

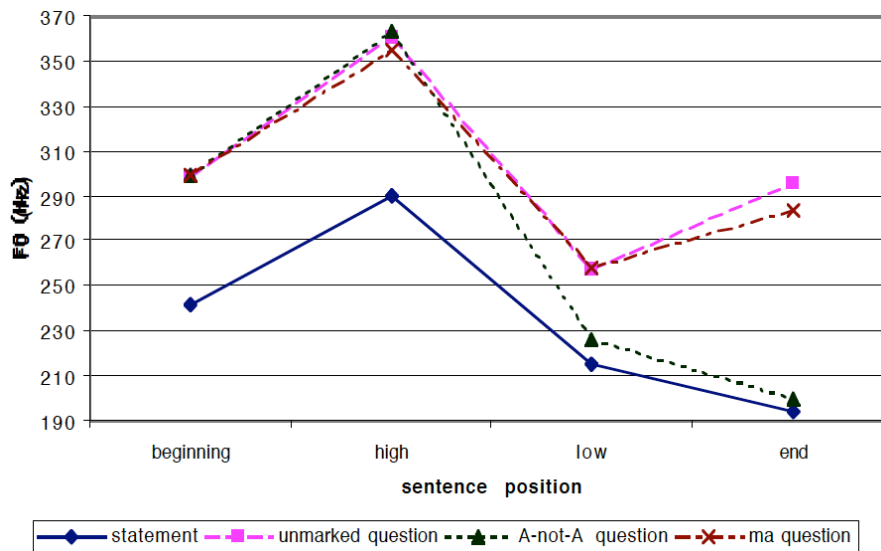
Beijing-accented English, like Beijing Mandarin, is notable for its strong r-colouring (aka “rhoticity”). That is, /r/ after vowels is strongly articulated with the tongue curling back into a “retroflex” position; usually this feels as though the tongue is pointing up, with the tip aimed at the hard palate, behind the alveolar ridge. This causes the tongue to carry residual tension all the time, which presents as a kind of cupping of the tongue and a mild tensing of the tongue root to native North American English speakers.

This causes the resonance to stay generally in the back of the mouth and the throat, rather than a bright forward quality (like voice teachers are frequently encouraging their students to adopt!)

Final /n/ is typically dropped, and the preceding vowel is nasalized. This gives the accent as a whole a somewhat nasal tone, compared to most native English speakers.

Generally speaking, there is limited lip movement in the accent, and the focus is on the tongue.

In terms of intonation, though Mandarin itself is a tonal language, with each syllable having its own tone, Mandarin sentences also have a general melodic pattern that is quite similar to the pattern of English. Most notably different is that, while Mandarin questions do go up at end like English ones do, question sentences invariably begin significantly higher than statement sentences. It is helpful to remember to “pitch up” a few notes, musically speaking. (The speaker in the chart below begins her question phrases about a perfect 4th above her statements.)



Consonant	Example	Mandarin	Notes
INITIAL CONSONANTS			
voiced TH /ð/	this, that, then	ㄊ, ㄊㄗ	Dentalized /d/, tongue on the back of the upper teeth
th /θ/	thing thought	ㄒ	Dentalized /s/, tongue aiming airstream toward teeth
thr /θɹ/	three, through	ㄒㄌ	Tongue curling back, though not enough to make [ʃɹ]
h /h/	how, who	ㄒ	“hock a loogie” sound, as in <i>Bach</i> , <i>loch</i> , <i>chutzpah</i>
v	very	ㄨ	A “soft” /v/, where the lip and teeth don’t quite touch.
ch /tʃ/	chew, choose	ㄊㄕ	A retroflex “ch”, with tongue curling back
r /ɹ/	red, rude	ㄌㄗ	Either retroflex, or a brief “zh” like <i>leisure</i> , <i>beige</i>
sh, zh /ʃʒ/	shy, rouge	ㄕ, ㄗ	Like our sound, but more curled back (retroflex)
FINAL CONSONANTS			
l /ɫ/	all, well	ㄌ, ㄨ	like an “o” or “w” but with no lip action
d_t	would_tell	ㄉㄠ ㄊ	“Ghost vowel” where final plosives meet initial consonants
-b, -d, -g	lab, had, bag	ㄅ, ㄊ, ㄍ	final plosives are devoiced
-bz, -dz, -gz	labs, beds, bags	ㄅㄗ, ㄊㄗ, ㄍㄗ	plurals of final plosives are also devoiced
-th /θ/	with, bath	ㄒ, ㄈ	more experienced speakers may do “th” correctly
-TH /ð/	bathe, breathe	ㄗ	
-v	live, have	ㄈ	devoices to “f”
-z	has, was	ㄗ	devoices to “s”
final R	here, there	ㄌ	very strong, curling back (retroflex) R
-n	man, one	—	nasalize the preceding vowel [mã, wã]

