



An introduction to Kunming Hua

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昆明话概况

An Introduction to Kunming Hua

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Third Edition, May 2000

The purpose of this monograph is to help students of Chinese living in Yunnan understand some of what is being said around them. Therefore, the authors would like to make available the option of photocopying this pamphlet to anyone who desires a copy. Please extend common scholarly courtesy to the authors by citing this monograph in any published work which makes use of it.

0. Introduction

This brief introduction to the Kunming dialect is intended to help the reader begin to make the adjustments from standard Mandarin - 普通话. We assume familiarity with standard Mandarin. We have made no attempt to follow any rigorous theory of phonology, but desire to be simply descriptive. There are several other sources one can consult (cf. Bibliography), but the one we referred to most - not including our own study - was Gui Mingchao's 1990 dissertation. Gui discusses differences between the old Kunming dialect and the modern one. For pedagogical reasons we will note areas of difference, but we will basically limit our discussion to modern Kunminghua.

It might be helpful for the reader to realize that Kunminghua (hereafter KMH) is not a mutated form of modern Mandarin (hereafter PTH), but both KMH and PTH are modern dialects of an older Mandarin. In fact, certain characteristics of this older Mandarin have been preserved in KMH, but lost in PTH. Many of the differences between PTH and KMH are consistent throughout Southwest China. For example, the province 湖南 is pronounced *hu²nan²* in PTH, but is pronounced *fu²lan²* throughout much of Southwest China. As such, it is our hope that this description of KMH can be used as a springboard into the study of other Southwest dialects.

Kunming, like many places in China, is a very diverse linguistic environment. The Chinese spoken throughout the province differs from area to area, having been influenced by the minority languages spoken there. Of course, many of these country people can be found in Kunming. Kunming also has people from North China who speak clear Mandarin, and people from Guangdong, Shanghai and other non-Mandarin areas. In the markets one will find that there are many people from

Sichuan. In fact, a high percentage of the peddlers (e.g. shoe repairmen, bike repairmen, etc.) are from Sichuan. And as expected, a person's age, educational level and exposure to other dialects of Chinese greatly affects their spoken language. The obvious question is "What is standard KMH?" We have tried to gather data from native Kunming people. In spite of this, we have found there is a fairly wide range of sounds that are produced for the same words. We have attempted to follow the most conservative path, excluding extremes on either end. For example, sometimes we found that there were consistent patterns, but then a speaker would articulate a word with PTH pronunciation and KMH tones. We usually didn't include examples like these in the range of KMH.

The phonetic script used is IPA, but we chose the symbols used in China where standard IPA was lacking (i.e. the apical vowels [ɿ] and [ʅ]). We have used superscript numerals to represent the tone pitch (e.g. *ma*⁵⁵ is high and *ma*¹¹ is low). Contour tones are represented with two different numbers juxtaposed (e.g. high-rising *ma*³⁵).

We would like to express our appreciation to Ms. Hannah Yang (杨红玉), Mr. John Zhang (张镇华) and Mr. Zhao Tianpei (赵天培) for their help in supplying us with the majority of our data. We are also thankful to Bryan and Silvia Allen, Dottie Martin and Lon Diehl for their helpful feedback. We hope this small description of KMH proves helpful to others. If the reader has suggestions for improvements in the presentation or comments for correction, please let us know.

1. Initials in Kunming Hua

Gui gives part of the following list of initials for modern KMH. He points out that some of the old people still retain some evidence of the retroflexed consonants, but that younger

speakers by and large have lost this distinction. One thing that we have noticed is that certain speakers actually switch the alveolar set with the retroflexed set, pronouncing 四, ɕ^{312} , as ɕ^{312} .

Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Retroflex	Alveolo-palatal	Velar
p p ^h		t t ^h			k k ^h
		ts ts ^h	(tʂ tʂ ^h)	tɕ tɕ ^h	
m		n			
	f v	s z	(ʂ ʐ)	ɕ	X
	w	l		j	

Moreover, we have noticed some speakers pronounce the retroflexed set as palato-alveolar (tʃ, tʃ^h, ʃ, ʒ). These same speakers will also pronounce the same words or homophones with the alveolar set. For consistency we will transcribe these all as alveolars, but the reader should be aware of these variations.

In KMH there are several deviations in initials from PTH. One of these we have already pointed out, namely the fronting of the retroflexed initials. The following examples from Gui (1990) show that in modern KMH the retroflexed consonants have been lost.

$\text{ts}^{\text{h}}\text{ɿ}^{\text{33}}$	to eat	吃
$\text{z}\text{ɿ}^{\text{312}}\text{ts}\text{ɿ}^{\text{55}}$	day/life	日子
$\text{z}\tilde{\text{a}}^{\text{312}}$	to permit	让
$\text{z}\tilde{\text{a}}^{\text{55}}$	to dye	染

pe ⁴² ts ^h ɿ ³³	idiot	白痴
tsu ³³	pig	猪
zəw ³¹² / zu ⁴²	meat	肉
sɿ ⁴² vu ³¹²	food	食物
tjəw ³¹² ts ^h ɑ ⁴²	investigation	调查
sã ³⁵ sã ³¹²	up hill	山上
ts ^h əw ³¹² lə ³³ ts ^h əw ³¹²	very stinking	臭了臭

Another difference with KMH is the presence of the labio-dental voiced fricative [v] in some words that begin with [w] in PTH. PTH's [wu] corresponds to KMH's [vu].

vu ³³ ja ³³	crow	乌鸦
vu ⁴²	not have	无
vu ⁵⁵	five	五
vu ³¹²	matter, thing	物

According to Gui, the initial [w] can also surface as a [v] proceeding nasalized [ã] and [ə̃] in a limited environment.¹

vã ⁴²	to smell	闻
və̃ ³¹²	to ask	问
vã ⁵⁵ sã ³¹²	evening	晚上

¹ Our language consultants were unable to verify Gui's data, but we believe we've heard other speakers say something like these so we felt it necessary to include them here.

