

A Quick Guide to...

The Sounds of Northern-Accented Mandarin Chinese

You'll watch a series of clips featuring people from various parts of *northern China*...

The **highlights** in the subtitles are pronunciation features that might throw you off if you're used to typical "Textbook Mandarin" and/or "Southern-Accented Mandarin".

#1

Extensive use of **Erhua (儿化)**

Erhua is the addition of an "-r" sound at the end of a syllable. (e.g. hua > huar)

This occurs in Standard Mandarin, but it's much more extensively used in casual northern-accented Mandarin.

Examples:

dòng huà piānr

动画片儿

Cartoon

dǒng shìr de

懂事儿的

Sensible

zán zhèr méi dì tiě.

咱这儿没地铁。

We don't have subway here.

chī wán fàn, qù shàng bānr.

吃完饭，去上班儿。

Finish eating and go to work.

#2

In fast speech...

/zh/, /ch/, /sh/ and /z/, /c/, /s/ can change to /r/

Examples:

r

↑

sì shí duō suì.

四十多岁。

40+ years old.

r

↑

tā sì shí duō suì.

她四十多岁。

She's 40+ years old.

r

↑

bù zhī dào.

不知道。

(I) don't know.

r

↑

wǒ bù zhī dào tā shì nǎr rén

我不知道她是哪儿人。

I don't know where she comes from.

r

↑

duō shǎo qián?

多少钱？

How much?

r

↑

zhèi duō shǎo qián?

这多少钱？

How much is this?

r

↑

zhèr duō shǎo qián ?

这儿多少钱？

How much is this?

r

↑

mǎ shàng jiù dào.

马上就到。

(I) will be there any minute.

r

↑

wǒ mǎ shàng jiù dào.

我马上就到。

I will be there any minute.

r

↑

wǒ gào sù nǐ.

我告诉你。

I'm telling you.

r

↑

wǒ gào sù nǐ, zhèr diàn yǐng lǎo hǎo kàn le.

我告诉你，这儿电影儿老好看了。

I'm telling you that this movie is amazing.

#3

In fast speech... /j/, /q/, /x/ can change to /y/

Examples: y

↑

xī hóng shì chǎo jī dàn.

西红柿炒鸡蛋。

A dish of tomato fried eggs.

y
↑

lǎo bǎn, lái yī fèn xī hóng shì chǎo jī dàn.

老板，来一份儿西红柿炒鸡蛋。

Boss, get me a dish of tomato fried eggs.

y
↑

gǎn jǐn qù.

赶紧去。

Hurry up! / Go quickly!

#4

/w/ pronounced similar to an English /v/

Examples:

v

↑

wèn

问

To ask

v

↑

wén

闻

To smell

v

↑

nǐ xǐ huān mǎi dōng xī ma? wèi shén me?

你喜欢买东西吗？为什么？

Do you like shopping? Why?

v

↑

fā wēi xìn.

发微信。

Send messages on Wechat.

v

↑

tōng cháng hé péng yǒu chū qù wánr.

通常和朋友出去玩儿。

I usually go out and have fun with my friends.

#5

/o/ pronounced similar to /e/

Examples:

é

↑

bó shì

博士

doctor / Ph.D.

è

↑

nǐ men zhōu mò dǎ suàn zuò shén me ?

你们周末打算做什么？

What are you going to do this weekend?

#6

Strong **nasal** pronunciation of **/ing/** (and other syllables that end with "ng")

Examples:

yìng

硬

Hard / firm

#7

Extensive use of the "**Neutral tone**"

The second syllable in many two-syllable words changes to a "neutral tone" (e.g. wǎn shàng > wǎn shang).

Note: While this is a feature of Standard Mandarin, it's included in this video as it can be helpful in differentiating between northern and southern accents.

(The neutral tone is rarely used in "Southern-Accented Mandarin")

Examples:

wǎn shang

晚上

evening

nǐ zuó tiān wǎn shang zuò le shén me ?

你昨天晚上做了什么？

What did you do last night?

#8

Tones change for emphasis

Examples:

ài

↑

hái

还

still

ài

↑

hái shuō huà ! ān jìng !

还说话！安静！

(You're) still talking. Be quiet!

íng

↑

bié

↑

bié

别

Don't

iè

↑

bié shuō le !

别说了！

Don't talk! / Stop talking!

iè

↑

bié gēn wǒ tán liàn ài, zán men jié hūn ba!

别跟我谈恋爱，咱们结婚吧！

Don't just date me, let's get married!

ě

↑

dé dào

得到

to get

ě

↑

dé dào xìng fú.

得到幸福。

To get happiness.

áo

↑

hǎo xiē

好些

A lot

áo

↑

hǎo xiē gè dú yīn dōu bù yī yàng.

好些个读音都不一样。

A lot of words are pronounced differently.

ù u

↑ ↑

gěi wǒ chū qù !

给我出去！

Get out!

ǔ u

↑ ↑

gěi wǒ chū qù !

给我出去！

Get out!

ǐ

↑

xī fū

媳妇儿

Wife

ǐ

↑

wǒ xī fu shì běi jīng rén.

我媳妇儿是北京人。

My wife is Beijingnese.

FULL POST + VIDEO:

<https://mandarinhq.com/2018/05/northern-chinese-accent/>

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