

Asian languages and /ɯ/

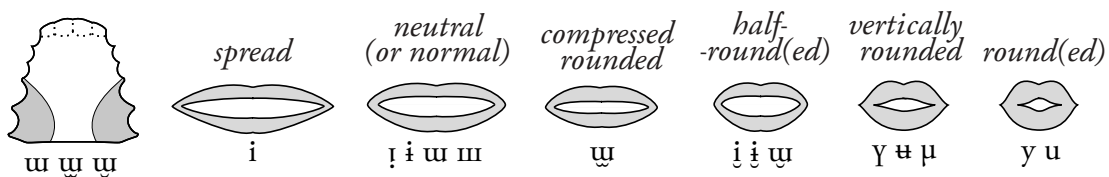
Luciano Canepari (2024²)

It is important to explain the situation of /ɯ/ for various Asian languages, including Korean, (Mandarin) Chinese, and Japanese (though not limited to East Asia). We will start from what we wrote about it for these three languages. It is a curious fact that some ‘authors’ do not even include it among the phonemes of Chinese. Some others, at least, introduce /i/ for Chinese, although that is not the best choice (but, at least, they do not ignore it completely).

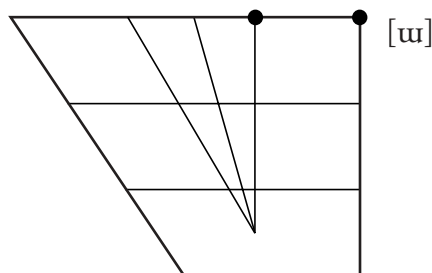
Let us consider only the neutral accent of each of these three languages. In different regional accents, things are more or less different (as can be seen from our series ‘X Pronunciation & Accents’ for Korean, Chinese, and Japanese). 11 further languages are added at the end of the paper.

However, limiting our discussion to their neutral (and mediatic, and social) accents, we will show (with vocograms) what they actually are. All other peculiarities can be found in our aforementioned works.

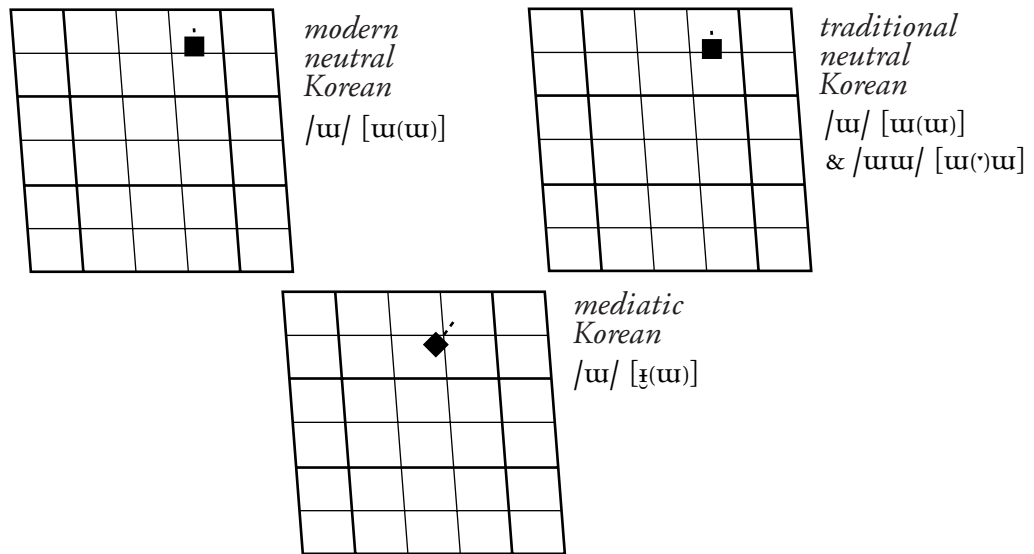
First of all, let us have a general look at the lip positions for our high vocoids. Of course, here, we are more interested in those regarding /ɯ/ (including its general palatogram).