(sɿ ⁵⁵) vã ⁴²	to die	死亡
vã ³¹² (tɕi ³¹²)	to forget	忘记

However, the initial of the following words from Gui (1990) is [w] but never [v]:

wa ³³	frog	蛙
wa ⁴²	baby	娃
wa ⁵⁵	tile	瓦
wa ³¹²	socks	袜
wæ ³³	slanting	歪
wæ ⁵⁵	sprain	崴
wæ ³¹²	outside	外
wi ³³	power	威
wi ⁴²	surround	围
wi ⁵⁵	great	伟
wi ³¹²	to feed	喂
wã ³³	crooked	弯
wã ³³	lukewarm	温
wã ⁴²	king	王
wã ⁵⁵	bowl	碗
wã ³¹²	prosperous	旺

Gui also describes the phenomenon of free variation of the initials [n] and [l]. Compare the following examples:

[n] ~ [l]

njã ⁴² / ljã ⁴²	mother	娘
nju ⁵⁵ tɕwã ⁵⁵ / lju ⁵⁵ tɕwã ⁵⁵	turn around	扭转
nju ⁵⁵ nje ⁴² / lju ⁵⁵ lje ⁴²	shy	扭捏
njẽ ⁴² / ljẽ ⁴²	year	年
nju ⁴² næ ⁵⁵ / lju ⁴² læ ⁵⁵	cow milk	牛奶
ni ⁵⁵ / li ⁵⁵	you	你
nã ⁴² / lã ⁴²	difficult	难

With certain speakers this change from [n] to [l] doesn't seem to be in free variation as much as it is an actual shift in the phonology. Some words beginning with [l] are never pronounced with an [n].

Another difference between standard PTH and KMH is the pronunciation of the Pinyin “h” [x] as an [f] before a [u]. Consider the following examples that seem to be in free variation for some speakers.

[x] ~ [f]

njẽ ⁴² xu ³³ / ljẽ ⁴² fu ³³	sticky	黏糊
zə ³¹² xu ³³ / zə ³¹² fu ³³	warm	热乎
fɛ ³⁵ xu ⁵⁵ / fɛ ³⁵ fu ⁵⁵	The Flying Tigers	飞虎
xu ³¹² ɕl ³³ / fu ³¹² ɕl ³³	nurse	护士
xu ³¹² k ^h əw ⁵⁵ / fu ³¹² k ^h əw ⁵⁵	residence permit	户口

But notice that the following words are never pronounced with the initial [f].

xəw ⁵⁵ tə ³³	very many	好多
------------------------------------	-----------	----

xəw ³¹² səw ³³	back, behind	后首
sən ³⁵ xo ⁴²	life	生活
xɛ ³³	black	黑
xɛ ⁵⁵ li ⁵⁵	sea	海里
xã ³¹² ji ⁵⁵	Chinese	汉语
xom ⁴²	red	红
xo ⁵⁵	fire	火
lã ⁴² xwa ³³	orchid	兰花
xwən ³⁵ li ⁵⁵	wedding	婚礼
xwi ⁴²	to return	回

For some speakers of KMH, PTH's [xu] is always pronounced as [fu] and does not vary at all.

2. Finals in Kunming Hua

Mandarin has more than 30 combinations of finals. In KMH some of these do not vary from PTH, but many of them vary in more than one way. The following are the possible combinations of finals in PTH written using Pinyin.

a, ia, ua, ao, iao, ie, u, ou, i,
o, uo, e, ü, üe, üan, ün, iu,
ai, uai, ei, ui,
an, ian, uan, en, in, un,
ing, eng, ang, iang, uang, ong, iong

The finals that are not different from Mandarin, or where the difference could be attributed to the local way of pronouncing the same segment, are as follows: a, ia, ua, ao, iao, ie, u, ou, i. The remaining we will now discuss.

Finals o, uo

Cheng (1973) gives the phonetic form of these pinyin finals as [wo]. This final may be used with all the KMH initials except [v], and the alveolo-palatal set, [tʃ, tʃ^h, ʃ]. There is one syllable without a consonantal initial: [wo], also *wo* in pinyin.

Within this group we elicited examples from a wider selection of people than for some of the other finals, because we found that it was difficult to pin down a clear-cut pattern. We believe the standard KMH pronunciation for [wo] is [o]. Some people's pronunciation was quite close to PTH. Other people articulated [wo] with certain initials (i.e. the velars) and [o] with the rest of the initials, while a few other people said [wə] for many words. A few people even said [ɔw].

We give the following examples of what we believe to be standard KMH.

po ³⁵ lã ³¹²	wave	波浪
sã ³³ p ^h o ³³	hillside	山坡
mɛ ⁵⁵ ko ⁴²	USA	美国
xo ⁵⁵	fire	火
lo ³³ so ³³	wordy	罗嗦
to ³³	many	多
no ³¹² mi ⁵⁵	sticky rice	糯米
zo ³¹²	weak	弱

Final: e

There are two pronunciations of the pinyin final *e*, namely, [ə] as in *le* (了) and [ɤ] as in *gege* (哥哥). The [ə] in *le* is often said as [a], producing [la]. This seems to occur when there is stress on

the particle *le* (了). The vowel is drawn out in length. For example:

$xwæ^{312}lə^{33}$ --> $xwæ^{312}la:^{33}$ ruined 坏了

The PTH [ɥ] is equivalent to [o] in KMH following the velar initials (k, k^h, x). Following all other initials it is the same in KMH as in PTH.²

