An introduction to Kunming Hua
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昆明话概况

An Introduction to Kunming Hua

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世界少数民族语文研究院东亚部
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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. 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, sɿ³¹², as ʂʅ³¹².

Moreover, we have noticed some speakers pronounce the retroflexed set as palato-alveolar (tʃ, tʃʰ, 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tsʰɿ³³</td>
<td>to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zɿ³¹²</td>
<td>day/life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zɿ³⁵⁵</td>
<td>to permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zã³¹²</td>
<td>to dye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ts³¹²</td>
<td>to dye</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labiodental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Retroflex</th>
<th>Alveolo-palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p pʰ</td>
<td>t tʰ</td>
<td></td>
<td>k kʰ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ts tsʰ</td>
<td>(tʂ tʂʰ)</td>
<td>tɕ tɕʰ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f v s z (ʂ zɿ)</td>
<td>ç</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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].

| pu³³⁴ jɑ³³ | crown | 乌鸦 |
| vu⁴² | not have | 無 |
| vu⁵⁵ | five | 五 |
| vu³¹² | matter, thing | 物 |

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

| vã⁴² | to smell | 闻 |
| vĩ³¹² | to ask | 问 |
| vã⁵⁵ sã³¹² | 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.
(ʂ́⁵⁵) vã⁴² to die 死亡
vã³¹² (tɕi³¹²) to forget 忘记

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wa³³</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>frog</td>
<td>蛙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa⁴²</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>baby</td>
<td>娃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa⁵⁵</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>tile</td>
<td>瓦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa³¹²</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>socks</td>
<td>袜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wæ³³</td>
<td>wæ</td>
<td>slanting</td>
<td>歪</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wæ⁵⁵</td>
<td>wæ</td>
<td>sprain</td>
<td>崴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wæ³¹²</td>
<td>wæ</td>
<td>outside</td>
<td>外</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wi³³</td>
<td>wi</td>
<td>power</td>
<td>威</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wi⁴²</td>
<td>wi</td>
<td>surround</td>
<td>围</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wi⁵⁵</td>
<td>wi</td>
<td>great</td>
<td>伟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wi³¹²</td>
<td>wi</td>
<td>to feed</td>
<td>喂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wæ³³</td>
<td>wæ</td>
<td>crooked</td>
<td>弯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɔ³³</td>
<td>wɔ</td>
<td>lukewarm</td>
<td>温</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa⁴²</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>king</td>
<td>王</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa⁵⁵</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>bowl</td>
<td>碗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa³¹²</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>prosperous</td>
<td>旺</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

[n] ~ [l]

August, 2008 Version
njä⁴² / ljä⁴²

NJU⁻⁵⁵TSWA⁻⁵⁵ / LU⁻⁵⁵TSWA⁻⁵⁵

NJU⁻⁵⁵ NJE⁴² / LU⁻⁵⁵ LJE⁴²

NJÈ⁴² / LJÈ⁴²

NJU⁻⁵⁵ NAE⁵⁵ / LU⁻⁵⁵ LÆ⁻⁵⁵

NI⁻⁵⁵ / LI⁻⁵⁵

NÄ⁻⁴² / LÄ⁻⁴²

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]

NJÈ⁴² Xu⁻³³ / LJÈ⁴² Fu⁻³³

ZÆ⁻³¹² Xu⁻³³ / ZÆ⁻³¹² Fu⁻³³

FE⁻³⁵ Xu⁻⁵⁵ / FE⁻³⁵ Fu⁻⁵⁵

XU⁻³¹² S̆⁻³³ / Fu⁻³¹² S̆⁻³³

XU⁻³¹² KʰÆ⁻⁵⁵ / Fu⁻³¹² KʰÆ⁻⁵⁵

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

XAW⁻⁵⁵To⁻³³

August, 2008 Version
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, [tɕ, tɕʰ, ɕ]. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>po³⁵lã³¹²</td>
<td>波浪</td>
<td>wave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sã³³pʰo³³</td>
<td>山坡</td>
<td>hillside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me⁵⁵ko⁴²</td>
<td>美国</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xo⁵⁵</td>
<td>火</td>
<td>fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lo³³so³³</td>
<td>罗嗦</td>
<td>wordy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to³³</td>
<td>多</td>
<td>many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no³¹²mi⁵⁵</td>
<td>粽米</td>
<td>sticky rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zo³¹²</td>
<td>弱</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final: e