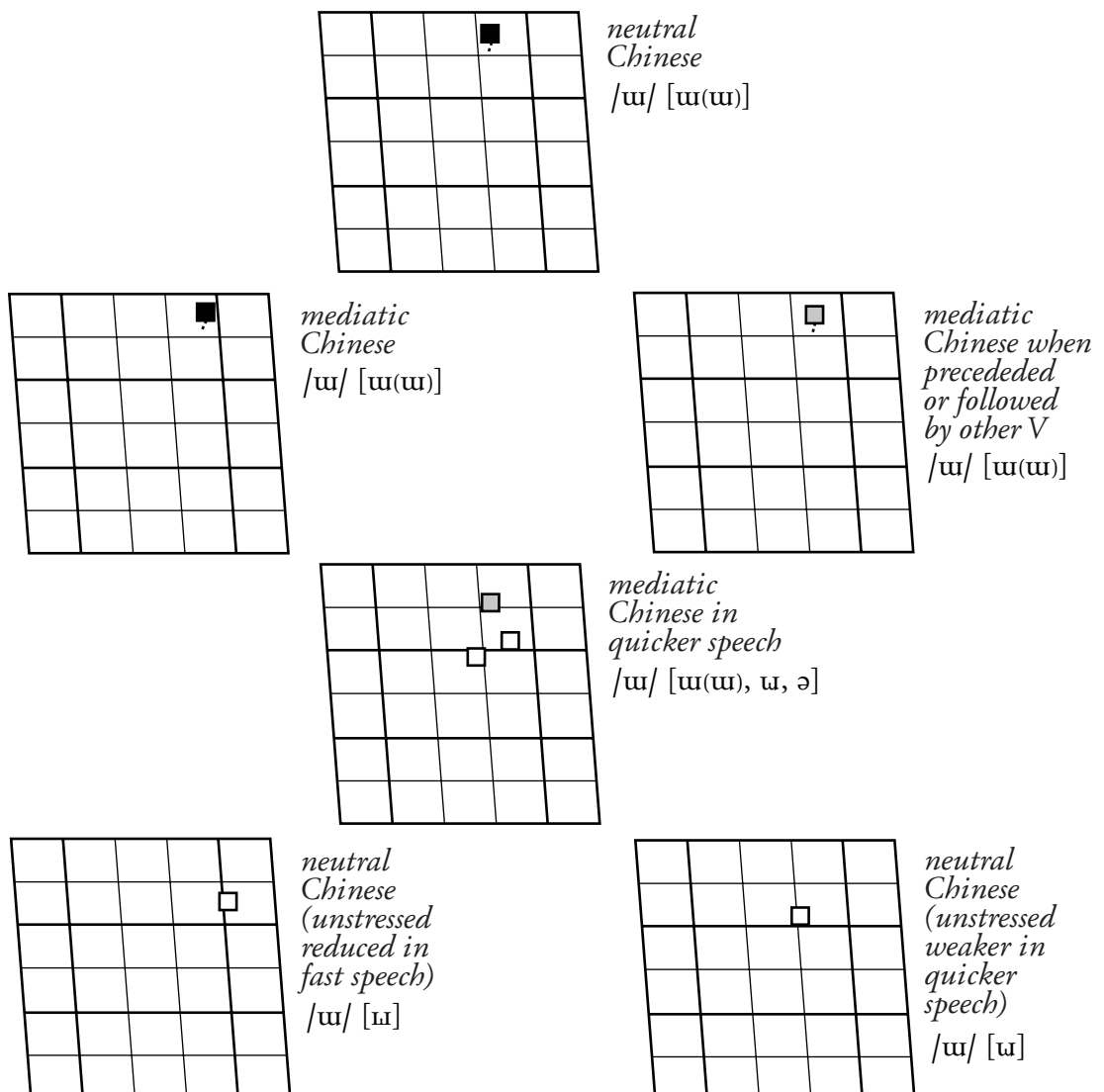
Unfortunately, too often different authors use /ɯ/ [ɯ], unscientifically placed exactly as shown in the following traditional quadrilaterals. They use a dot on impossible points on the figure for this non-rounded vocoid, according to outdated official IPA principles. That on the left might be almost acceptable, but not that on the right.