$ko^{33}ko^{33}$	older brother	哥哥
$k^h o^{35} \zeta ju^{42}$	science	科学
$k^h o^{55} ji^{55}$	OK	可以
xo^{33}	to drink	喝

Finals ü, üe, üan, ün

The set of high, front, rounded finals follow a fairly consistent pattern. There are exceptions to this that might be lexical rather than phonological, but the rule is basically the PTH *ü* [y] is pronounced [i] in KMH. Consider the following examples:

ü [y] : KMH [i]

$t\zeta i^{312} ts\eta^{55}$	sentence	句子
$t\zeta jaw^{33} t\zeta^h i^{33}$	suburbs	郊区
$\zeta i^{35} jaw^{312}$	need	需要
$ni^{53} n\grave{a}^{33}$	female	女的

² There are exceptions to this as well. We have elicited examples of *le* (快乐) and *me* (什么) where the final was pronounced as [o] instead of [ɥ] or [ə].

fa ⁵⁵ li ³¹²	law	法律
------------------------------------	-----	----

One exception that we found to this is the following:

lu ³¹² sy ³¹²	green	绿色
-------------------------------------	-------	----

One hypothesis we have is that whenever there is an alternate older Mandarin (proto-Mandarin?) pronunciation for a given character (as also seen in PTH), KMH chooses the phonologically less marked one. Thus [lu] is less marked than [ly].

üe [yɛ] : KMH [jɛ]

tɕjɛ ⁴² t̃i ³¹²	to decide	决定
tɕ ^h jɛ ³⁵ saw ⁵⁵	to lack	缺少
ɕjɛ ⁵⁵	snow	雪
jɛ ³¹² fən ³¹²	month	月份

At least three exceptions to this pattern are the words ‘to study’ 学习 [ɕju⁴²çi⁴²], ‘to plunder’ 掠夺 [lju³¹²to⁴²] and ‘brief, sketchy’ 略 [lju³¹²].

üan [yɛn] : KMH [jɛ̃]

tɕjɛ̃ ⁵⁵	roll	卷
tɕ ^h jɛ̃ ⁴²	whole	全
ɕjɛ̃ ⁵⁵ tsə ⁴²	to choose	选择
jɛ̃ ⁵⁵	distant	远

ün [yn] : KMH [in]

tɕin ³⁵ twi ³¹²	army	军队
tɕ ^h in ⁴² tsom ³¹²	the masses	群众

$p^h e j^{42} \zeta i n^{312}$	cultivate	培训
$j i n^{42} n \tilde{a}^{42}$	Yunnan	云南

Final: iu

Cheng (1973) gives the phonetic form [jow] for the pinyin *iu*. In KMH this is simply [u]. However, we found that often words with this final were pronounced very similarly to PTH. Consider the following examples that display the difference:

$t \zeta u^{55}$	nine	九
$l u^{312}$	six	六
$n u^{42}$	cow	牛

Finals ai, uai, ei

The phonetic forms of these three finals in PTH are the same as the pinyin forms. We have grouped these three together because, first, *ai* [aj] and *uai* [waj] are basically the same, and second, the pronunciation *ai* [aj] and *ei* [ej] converge in KMH for certain initials.

It is difficult to give a simple rule for pronunciation of these finals. For most cases PTH's *ai* [aj] correlates to KMH's [æ] and *uai* [waj] is equivalent to [wæ]. But there are cases where *ai* [aj] is articulated as [ɤ] and sometimes [e], a low-central unrounded vowel. This is where it starts to get difficult, as PTH's *ei* [ej] is also pronounced [e] in certain environments but [ɛ] in others, and yet [wej] in others. First consider *ai* [aj] and *uai* [waj].

ai [aj] : KMH [æ]		
$\zeta \text{æ}^{312}$	love	爱
$p \text{æ}^{312}$	be defeated	败

ts ^h æ ³³	guess	猜
tæ ³¹²	to wear	戴
jĩ ³³ kæ ³³	should	应该
xæ ⁴²	still	还
k ^h æ ³³	open	开
læ ⁴²	come	来
mæ ⁵⁵	to buy	买
næ ⁵⁵ næ ³³	grandma	奶奶
p ^h æ ⁴² twi ³¹²	to line up	排队
sæ ³¹²	to sun	晒
t ^h æ ³¹²	too	太
tsæ ³¹²	at	在
uai [waj] : KMH [wæ]		
kwæ ³³	well-behaved	乖
xwæ ³¹²	bad	坏
k ^h wæ ³¹²	fast	快
swæ ⁵⁵	to swing (a whip)	甩

These data look fairly consistent. We examine the exceptions below, comparing them to some examples of *ei* [ej].

The changes of the final *ei* [ej] are not as neat. When the final *ei* is preceded by the alveolars [n] and [l] it is pronounced as [wej].³

lwej ³¹²	tired	累
lwej ⁴² tjẽ ³¹²	thunder and lightning	雷电
nwej ³¹²	internal	内

When the final *ei* follows [m] or [f] it can be pronounced as [ɛ] but not consistently. It can be articulated anywhere from the PTH [ej] to [ɜ], a lower-mid vowel.

mɛ ⁵⁵ ko ⁴²	USA	美国
fɛ ³⁵ fu ⁵⁵	The Flying Tigers	飞虎

The last two possible pronunciations of the final *ei* are [ɥ] and [ɐ]. Consider the following examples:

xɥ ³³	black	黑
ky ⁵⁵	to give	给
pɛ ⁵³ tɕi ³³	Beijing	北京
mɛ ⁴² tə ³³	there are none	没的

Recall that earlier we said that *ai* is also sometimes said as [ɐ].

