronounce something any more. I don’t know whether is because you are actually Chinese, and you are saying very properly whereas the Japanese teaches Japen, teaches Japanese in high school. She is actually Anglo but she teaches Japanese. So it might be that, I’m not certain. It could be that case, because your pronunciation is just did perfect, you are Chinese obviously, whereas she might have a slight Anglo sound to the words. That might be making them giggling a little bit. But they are picking words and as with your assessments did at the end of lesson, as you evaluate what you have done, you can see they are learning the words. So you are getting there, it’s just perhaps me who doesn’t like the fact that they are laugh. They can laugh, but not at the pronunciation words. I don’t think they should be doing that. But, cut the long story short, yes, they do learn the words, as you know, when you evaluated at the end of your lesson. So, they are getting there.
Y: Can you point out the pros and cons of my Chinese lessons? Like give me some suggestions?
H: Yep. Absolutely number one, number one you need to control the class totally, absolute total control. Don’t allow them to speak when you are speaking ever. So you have that going straight away. You can be (not clear), you can be laugh, you can do all of those things, you don’t have to be cranky or anything like that, but you must have them watching you and listening to you and no talking when someone else is talking, so that’s perhaps one of the things that you should work on a lot more.
Y: Like when I see someone is talking, so like I should stop and wait?
H: Absolutely. Don’t wait. Remind them. (Y: Remind them? ) You can use that. It’s one method that I use sometimes while if they are talking, I just stand and wait and don’t speak any more and wait, but with some children, you could be waiting for a long time. So you decide how long you want to wait if you want to use that method. Like 10 seconds, 15 seconds, whatever it is. And then, tell them, you know, you are trying to speak, or we are trying get lesson down here and you are interrupting. You can remind them that it’s not polite to be talking when someone else is. You can do that sort of things, just general teaching of children in terms of the expectations of their behavior when something, when your lesson is going on that part of your lesson. And as I said before, it would be good if you can do something about the names. So they are not just a big group when you actually say like ‘Well done, Sophie’ instead of just general ‘well done’. So that’s important to children ...(not clear)... You actually do name them or give them a nickname if you want to. It doesn’t matter if they know whom you are talking to. That’s really important that you talk to the individual student. That’s something you should work on. You should work on that. In terms of your preparation, what you are doing with the lessons, you are doing absolutely wonderful job, really well. It’s really, really good that you prepared everything very well. So and you engaged the children. You got them working all the time except when they were talking. But that’s just general. They do that with other teachers, not just you. So, it’s not just you. They will do with the some other teachers. It’s something that you need to do with the class just make sure that if you don’t like them talking, then stop them straight away which way you like, whatever it’s comfortable for you. Have a rest, wait, they are still talking then you have to say
‘Ryan, whatever it is, Ryan, I’d like you to pay attention now because you are gonna miss out what we are doing next.’ or whatever. That part of it, you need to work on. Otherwise, you are doing everything, everything that I think is really, really good. Really good. True, you are. No, I’m not saying that just for the tape.

Y: Thank you. Thank you for your time.