There are two pronunciations of the pinyin final e, namely, [ə] as in le (了) and [ɣ] 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 \textit{le} (\textit{了}). The vowel is drawn out in length. For example:

\[ \text{xwæ}^{312}\text{le}^{33} \rightarrow \text{xwæ}^{312}\text{la}:^{33} \] ruined 坏了

The PTH [\textit{ɣ}] is equivalent to [\textit{o}] in KMH following the velar initials (k, \textit{k}^\text{h}, x). Following all other initials it is the same in KMH as in PTH.\textsuperscript{2}

\begin{align*}
\text{ko}^{33}\text{ko}^{33} & \quad \text{older brother} \quad \text{哥哥} \\
\text{k}^\text{h}\text{o}^{35}\text{cju}^{42} & \quad \text{science} \quad \text{科学} \\
\text{k}^\text{h}\text{o}^{55}\text{j}^{55} & \quad \text{OK} \quad \text{可以} \\
\text{x}^{33} & \quad \text{to drink} \quad \text{喝}
\end{align*}

**Finals ü, ūe, 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 [\textit{y}] is pronounced [i] in KMH. Consider the following examples:

\begin{align*}
\text{ü} [\textit{y}] : \text{KMH} [\text{i}] \\
\text{tɕi}^{312}\text{tsɿ}^{55} & \quad \text{sentence} \quad \text{句子} \\
\text{tɕjaw}^{33}\text{t}^{33} & \quad \text{suburbs} \quad \text{郊区} \\
\text{ɕi}^{35}\text{jaw}^{212} & \quad \text{need} \quad \text{需要} \\
\text{ni}^{53}\text{nə}^{33} & \quad \text{female} \quad \text{女的}
\end{align*}

\footnote{\text{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 [y] or [ə].}}

August, 2008 Version
One exception that we found to this is the following:

\[ \text{lu}^{312} \text{sv}^{312} \quad \text{green} \quad \text{绿色} \]

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].

\[ \text{"üe" [yɛ] : KMH [jɛ]} \]
\[ \text{tɕje}^{42} \text{tɨ}^{312} \quad \text{to decide} \quad \text{决定} \]
\[ \text{tɕʰje}^{35} \text{səw}^{55} \quad \text{to lack} \quad \text{缺少} \]
\[ \text{ɕje}^{55} \quad \text{snow} \quad \text{雪} \]
\[ \text{je}^{312} \text{fən}^{312} \quad \text{month} \quad \text{月份} \]

At least three exceptions to this pattern are the words ‘to study’ 学习 [ɕju⁴²ɕi⁴²], ‘to plunder’ 掠夺 [lju³¹²to⁴²] and ‘brief, sketchy’ 略 [lju³¹²].

\[ \text{"üan" [yɛn] : KMH [jɛ̃]} \]
\[ \text{tɕje}^{55} \quad \text{roll} \quad \text{卷} \]
\[ \text{tɕʰje}^{42} \quad \text{whole} \quad \text{全} \]
\[ \text{ɕje}^{55} \text{tso}^{42} \quad \text{to choose} \quad \text{选择} \]
\[ \text{je}^{55} \quad \text{distant} \quad \text{远} \]

\[ \text{"ün" [yn] : KMH [in]} \]
\[ \text{tɕin}^{35} \text{twi}^{312} \quad \text{army} \quad \text{军队} \]
\[ \text{tɕʰin}^{42} \text{tsom}^{312} \quad \text{the masses} \quad \text{群众} \]
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pʰæj⁴²ɕin³¹²</th>
<th>cultivate</th>
<th>培训</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jin⁴²nã⁴²</td>
<td>Yunnan</td>
<td>云南</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 [ɣ] and sometimes [u], a low-central unrounded vowel. This is where it starts to get difficult, as PTH’s ei [ej] is also pronounced [u] in certain environments but [ɛ] in others, and yet [wej] in others. First consider ai [aj] and uai [waj].