³ This difference apparently only applies to the alveolar sonorants. The syllable *dei*³ 得 'must' is not included here because KMH chooses the less marked pronunciation of [tɥ⁵³]. The syllables *cei* and *tei* don't exist. And the syllable *zei*² 贼 'wicked' is the same as PTH.

pe ⁴²	white	白
pe ⁵⁵	hundred	百
p ^h e ³⁵ tjɛ̃ ³¹² ji ⁵⁵	to make a movie	拍电影

Because of these variations the words ‘north’ 北 and ‘hundred’ 百 are homophones in KMH: [pe⁵⁵].

Final: ui

Cheng (1973) gives the phonetic form [wej] for the pinyin *ui*. This corresponds to [wi] in KMH.

twi ³¹²	correct	对
ts ^h wi ³⁵ nu ⁴²	to brag	吹牛
kwi ³³	to return	归
xwi ³¹²	to know how	会
swi ³¹²	year old	岁
xo ⁵⁵ t ^h wi ⁵⁵	ham	火腿
tswi ³¹²	most	最
wi ⁵⁵ ta ³¹²	great	伟大

Finals an, ian, uan, en, in, un

Most of the nasal finals behave similarly. Basically, the nasal consonant is deleted and the vowel is pronounced as a nasal. This is true with all the nasals listed here and below, but not including the *ong*, *iong* set.

Within the set of finals that close the syllable with the alveolar [n] there are some differences. With certain vowels the [n] always deletes (*viz.* *an*, *ian*, *uan*), but with others it appears to be somewhat optional (*viz.* *en*, *in*, *un*).

an [an] : KMH [ã]

ʔã ³³	peaceful	安
pã ³³	class, team	班
ts ^h ã ³³ tɕja ³³	to participate	参加
fã ³¹²	rice	饭
kã ⁵⁵	to feel	感
nã ⁴²	difficult	难
sã ³³	mountain	山
t ^h ã ⁴² xwa ³¹²	to talk	谈话

ien [jɛn] : KMH [jẽ]

p ^h ã ⁴² pjẽ ³³	side	旁边
ts ^h ɿ ⁴² tjẽ ⁵⁵	dictionary	词典
sɿ ⁴² tɕjẽ ³³	time	时间
ljẽ ⁵⁵	face	脸
jẽ ³³	smoke	烟

uan [wan] : KMH [wã]

wã ³¹²	ten thousand	万
ts ^h wã ³³	to wear	穿
kwã ³⁵ ɕi ³¹²	relationship	关系
nwã ⁵⁵ xo ³³	warm	暖和
zwã ⁵⁵	soft	软

The finals *en* [ən], *in* [in] and *un* [wən] can follow the pattern described above of deleting the nasal consonant and nasalizing

the vowel, but these finals are more often pronounced with the syllable final [n].⁴

en [ən] : KMH [ən] or [ɛ̃]

k ^h o ³¹² pən ⁵⁵ / k ^h o ³¹² pɛ̃ ⁵⁵	textbook	课本
fən ³³ / fɛ̃ ³³	to divide, part	分
zən ⁵⁵ / zɛ̃ ⁵⁵	to endure	忍
sən ³⁵ lin ⁴² / sɛ̃ ³⁵ lɿ ⁴²	forest	森林

in [in] : KMH [in] or [ĩ]

lin ⁴² tɕi ³³ / lĩ ⁴² tɕi ³³	neighbor	邻居
p ^h in ³³ jɿn ³³ / p ^h ĩ ³³ jɿ ³³	pinyin	拼音
zɛ̃n ⁴² min ⁴² / zɛ̃ ⁴² mɿ ⁴²	the people	人民
ɕin ³³ / ɕĩ ³³	new	新

un [wən] : KMH [wən] or [wɛ̃]

wən ⁴² / wɛ̃ ⁴²	writing	文
ts ^h wən ⁴² tsɛ̃ ³¹² / ts ^h wɛ̃ ⁴² tsɛ̃ ³¹²	exist	存在
twən ³³ / twɛ̃ ³³	squat on heels	蹲
k ^h wən ³⁵ mɿ ⁴² / k ^h wɛ̃ ³⁵ mɿ ⁴²	Kunming	昆明

Finals ing, eng, ang, iang, uang

⁴ We elicited the word 'tender' nen⁴ 嫩, and found it to be an exception in an unexpected way. It was pronounced [nwən³¹²], resembling [nei] in that a [w] is epenththesized.

The finals in this group and the following set are the entire velar nasal consonant group. These differ from the previous set in that the velar nasal consonant is never articulated. If there is a nasal consonant it is an alveolar [n] or bilabial [m] (cf. next set). If there is no nasal consonant the vowel, as would be expected, is then nasalized.

Similar to the previous set of finals, the finals *ing* [iŋ] and *eng* [əŋ] more often do appear as [in] and [ən].

ing [iŋ] : KMH [in] or [ĩ]

$pĩ^{33} / pĩ^{33}$	ice	冰
$tĩ^{35}tɕ^{55} / tĩ^{35}tɕ^{55}$	nail	钉子
$tɕĩ^{55} / tɕĩ^{55}$	well	井
$nã^{42}lĩ^{42} / nã^{42}lĩ^{42}$	Nanning	南宁

eng [əŋ] : KMH [ən] or [ẽ]

$ts^hən^{42} / ts^hẽ^{42}$	layer, stratum	层
$fən^{33} / fẽ^{33}$	wind	风
$kən^{312} / kẽ^{312}$	even more	更
$nən^{42} / lẽ^{42}$	able	能