For Korean, we present three vocograms, which are self-explanatory.



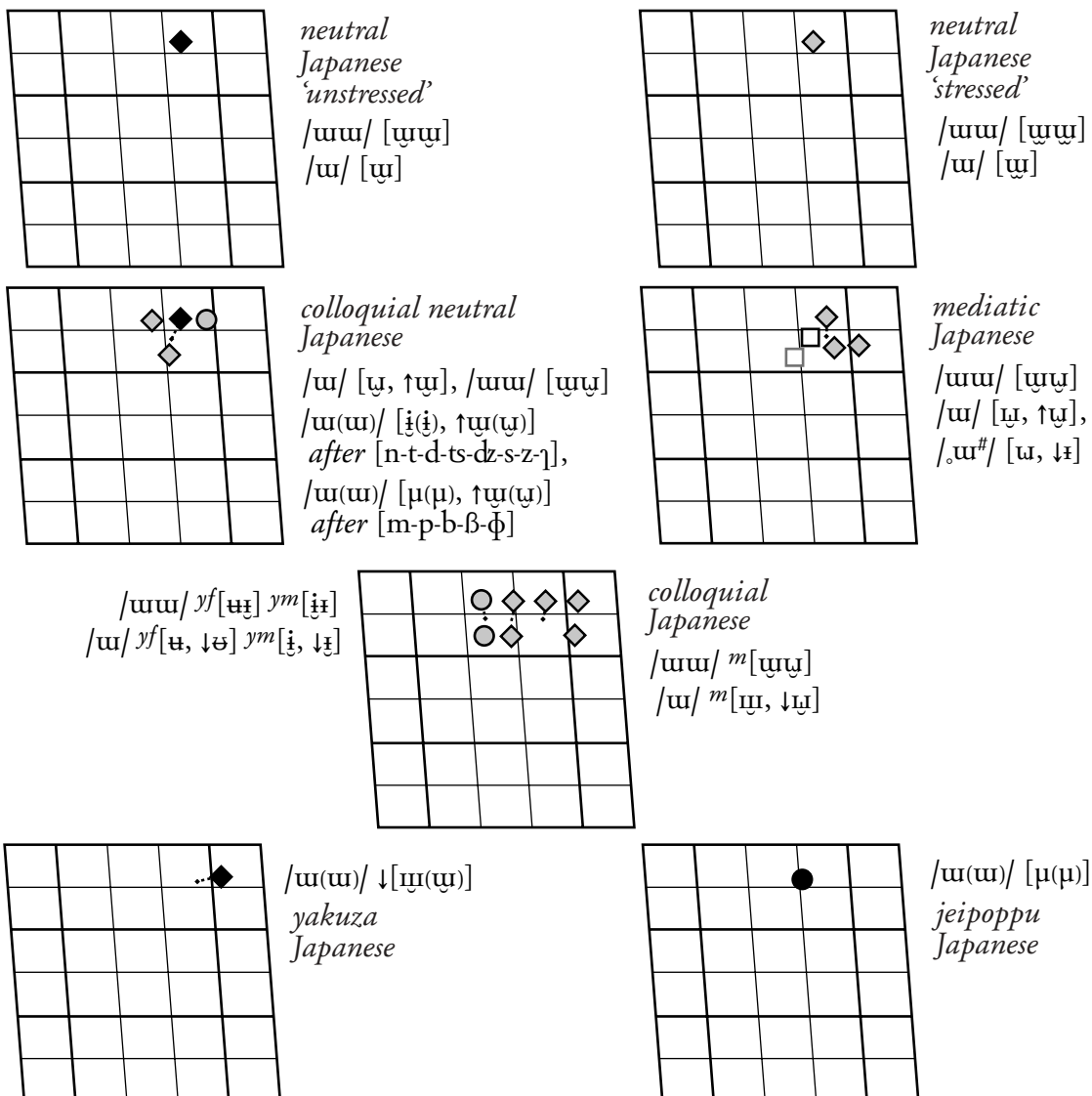
For Chinese, six vocograms (see above) illustrate the situation of its /ʉ/.



