peace one woman under a roof

quarrel two women

gossip three women

home pig under a roof

father two hands and two sticks

to sing bird and mouth

to think brain plus heart

worship man kneeling

repentance heart and mother

hermit man and mountains

prisoner man in a box

Ideas are expressed vocally by a series of sounds linked together to form words and sentences, ordinarily meaning the same to the eyes, when they are read as they do to the ear when heard.

The sounds used in the entire language can be written with only about 400 Romanized syllables. Since this is not enough syllables various modulations or tonal changes are applied to basic syllables--getting about 1,500 distinguishable sound combinations. This is what makes learning the Chinese spoken language difficult.

The greatest difficulty faced by foreigners studying Chinese is the correct usage of tones. Innumerable comic situations have arisen because of the misuse of tones by a foreigner. A minister at the end of a service raised his hands to heaven, and said, in a very solemn and impressive voice, what he thought was "Now let us have silent prayer." What he really did was to make a slight error in tone, instead he said, "Now let us sharpen our knizes."

The pronunciation of the language differs throughout