The finals *ang*, *iang*, *uang* [aŋ, jaŋ, waŋ] never surface with a nasal consonant.

ang [aŋ] : KMH [ã]

$pã^{35}tsu^{312}$	to help	帮助
$ɕjã^{33}tã^{33}$	to be equal to	相当
$fã^{33}$	square	方
$kã^{35}pi^{55}$	fountain pen	钢笔

iang [jaŋ] : KMH [jã]

tɕjã ⁵⁵ xwa ³¹²	to talk	讲话
ljã ⁴² xaw ⁵⁵	good	良好
tɕ ^h jã ⁴²	strong	强
ɕjã ⁵⁵	to think	想

uang [waŋ] : KMH [wã]

xwã ⁴² ti ³¹²	emperor	皇帝
k ^h wã ⁴² tɕjɛ ⁵⁵ pĩ ³¹²	rabies	狂犬病
swã ³³	pair	双
tswã ³¹² tsu ⁴²	Zhuang Nationality	壮族

Finals ong, iong

There is usually a nasal consonant articulated with these finals, but it is always bilabial [m], a sound that PTH does not use in the syllable final position. Consider the following:

ong [oŋ] : KMH [om]

ts ^h om ⁴²	from	从
jĩ ³¹² tom ³¹²	movement	运动
xom ⁴²	red	红
nom ³¹²	to get, cause	弄
t ^h om ⁵⁵ ji ³³	to unite	统一

iong [joŋ] : KMH [jom]

jom ³¹²	to use	用
tɕ ^h jom ⁴²	poor	穷
ɕjom ⁴²	a bear	熊

3. Tones in Kunming Hua

Tones in KMH are quite interesting. It's been commented by some that there seems to be no real system. Others have said that there is only one tone: falling. These observations, of course, are not accurate, but we have elicited words that carry the first tone in PTH and are pronounced with a clear falling tone in KMH. For example, the word 掐 *qia'* 'to pinch, throttle', was pronounced with approximately a [42] falling pitch in isolation. Phenomena like this would certainly lead one to make initial observations like the above. Gui (1990) gives the following pitch values for KMH (the PTH values are from Yip 1990):

Category	PTH Value	KMH Value
Tone 1	55	44
Tone 2	35	31
Tone 3	214	53
Tone 4	51	212

Gui also points out that another complicating factor in KMH is there are some differences between the speech of older and younger speakers. He gives the following tonal inventory for older speakers of KMH:

Category	Old KMH
Tone 1	44
Tone 2	33
Tone 3	53
Tone 4	11

But based on our own acoustical studies we would claim that the tones in modern KMH are as follows:

Category	KMH	Allotone
Tone 1	33	35
Tone 2	42	
Tone 3	55	53
Tone 4	312	

There are three differences between our list and Gui's. The reason for the first difference can be seen by comparing Tone 1 with Tone 3. Tone 3 is always higher pitched than Tone 1, therefore we have called Tone 1 a 33 pitch and Tone 3 a 55 pitch. The second and third differences have to do with Tone 2 and Tone 4. Tone 4 is pitched very low, but it always has the contour of low falling (sometimes with a slight rise). Tone 2 actually starts higher than Tone 1 and doesn't go as low as Tone 4. Although this is the phonetic shape of Tone 2, we would still call it low falling, and call Tone 4 low level. We will discuss this below.

When one listens to spoken KMH, in contrast to PTH, it sounds very low and laryngealized. At times it sounds like the speakers are growling at each other. The reason for this impression is probably two-fold. One is that Tone 1 is pronounced as a mid-level tone in KMH. The other reason is that Tone 4 is pronounced with what is known as creaky or laryngeal voice. It is quite plausible that this tone is simply low level phonemically, like Tone 3 in PTH. The reason for the contour might be that it is difficult to pronounce such a low tone without a slight fall (cf. Yip 1990).

The creaky voice of Tone 4 helps distinguish it from Tone 2. It is this tone that gives KMH its characteristic sound. Probably the creaky voice is due to the fact that its pitch is very low. This laryngealization can be exaggerated to the point of a glottal stop being inserted in the middle of the syllable rime. For example:

$ku^{55}tæʔæ^{312}$	ancient times	古代
$x\tilde{a}^{55}taʔa^{312}$	very big	很大

The phonetic shape of Tone 3 can sometimes be pronounced similarly to the Mandarin Tone 4 (i.e. 51 high-falling). This usually occurs when a word is said in isolation or when Tone 3 is utterance final. Usually, though, it is pronounced as 53 high-falling in this environment.

3.1. Tone 1 Sandhi

Gui (1990) discusses the change of Tone 1 (pitch = 33) changing to high-rising (35) preceding any tone except Tone 1. Consider the following:

Tone 1 preceding Tone 2

$xwa^{33}ts^h a^{42} \rightarrow xwa^{35}ts^h a^{42}$	flower-tea	花茶
$s\grave{a}w^{33}t\check{c}i^{42} \rightarrow s\grave{a}w^{35}t\check{c}i^{42}$	to collect	搜集
$s\grave{a}n^{33}xo^{42} \rightarrow s\grave{a}n^{35}xo^{42}$	to live	生活

Tone 1 preceding Tone 3

$sw\grave{a}e^{33}taw^{55} \rightarrow sw\grave{a}e^{35}taw^{55}$	to fall	摔倒
$vu^{33}z\tilde{a}^{55} \rightarrow vu^{35}z\tilde{a}^{55}$	pollution	污染
$t\check{c}in^{33}ts\grave{I}^{55} \rightarrow t\check{c}i^{35}ts\grave{I}^{55}$	gold	金子