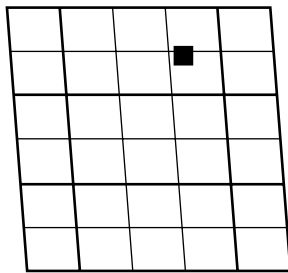
For Japanese we present seven vocograms. The first vocogram shows /ɯ/ [ɯ̠] (lips with half-rounding). The second vocogram shows /ɯ/ (represented as [ɯ̠̠], with ‘compressed’ half-rounding), which occurs mainly in stressed syllables. Notice that we use the symbol /ɯ/ as the phonemic symbol of our (unrounded high back-central) *canIPA* [ɯ] (instead of our truly back [ɯ̠], corresponding to the official *IPA* one, [ɯ̠]). We are doing this for all the languages we are discussing, specifically for their similarities and differences.

However, in works specific to Japanese, we prefer to use the more accurate symbol /ɯ̠/ [ɯ̠̠], even phonemically, more grounded in reality (possibly adding [ɯ̠̠]).

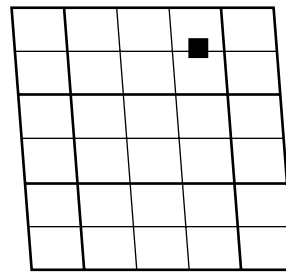
The third and fourth vocograms show the colloquial and mediatic variants of /ɯ/. The fifth vocogram presents peculiarities of female, male, and young speakers. The last two vocograms, respectively, show how /ɯ/ is realized in the ‘yakuza’ and ‘jeipoppu’ (music, J-pop) accents.



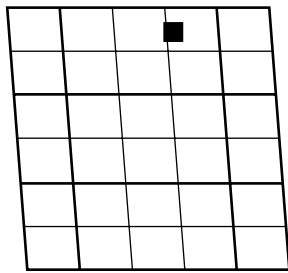
Eleven further Asian languages are added here for the same /ʍ/ phoneme.



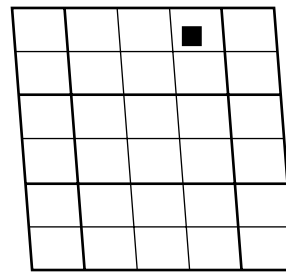
Chuvash
/ʍ/ [ʍ]



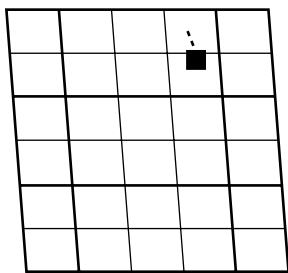
Azeri
/ʍ/ [ʍ]



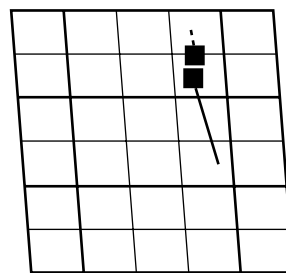
Nenets
/ʍ(:) [ʍ(:)]



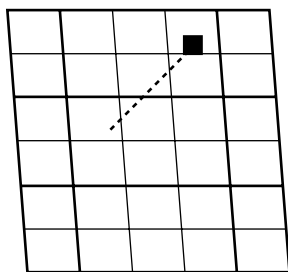
Sel'kup
/ʍ/ [ʍ]



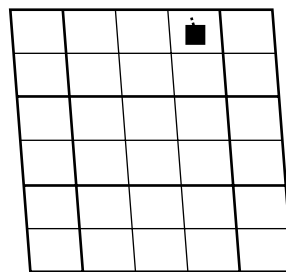
Kazakh
/ʍ/ [ʍ, ʍ̊]