Phoneme	Lexical Set	Mandarin	Notes Examples
/i/ ee	Fleece, Read	[i]	plea, meet, read, dream, each
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please leave the beach before you sneeze. 2. Ethan's teeth need cleaning each evening. 			
/ɪ/ -y	Happy, Quickly	[i]	pretty, lady, chassis, jazzy, foamy
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Silly Jessie was pretty lazy and very funny. 2. The city is dirty, smelly and extremely sexy, baby. 			
/ɪ/ ih	Kit, This	[i]	hid, miss, fill, rim, sing, rich
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which Hilton sister will sin with the richest celebrity? 2. Phil isn't really living in Pittsburgh in winter, is he? 			
/ɛ/ e	Dress, Fellow	[æ]	met, bed, left, bless, edge, hem, neck, egg
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eddy sent ten red roses to Cecily. 2. Whenever Jeff gets dressed, he forgets his red necktie. 			
/æ/ a	Trap, Actors	[a]	flap, jab, cram, bag, sack,
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Naturally, the cat and the rat acted badly. 2. The man made a gaff as he calculated the ant's mass. 			
/æ.ɪ/ -arr-	Guarantee	[a]	Larry, parasite, harassment, barrel, carrier
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harriet parried Barry's frantic marriage proposals in the carriage. 2. The paratrooper shot an arrow in the arid landscape. 			
/a/ ah	Bath, Command	[a]	path, dance, brass, daft, laugh, basket, branch
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The calf stood halfway in the path. 2. The castle staff were members of the lower class. 			
/ɑ/ aa	Palm, Father	[ɑ]	garage, balm, aha, bra, taco, bourgeois, mirage, piranha
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Papa listened to the Bach sonata while he ate his taco under the palm tree. 2. The macho maharaja calmly enjoyed his massage. 			
/ɒ/ o	Lot, Cloth*, not	[ɒ]	not, rod, rock, bog, profit, honest, loft off, Austria, cost, gone
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The orange moth was extremely fond of cloth. 2. Stop waffling Tom and buy the odd clock. 			

/ɔ/ <i>aw</i>	Thought, Drawing	[ɒ]	taught, bought, applaud, hawk, small
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paul taught his daughter to crawl when she was small. 2. Never applaud a debauched and naughty performer. 			
/u/ <i>oo</i>	Goose, moods	[ʊ, ü]	scoop, boom, boost, move, tomb, groove
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The youth with the loose tooth will choose to move to Vancouver. 2. The rude moose hunter wore his toque as he smooched with Sue. 			
/ju/ <i>yoo</i>	Music Tune, Duke	[jʊ]	cue, few, cube, huge, dupe, new, tune, stew, obtuse, deuce
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The singer resumed the tune as the funeral director gave him is cue. 2. It's your duty to review the human rights bill as a neutral and lucid student. 			
/ʊ/ <i>uu</i>	Foot, good	[ʊ]	put, soot, good, wool, could
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Should you put sooty candles in wooden pulpits when they could catch fire? 2. The pussycat on the cushion near the book watched the wolf eat the pudding. 			
/ʌ/ <i>u</i>	Strut, luck	[ə, ʌ]	cup, rub, hum, pulse, butter, done
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The young monk hummed as he hurried uphill. 2. Her mother fussed about adding a touch of butter to the cup of flour. 			
/ʌ.ɪ/ <i>-urr</i>	Hurry	[ɜɹ, ʌ]	curry, current, currency, furrow, hurry, hurricane, occurrence
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Murray worried about the hurricane destroying the turret. 2. Hurry to Surrey to buy some nourishing currants. 			
Final /ə/ <i>uh</i> (unstressed)	Comma Letter	[ə] [ɪ]	idea, sofa, saliva, arena actor, better, flavour
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The customer got a better offer on the sofa in order to reach the sales quota. 2. The saga tells us the colour of the armour worn by the martyr in the arena. 			
/ɜ/ <i>ur</i>	Nurse	[ɜɹ]	hurt, curd, hurl, burst, irk, birch, girl, fir, myrtle, assert
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The courteous colonel preferred to fish with curds rather than worms. 2. I was urged to be a liquor connoisseur, said the earnest girl at her worst. 			

Diphthong	Lexical Set	Mandarin	Notes Examples
/eɪ/ <i>ay</i>	Face	[e]	change, taper, base, crêpe, wait, day, rein, they, reign
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The baby's name is April, and she weighs eight pounds. 2. The raven-haired lady deigns to bathe in the wave pool. 			
/aɪ/ <i>igh</i>	Price	[a, ai]	night, like, rife, nice, type missile, fertile, agile, mobile
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I like it when the airplane for the night flight gets de-iced. 2. The vampire was attacked with a knife, a spike and an ice pick. 			
/ɔɪ/ <i>oy</i>	Choice	[ɔə]	toy, choice, moist, coin, groin, hoist, joist
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The boy found joy in employing his voice to make a loud noise. 2. The oil from the buoy spoiled the oysters and made them poisonous. 			
/aʊ/ <i>ow</i>	Mouth	[aʊ]	out, pouch, south, house, loud, gouge, thou, round, oust, flour
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The count used a towel to dry his mouth. 2. The loud noun featured a foul vowel that was hard to pronounce. 			
/oʊ/ <i>oh</i>	Goat	[ʌʊ]	soap, boat, oak, coal, rope, joke, both, code, rogue, home, tone, no, toe
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I loathe that the noble will ride the colt along the road. 2. My brooch was sewn on the robe with the hole. 			
/ɪə/ <i>eer</i>	Near	[i.ɪ]	beer, deer, career, here, mere, sincere, interfere, cashier, weir, fear, appear
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I fear her tears are sincere: she's weary of her career here. 2. Don't interfere with the yearling, dear; it's acting queer. 			
/ɛə/ <i>air</i>	Square	[e.ɪ]	care, fair, pear, their, scarce
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mary didn't care for what the fairy had to share. 2. My heir swears with flair because our funds are so scarce. 			
/ɑə/ <i>ar</i>	Start	[ɑ.ɪ]	part, large, snarl, arch, marvelous, hearth
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please carve the turkey for the party with the sharp knife, Charles. 2. The hearty sergeant was far from sharp. 			
/ɔə/ <i>or</i>	North	[ɔ.ɪ]	for, war, resort, horse, chord, short, orchid, swarm
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I adore Laura, who ignores my snoring. 2. The performance of the porn star cost a fortune. 			

/ʊə/ oor	Cure	[ʊ]	boor, poor, tour, allure, assure, lure, contour
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The bourgeois fool assured us of the mural's authenticity.2. The furious gourmet showed his boorishness at the lurid feast.			