Tone 1 preceding Tone 4

$\text{ɕi}^{33}\text{jaw}^{312}$	-->	$\text{ɕi}^{35}\text{jaw}^{312}$	must	须要
$\text{jəw}^{33}\text{ɕju}^{312}$	-->	$\text{jəw}^{35}\text{ɕju}^{312}$	excellent	优秀
$\text{wã}^{33}\text{təw}^{312}$	-->	$\text{wã}^{35}\text{təw}^{312}$	pea	豌豆

It can be seen that in the above examples Tone 1 changes from 33 mid-level to 35 high-rising before Tones 2,3, and 4. When Tone 1 precedes another Tone 1 there is no change. Consider the following:

Tone 1 preceding Tone 1

$\text{fɛ}^{33}\text{tɕi}^{33}$	airplane	飞机
$\text{tɕja}^{33}\text{ɕjã}^{33}$	hometown	家乡
$\text{ɕi}^{33}\text{kwa}^{33}$	watermelon	西瓜

3.2. Tone 3 Sandhi

Another tone sandhi rule for KMH is Tone 3 changing from (55) high-level to (53) high-falling. The environment for this change, as mentioned above, is prepausal or utterance final. This change also sometimes occurs before another syllable that is toneless (i.e. a neutral tone).

This analysis is different from what one will find in the literature. The assumption is a character pronounced in isolation rather than in context is more basic. We reject this since a word in isolation is both utterance initial and final, which is an unnatural environment. We consider a word said in the middle of an utterance to be more natural and thus the more basic form.

In an utterance Tone 3 syllables are high-level. Consider the following:

Tone 3 preceding Tone 1⁵

ɕjaw ⁵⁵ t ^h əw ³³	thief	小偷
p ^h u ⁵⁵ tom ³³	common	普通
law ⁵⁵ ɣ ³³	teacher	老师

Tone 3 preceding Tone 2

mɛ ⁵⁵ ko ⁴²	USA	美国
swi ⁵⁵ ni ⁴²	cement	水泥
tæ ⁵⁵ tsu ⁴²	Dai Nationality	傣族

Tone 3 preceding Tone 3

xə̃ ⁵⁵ xaw ⁵⁵	very good	很好
lo ⁵⁵ t ^h i ⁵⁵	naked	裸体
k ^h əw ⁵⁵ ji ⁵⁵	spoken language	口语

Tone 3 preceding Tone 4

paw ⁵⁵ kwi ³¹²	precious	宝贵
ts ^h aw ⁵⁵ tɕja ³¹²	to quarrel	吵架

⁵ We found at least one exception to this rule. The word 'Beijing' 北京 is pronounced as [pe⁵³tɕi³³]. Andy Eatough has pointed out that certain Tone 3 words in Chengdu Hua have a falling tone. These words historically, he notes, were entering tone (入声) words. The word 'north' 北 is one of these.

$k^h a w^{55} s \eta^{312}$ test 考试

There are examples like the following where the second syllable carries the neutral tone, but there is no sandhi besides the neutralizing of the second syllable's tone:

$t \zeta j e^{55} t \zeta j e^{55} \rightarrow t \zeta j e^{55} t \zeta j e^{33}$ older sister 姐姐

But there are also examples of a Tone 3 syllable preceding a neutral tone syllable with the sandhi.

$s \eta^{55} l \bar{a}^{33} \rightarrow s \eta^{53} l \bar{a}^{33}$ died 死了

Yip (1990) notes this same phenomenon with Tone 3 sandhi in PTH, namely inconsistent application of the tone sandhi before neutral tones. The Tone 3 sandhi rule doesn't apply in the 'older sister' example, because the deletion of the tone on the second syllable occurs after the sandhi rule. In the second example it is the case that the *le* 了 syllable has no tone to begin with so the sandhi rule can apply.

A good example of Tone 3 syllables in context is the well-known sentence: "Old Lee buys good wine." It can be seen in this example that four of the five syllables are pronounced with the high-level tone. Only the last syllable is pronounced with a falling tone, and this is because it is utterance final.

$l a w^{55} l i^{55} m \bar{a} e^{55} x a w^{55} t \zeta u^{51}$
老 李 买 好 酒

3.3. Neutral Tone

Unlike PTH the neutral tone in KMH consistently has the pitch value of mid-level (i.e. 33).⁶ It looks like Tone 1 except it is usually in the context where a neutral tone would be expected (i.e. unstressed syllables). For example, when a familial title is reduplicated the second syllable loses its original tone. Consider the following:

$ti^{312}ti^{312}$	$-->$	$ti^{312}ti^{33}$	younger brother	弟弟
$pə^{42}pə^{42}$	$-->$	$pə^{42}pə^{33}$	uncle (father's older bro.)	伯伯
$tɕjɛ^{55}tɕjɛ^{55}$	$-->$	$tɕjɛ^{55}tɕjɛ^{33}$	older sister	姐姐
$p^h o^{42}p^h o^{42}$	$-->$	$p^h o^{42}p^h o^{33}$	mother-in-law	婆婆

In PTH when a noun suffix like 头 [$t^h əw$] is affixed to a word it is usually articulated with the neutral tone. This is also true in KMH as can be seen in the following examples from Gui 1990⁷:

$sə^{42}t^h əw^{42}$	$-->$	$sə^{42}t^h əw^{33}$	tongue	舌头
$tɕ^h iɛ^{42}t^h əw^{42}$	$-->$	$tɕ^h iɛ^{42}t^h əw^{33}$	fist	拳头
$wə^{312}t^h əw^{42}$	$-->$	$wə^{312}t^h əw^{33}$	outside	外头
$xəw^{312}t^h əw^{42}$	$-->$	$xəw^{312}t^h əw^{33}$	behind	后头

⁶ Gui (1990) has several spurious tone sandhi rules which all can be eliminated by the recognition of the neutral tone. The "Yunnan Survey, vol. 58 of the Chinese Dialect Survey" 1989:134 (i.e. 云南省志, 卷五十八, 汉语方言志) also points out that the KMH neutral tone is mid-level.