ai [aj] : KMH [æ]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ʔæ³¹²</th>
<th>love</th>
<th>爱</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pæ³¹²</td>
<td>be defeated</td>
<td>败</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinyin</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>注音</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsʰæ³³</td>
<td>guess</td>
<td>猜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tæ³¹²</td>
<td>to wear</td>
<td>戴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ji³³kæ³³</td>
<td>should</td>
<td>应该</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xæ⁴²</td>
<td>still</td>
<td>还</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʰæ³³</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>开</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>læ⁴²</td>
<td>come</td>
<td>来</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mæ⁵⁵</td>
<td>to buy</td>
<td>买</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nae⁵⁵nae³³</td>
<td>grandma</td>
<td>奶奶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pʰæ⁴²twi³¹²</td>
<td>to line up</td>
<td>排队</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sæ³¹²</td>
<td>to sun</td>
<td>晒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thæ³¹²</td>
<td>too</td>
<td>太</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsæ³¹²</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>在</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**uai [waj] : KMH [wæ]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>注音</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kwæ³³</td>
<td>well-behaved</td>
<td>乖</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xwæ³¹²</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>坏</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʰwæ³¹²</td>
<td>fast</td>
<td>快</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swæ⁵⁵</td>
<td>to swing (a whip)</td>
<td>甩</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data look fairly consistent. We examine the exceptions below, comparing them to some examples of *ei* [ej].
The changes of the final *ei* [ei] are not as neat. When the final *ei* is preceded by the alveolars [n] and [l] it is pronounced as [wej].

- `lwej³¹²` tired 累
- `lwej⁴²tje³¹²` thunder and lightning 雷电
- `nwej³¹²` internal 内

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

- `mɛ⁵⁵ko⁴²` USA 美国
- `fɛ³⁵fu⁵⁵` The Flying Tigers 飞虎

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

- `xɤ³³` black 黑
- `kɤ⁵⁵` to give 给
- `pɤ⁵³tɕĩ³³` Beijing 北京
- `mɤ⁴²to³³` there are none 没的

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

---

3 This difference apparently only applies to the alveolar sonorants. The syllable *dei³* 得 ‘must’ is not included here because KMH chooses the less marked pronunciation of [tɤ⁵³]. The syllables *cei* and *tei* don’t exist. And the syllable *zei²* 贼 ‘wicked’ is the same as PTH.
Because of these variations the words ‘north’ 北 and ‘hundred’ 百 are homophones in KMH: [pɐ⁵⁵].

Final: ui

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>白</th>
<th>百</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>white</td>
<td>hundred</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>白</th>
<th>百</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>白</td>
<td>百</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).
昆明话概况

an [an] : KMH [ā]

ʔā³³ peaceful 安
pā³³ class, team 班
tsʰā³³ tɕja³³ to participate 参加
fâ³¹ rice 饭
kā⁵⁵ to feel 感
nā⁴² difficult 难
sā³³ mountain 山
tʰa⁴² xwa³¹ to talk 谈话

ien [jen] : KMH [jē]
pʰa⁴² pjē³³ side 旁边
tsʰ¹⁴ tje⁵⁵ dictionary 词典
sɿ⁴² tɕjē³³ time 时间
ljē⁵⁵ face 脸
jē³³ smoke 烟

uan [wan] : KMH [wā]
wā³¹ ten thousand 万
tsʰwā³³ to wear 穿
kwā³⁵ɕi³¹ relationship 关系
nwā⁵⁵ xo³³ warm 暖和
zwā⁵⁵ soft 软

