The basic unit of the Chinese language is the zi (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each zi has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string zi together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

This week: Words about management

**效**

Pronunciation: xiao (Putonghua, 4th tone), haau (Cantonese, 6th tone)

Basic meaning: effect, reaction

Effect (xiao guo = effect-result). Medicine/advice is 有效 (you xiao = has effect = effective/fruitful) or 無效 (wu xiao = no-effect = ineffective/fruitless).

Company's 加薪 (jia xin = add-salary = salary-raise), 裁員 (cai yuan = cut-member = sacking/downsizing) 即時生效 (ji shi sheng xiao = this-time/moment-yield-effect = are carried out immediately). Reforms 立竿見影 (li gan jian ying = stand-bamboo-pole-see-shadow = show effect immediately), raising 效率 (xiao lu = effect-efficiency), 效益 (xiao yi = effect-benefit/gain).

骨牌效應 (gu pai xiao ying = bone-tile-effect-echo = domino effect) = 連鎖效應 (lian suo xiao ying = linked-chain-effect-echo = chain effect/reaction). 蝴蝶效應 (hu die xiao ying = butterfly effect) explains chaos theory.