⁷ We have standardized Gui's tones to our system.

Gui (1990) also gives some examples where the tone of 头 [t^həw] doesn't neutralize. In these cases the syllable [t^həw] is stressed and it seems to still carry its primary semantic meaning of 'head'. Moreover, these words in PTH do not neutralize the syllable [t^həw].

kəw ⁵⁵ t ^h əw ⁴²	dog's head	狗头
səw ⁵⁵ t ^h əw ⁴²	at hand	手头

In KMH the word 首 [səw] is also used as a suffix the way 头 [t^həw] is used. As a suffix it is not stressed and its tone is neutralized.

ɕja ³¹² səw ⁵⁵ --> ɕja ³¹² səw ³³	below	下首
kaw ³³ səw ⁵⁵ --> kaw ³³ səw ³³	above	高首
tɕ ^h jɛ̃ ⁴² səw ⁵⁵ --> tɕ ^h jɛ̃ ⁴² səw ³³	front	前首

Other examples of a neutral tone second syllable are given below.

ja ⁴² ts ^h ɿ ⁵⁵ --> ja ⁴² ts ^h ɿ ³³	tooth	牙齿
ko ⁵⁵ tsɿ ⁵⁵ --> ko ⁵⁵ tsɿ ³³	fruit	果子
ɕjɛ ³¹² ɕjɛ ³¹² --> ɕjɛ ³¹² ɕjɛ ³³	thanks	谢谢

Now consider the following three examples with the neutral tone particle *le* 了:

pɛ ⁴² lə ³³ pɛ ⁴²	extremely white	白了白
lã ⁴² lə ³³ lã ⁴²	extremely blue	蓝了蓝
ts ^h ɿ ³³ la ³³	have eaten	吃了

Gui (1990) also points out that reduplicated verbs can have a neutral tone second syllable like PTH.

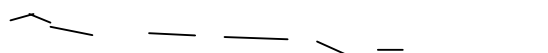
$k^{h\tilde{a}^{312}}k^{h\tilde{a}^{312}} \rightarrow k^{h\tilde{a}^{312}}k^{h\tilde{a}^{33}}$ to look 看看

It is important to note that the above example with ‘fruit’ is somewhat of an exception because the noun suffix [-tsɿ] (子) often carries Tone 3. As seen above in the example of “Old Lee buys good wine,” when Tone 3 is utterance final its phonetic shape can also be pitch [51].

$k\text{əw}^{33}tsɿ^{55} \rightarrow k\text{əw}^{35}tsɿ^{51}$ hook 钩子
 $x\text{əw}^{42}tsɿ^{55} \rightarrow x\text{əw}^{42}tsɿ^{51}$ monkey 猴子
 $pej^{312}tsɿ^{55} \rightarrow pej^{312}tsɿ^{51}$ quilt 被子

3.4. Intonation

We will not discuss this topic in detail, but we want to point out that KMH has a strong tendency towards falling intonation. For example, a two syllable Tone 4 word will display a lower Tone 4 on the second syllable. But this tendency is also seen at the sentence level. If a sentence contains syllables with the same tone, one occurring early and the other late, the later syllable will display a lower pitch of the same contour. Consider the following example from a normal speed sentence as analyzed in CECIL:



 ni.nə ɕjã.tɕjaw tsɑ.ky mə

 ni⁵³nə³³ ɕja³³tɕjaw³³ tsɑ³¹²ky³³ mə³¹²

 你的 香蕉 咋个 卖

 your bananas how to sell

How much do your bananas cost?

The drift is downward. The syllable [tɕɑ³¹²] and [mæ³¹²] are both Tone 4 words, but [mæ³¹²] is much lower in actual pitch than [tɕɑ³¹²]. Also, the syllable [kɿ³³], which carries a neutral tone, is much lower in pitch than [nə³³], which also has a neutral tone. It is examples like these that lead us to say that KMH's intonation is falling.

4. Lexical differences in Kunming Hua

Perhaps the most difficult differences between PTH and KMH for foreign students are lexical. These differences are often just shrugged at and called 'dialectal', 方言, as if this makes it easier or less important. But the fact is, when a student of PTH first hears the question [ni⁵⁵ k^hɿ³¹² na⁵⁵ tɕɑ̃⁵³] they have no idea that it means 'Where are you going?' 你去哪儿? The following list is by no means exhaustive, but we hope it proves helpful in becoming acquainted with this 'dialect'.

We mentioned above that there are exceptions to the phonological changes and that we propose it might be due to the fact that a given character had more than one pronunciation in proto-Mandarin. KMH chooses the lesser-marked option. We have sighted examples like 'must' 得 and 'green' 绿色. Now consider the following examples:

jəw ³¹²	medicine	药
jəw ³³ xwi ³³	appointment	约会

The pronunciation of 'medicine' is [jaw] in PTH. The first syllable of 'appointment' is pronounced [yɛ] in PTH. An alternate pronunciation for the character 约 is [jaw]. Therefore, it would seem that this alternate pronunciation has been chosen in KMH since it is articulated like the word 'medicine'.