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

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

\[\text{en} \text{ [en]} : \text{KMH [en] or } [\ddot{e}]\]

\[k^h\text{o}^{312}\text{pən}^{55} / k^h\text{o}^{312}\text{pə}^{55}\]

\[\text{textbook} \quad \text{课本}\]

\[\text{fən}^{33} / \text{fə}^{33}\]

\[\text{to divide, part} \quad \text{分}\]

\[\text{zən}^{55} / \text{zə}^{55}\]

\[\text{to endure} \quad \text{忍}\]

\[\text{sən}^{35}\text{lin}^{42} / \text{sə}^{35}\text{li}^{42}\]

\[\text{forest} \quad \text{森林}\]

\[\text{in} \text{ [in]} : \text{KMH [in] or } [\ddot{i}]\]

\[\text{lin}^{42}\text{tçi}^{33} / \text{li}^{42}\text{tçi}^{33}\]

\[\text{neighbor} \quad \text{邻居}\]

\[p^h\text{in}^{33}\text{jin}^{33} / p^h\text{i}^{33}\text{jĩ}^{33}\]

\[\text{pinyin} \quad \text{拼音}\]

\[\text{zən}^{42}\text{min}^{42} / \text{zə}^{42}\text{mĩ}^{42}\]

\[\text{the people} \quad \text{人民}\]

\[\text{ɕin}^{33} / \text{ɕi}^{33}\]

\[\text{new} \quad \text{新}\]

\[\text{un} \text{ [wən]} : \text{KMH [wən] or } [\ddot{a}]\]

\[\text{wən}^{42} / \text{wə}^{42}\]

\[\text{writing} \quad \text{文}\]

\[\text{ts}^h\text{wən}^{42}\text{tsə}^{312} / \text{ts}^h\text{wə}^{42}\text{tsə}^{312}\]

\[\text{exist} \quad \text{存在}\]

\[\text{twən}^{33} / \text{twə}^{33}\]

\[\text{squat on heels} \quad \text{蹲}\]

\[k^h\text{wən}^{35}\text{mi}^{42} / k^h\text{wə}^{35}\text{mi}^{42}\]

\[\text{Kunming} \quad \text{昆明}\]

\textbf{Finals ing, eng, ang, iang, uang}

---

4 We elicited the word ‘tender’ \[\text{nən}\] 嫩, and found it to be an exception in an unexpected way. It was pronounced \[\text{nwən}^{312}\], resembling \[\text{nei}\] in that a \[\text{w}\] is epenthized.
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 [ɨ]
- pin^{33} / pɨ^{33} ice 冰
- tin^{35}tsɿ^{55} / ti^{35}tsɿ^{55} nail 钉子
- tɕin^{55} / tɕɨ^{55} well 井
- nə^{42}lin^{42} / nə^{42}lɨ^{42} Nanning 南宁

**eng [əŋ]**: KMH [ən] or [ɨ]
- tsʰən^{42} / tsʰə̃^{42} layer, stratum 层
- fən^{33} / fə^{33} wind 风
- kən^{312} / kə̃^{312} even more 更
- nən^{42} / lə̃^{42} able 能

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

**ang [aŋ]**: KMH [ā]
- pə^{35}tsɿ^{312} to help 帮助
- cə^{33}tə^{33} to be equal to 相当
- fə^{33} square 方
- kə^{35}pi^{55} fountain pen 钢笔
iang [jan] : KMH [ja]

tɕja⁵⁵xwa³¹² to talk 讲话
ljā⁴²xaw⁵⁵ good 良好
tɕʰjā⁴² strong 强
ɕjā⁵⁵ to think 想

uang [waŋ] : KMH [wa]
xwa⁴²ti³¹² emperor 皇帝
kʰwã⁴²tɕjɛ̃⁵⁵pĩ³¹² rabies 狂犬病
swã³³ pair 双
tswã³¹²tsu⁴² 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 [ʊŋ] : KMH [om]

tsʰom⁴² from 从
jĩ³¹²tom³¹² movement 运动
xom⁴² red 红
nom³¹² to get, cause 弄
tʰom⁵⁵ji³³ to unite 统一

iong [jʊŋ] : KMH [jom]

jom³¹² to use 用
tɕʰjom⁴² poor 穷
ɕjom⁴² 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 qia¹ ‘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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>PTH Value</th>
<th>KMH Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tone 1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone 2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone 3</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone 4</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Old KMH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tone 1</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone 2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone 3</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone 4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
But based on our own acoustical studies we would claim that the tones in modern KMH are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>KMH</th>
<th>Allotone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tone 1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone 2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone 3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone 4</td>
<td>312</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

\[ \text{ku}^{55}\text{tæʔæ}^{312} \quad \text{ancient times} \quad \text{古代} \\
\text{xə}^{55}\text{taʔa}^{312} \quad \text{very big} \quad \text{很大} \]