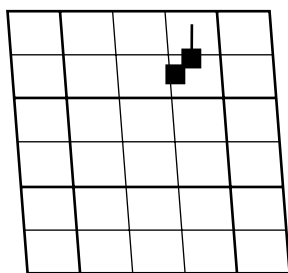
Thai
/ʍ(ʍ) [ʍ(ʍ)]
/ʍɰ [ʍɰ]



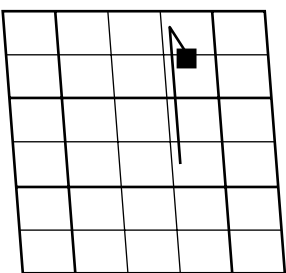
Lao
/ʍ/ [ʍ]
/ʍə/ [ʍə]



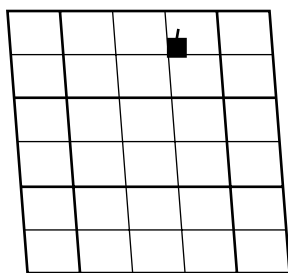
Shanghainese
/ʍ/ [ʍ(ʍ)]



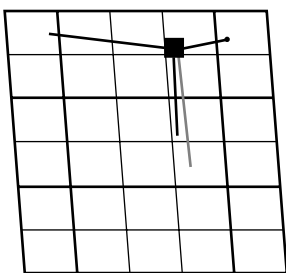
Khmer
/ʍ(ʍ) [ʍ(ʍ)]



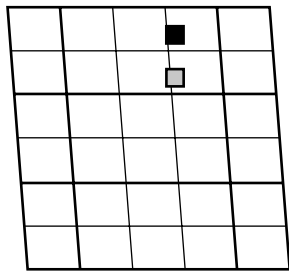
/ʍʉɰ/ [ʍʉɰ]



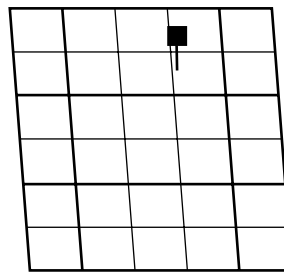
Vietnamese
/ʍʉ/ [ʍʉ]



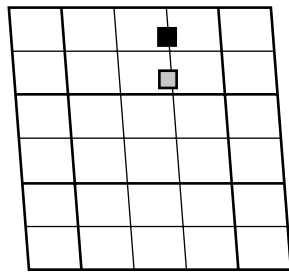
/ʍʉɰ/ [ʍʉɰ, ʍʉʰ]
/ʍʉi/ [ʍʉi]
/ʍʉu/ [ʍʉu]



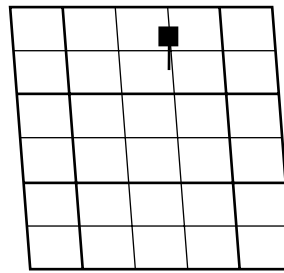
neutral Turkish
/ʉ/ [ʉ, ⁰ʉ(ʉ)]



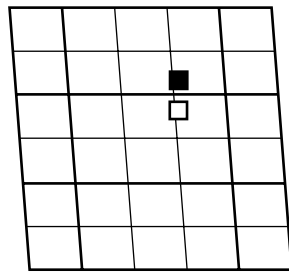
/ʉ:/ [ʉʉ]



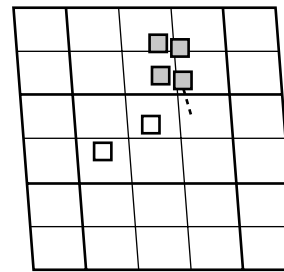
traditional Turkish
/ʉ/ [i, ⁰ʉ(ʉ)]



/ʉ:/ [iʉ]



mediatic Turkish
/ʉ(:) [ʉ(ʉ),
⁰ʉ(ʉ)], ʉ, ʉ]



/ʉ(:)/
↑[ʉ(ʉ), ⁰ʉ(ʉ)]
↓[i(i), ⁰ʉ(ʉ)]
[ʉ, ʉ]
/ʉ:/ [ʉʉ]