Irregularities like these make it difficult to find patterns when one listens to KMH as an outsider. We discuss these differences here because they seem to be motivated lexically rather than phonologically. There are many other clear-cut lexical differences between KMH and PTH. Many of them do not seem to have a corresponding character. When one asks a local person to write down a word, they either write down the character with that meaning or say that there is not one. Following the lead of Teacher Zhao (赵天培), we will give what we consider to be the most suitable character for a given word. Consider the following:

$k^h\gamma^{312}$	to go	去
$na^{55}tj\tilde{a}^{55}$	where	哪点
$ni^{55}k^h\gamma^{312}na^{55}tj\tilde{a}^{53}$	Where are you going?	
	你去哪点? (= 你去哪儿?)	
$na^{55}j\tilde{a}^{312}$	what	哪样
$ni^{55}t\epsilon j\epsilon^{33}$	you (honorific)	你家
$ni^{55}t\epsilon j\epsilon^{33} \zeta ju^{42} \zeta i^{42} na^{55}j\tilde{a}^{312}$	What are you (hon.) studying?	
	你家学习哪样? (= 您学习什么?)	
$wi^{312}na^{55}j\tilde{a}^{312}na^{33}$	Why?	
	为哪样呢? (= 为什么?)	

The word ‘please’ 请 has several meanings in KMH. It is really a term of politeness. It can mean ‘eat’, ‘drink’, ‘please’, etc. Consider the following:

$t\zeta i^{h\tilde{55}}$	eat; please	请
--------------------------	-------------	---

ni⁵⁵ tɕjɛ³³ tɕ^hɿ⁵⁵ tɕjɛ̃⁵⁵ na⁵⁵ jã³¹²

What would you (hon.) like to eat?

你家请点哪样? (= 您想吃一点什么?)

tsæ³¹² tɕ^hɿ⁵⁵ ji³¹² tɕjɛ̃⁵³

Have some more to eat!

再请一点! (= 多吃一点!)

kæ⁴² tɕ^hɿ⁵³ tə³³ fã³¹² lə³³

Have you eaten?

咯请的饭了? (= 吃饭了吗?)

tɕ^hɿ⁵⁵ ts^hɑ⁴²

Please drink some tea.

请茶!

tɕ^hɿ⁵⁵ tɕu⁵³

Please drink some wine.

请酒!

When the word 请 means something other than ‘to eat’ or ‘to drink’, it is used as in the following examples:

mã³¹² tɕ^hɿ⁵³

(sending off guest, a polite statement)

慢请!

tɕ^hɿ⁵⁵ lju⁴² pu³¹²

(guest to host on leaving: ‘Don’t bother sending me.’)

请留步。

KMH uses the particle [kæ⁴²/ ky⁴²] 咯 extensively. It is basically a question word like *ma* 吗, but it is also more than that. It is an interjection with several possible readings. When used as a question word it can be placed before the verb or at the end of the sentence.

ky⁴² ɕin⁴²

Is it OK?

咯行? (= 行不行?)

ky⁴² xaw⁵³

Is it OK?

咯好? (= 好不好?)

kɛ³³ (or: kæ³³) street

街⁸

ni⁵⁵ ky⁴² sã³¹² kɛ³³

Are you going out?

你咯上街? (= 你上街吗?)

ni⁵⁵ tɕjɛ³³ ky⁴² jəw³¹² xɛ⁵⁵ ɕjɛ³³

Do you (hon.) want seafood?

你家咯要海鲜? (= 您要海鲜吗?)

ky⁴² sɿ⁴²

Right?!

咯是? (= 对吧?)

KMH has many set expressions that make sense once the meaning has been explained, but might not be apparent when the language student first hears them.

t^hin³³ tɔ³³ lə⁴²

understand

听得来(= 听得懂)

⁸ There is at least one other example of PTH *jie* being pronounced as [kɛ] in KMH: [kɛ⁵⁵fã³¹²] 'liberation' 解放.

tɕjẽ³¹²pu³³tə⁴²

don't like to watch

见不得! (= 不喜欢看)

ɕjaw⁵³pu³³tə⁴² (or: ɕju⁵³pu³³tə⁴²)

don't know

晓不得! (= 不知道)

zən³¹²pu³³tə⁴²

don't know, or can't recognize

认不得! (= 不知道、认不出)

tsən⁵³pu³³ts^hən⁴²

can't do it, or no can do

整不成! (= 搞不成、不行)

A word that is heavily used in KMH is [tsɑ³¹²ky³³] 咋个 'how'. Consider the following examples:

tsɑ³¹²ky³³lə³³

what happened?

咋个了? (= 怎么了?)

tsən⁵⁵

to do

整

tsən⁵⁵na⁵⁵jã³¹²

what are (you) doing?

整哪样? (= 干什么?)

tsɑ³¹²ky³³tsən⁵³

what to do?

咋个整? (= 怎么办?)

xæ⁴²tsɿ⁵⁵

shoes

鞋子

xæ⁴²tsɿ⁵⁵tsɑ³¹²ky³³mæ³¹²

how much do the shoes cost?

鞋子咋个卖? (= 鞋子多少钱?)

The last domain of differences that we would like to point out is words dealing with time. In KMH the word [tsən³¹²] 阵 is used to mean ‘time, period of time’.

to³⁵tsən³¹²

what time, when

多阵? (= 什么时候?)

ta⁵⁵ɣ³³

to lose

打失

to³⁵tsən³¹² ta⁵⁵ɣ³³ lə³³ ky³³

when did (you) lose it?

多阵打失了个? (= 什么时候丢失了一个?)

na⁵⁵tsən³¹²

what time, when

哪阵? (= 什么时候?)

tsə⁴²tsən³¹²

now, these days

这阵 (= 现在、这时候)

There are many more expressions that are used in KMH that we could list here. Some are ‘common sayings’ 俗语 and some are similar to those above. There are also terms of relationship that differ from PTH. In short, our list is simply a start. We hope that it will help in understanding this dialect of Mandarin as the language student lives and works in Kunming.

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