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**

- \( \text{xwa}^{33}\text{tsʰa}^{42} \rightarrow \text{xwa}^{35}\text{tsʰa}^{42} \quad \text{flower-tea} \quad \text{花茶} \\
- \text{səw}^{33}\text{tɕi}^{42} \rightarrow \text{səw}^{35}\text{tɕi}^{42} \quad \text{to collect} \quad \text{搜集} \\
- \text{sən}^{33}\text{xo}^{42} \rightarrow \text{sən}^{35}\text{xo}^{42} \quad \text{to live} \quad \text{生活} \)

**Tone 1 preceding Tone 3**

- \( \text{swæ}^{33}\text{taw}^{55} \rightarrow \text{swæ}^{35}\text{taw}^{55} \quad \text{to fall} \quad \text{摔倒} \\
- \text{vu}^{33}\text{zə}^{55} \rightarrow \text{vu}^{35}\text{zə}^{55} \quad \text{pollution} \quad \text{污染} \\
- \text{tɕin}^{33}\text{tsɿ}^{55} \rightarrow \text{tɕin}^{35}\text{tsɿ}^{55} \quad \text{gold} \quad \text{金子} \)
Tone 1 preceding Tone 4

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ɕi³³jɑw³¹²} & \rightarrow \text{ɕi³⁵jɑw³¹²} & \text{must} & \text{须要} \\
\text{jəw³³ɕju³¹²} & \rightarrow \text{jəw³⁵ɕju³¹²} & \text{excellent} & \text{优秀} \\
\text{wã³³təw³¹²} & \rightarrow \text{wã³⁵təw³¹²} & \text{pea} & \text{豌豆}
\end{align*}
\]

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{fɛ³³tɕi³³} & \quad \text{airplane} & \text{飞机} \\
\text{tɕja³³ɕjã³³} & \quad \text{hometown} & \text{家乡} \\
\text{ɕi³³kwa³³} & \quad \text{watermelon} & \text{西瓜}
\end{align*}
\]

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 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>音节</th>
<th>意思</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ɕjaw⁵⁵tʰəw³³</td>
<td>thief 小偷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pʰu⁵⁵tom⁳³</td>
<td>common 普通</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>law⁵⁵sɿ³³</td>
<td>teacher 老师</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tone 3 preceding Tone 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>音节</th>
<th>意思</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mɛ⁵⁵ko⁴²</td>
<td>USA 美国</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swi⁵⁵ni⁴²</td>
<td>cement 水泥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tæ⁵⁵tsu⁴²</td>
<td>Dai Nationality 傣族</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tone 3 preceding Tone 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>音节</th>
<th>意思</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>xə̃⁵⁵xɑw⁵⁵</td>
<td>very good 很好</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lo⁵⁵tʰi⁵⁵</td>
<td>naked 裸体</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʰaw⁵⁵ji⁵⁵</td>
<td>spoken language 口语</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tone 3 preceding Tone 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>音节</th>
<th>意思</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>paw⁵⁵kwi³¹²</td>
<td>precious 宝贵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsʰaw⁵⁵tcja³¹²</td>
<td>to quarrel 吵架</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 We found at least one exception to this rule. The word ‘Beijing’ 北京 is pronounced as [pɐ⁵³tɕĩ³₃]. 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.

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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:

\[ \text{tɕjɛ}^{55}\text{tɕjɛ}^{55}4 \rightarrow \text{tɕjɛ}^{55}\text{tɕjɛ}^{33} \quad \text{older sister} \quad \text{姐姐} \]

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

\[ \text{sɿ}^{55}\text{lo}^{33}4 \rightarrow \text{sɿ}^{53}\text{lo}^{33} \quad \text{died} \quad \text{死了} \]

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 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.

\[ \text{law}^{55}\text{li}^{55} \text{mæ}^{55} \text{xaw}^{55} \text{tcu}^{51} \quad \text{老} \text{李} \text{买} \text{好} \text{酒} \]
3.3. Neutral Tone

Unlike PTH the neutral tone in KMH consistently has the pitch value of mid-level (i.e. 33). 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ti}^{312}\text{ti}^{312} & \rightarrow \text{ti}^{312}\text{ti}^{33} \quad \text{younger brother} & \text{弟弟} \\
\text{pə}^{42}\text{pə}^{42} & \rightarrow \text{pə}^{42}\text{pə}^{33} \quad \text{uncle (father's older bro.)} & \text{伯伯} \\
\text{tɕje}^{55}\text{tɕje}^{55} & \rightarrow \text{tɕje}^{55}\text{tɕje}^{33} \quad \text{older sister} & \text{姐姐} \\
\text{pʰo}^{42}\text{pʰo}^{42} & \rightarrow \text{pʰo}^{42}\text{pʰo}^{33} \quad \text{mother-in-law} & \text{婆婆}
\end{align*}
\]

In PTH when a noun suffix like 头 [tʰəw] 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 1990:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sə}^{42}\text{tʰəw}^{42} & \rightarrow \text{sə}^{42}\text{tʰəw}^{33} \quad \text{tongue} & \text{舌头} \\
\text{tɕʰiɛ}^{42}\text{tʰəw}^{42} & \rightarrow \text{tɕʰiɛ}^{42}\text{tʰəw}^{33} \quad \text{fist} & \text{拳头} \\
\text{wæ}^{312}\text{tʰəw}^{42} & \rightarrow \text{wæ}^{312}\text{tʰəw}^{33} \quad \text{outside} & \text{外头} \\
\text{xəw}^{312}\text{tʰəw}^{42} & \rightarrow \text{xəw}^{312}\text{tʰəw}^{33} \quad \text{behind} & \text{后头}
\end{align*}
\]

---

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 [tʰəw] doesn’t neutralize. In these cases the syllable [tʰəw] is stressed and it seems to still carry its primary semantic meaning of ‘head’. Moreover, these words in PTH do not neutralize the syllable [tʰəw].

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kəw}^{55} & \text{tʰəw}^{42} & \text{dog’s head} & \text{狗头} \\
\text{səw}^{55} & \text{tʰəw}^{42} & \text{at hand} & \text{手头}
\end{align*}
\]

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ɕja}^{312} & \text{səw}^{55} \rightarrow \text{ɕja}^{312} \text{səw}^{33} & \text{below} & \text{下首} \\
\text{kaw}^{33} & \text{səw}^{55} \rightarrow \text{kaw}^{33} \text{səw}^{33} & \text{above} & \text{高首} \\
\text{ʨʰjɛ̃}^{42} & \text{səw}^{55} \rightarrow \text{ʨʰjɛ̃}^{42} \text{səw}^{33} & \text{front} & \text{前首}
\end{align*}
\]

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ja}^{42} & \text{tsʰ}^{55} \rightarrow \text{ja}^{42} \text{tsʰ}^{33} & \text{tooth} & \text{牙齿} \\
\text{ko}^{55} & \text{tsɿ}^{55} \rightarrow \text{ko}^{55} \text{tsɿ}^{33} & \text{fruit} & \text{果子} \\
\text{ɕjɛ}^{312} & \text{ɕjɛ}^{312} \rightarrow \text{ɕjɛ}^{312} \text{ɕjɛ}^{33} & \text{thanks} & \text{谢谢}
\end{align*}
\]

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pe}^{42} & \text{lə}^{33} \text{pe}^{42} & \text{extremely white} & \text{白了白} \\
\text{lə}^{42} & \text{lə}^{33} \text{lə}^{42} & \text{extremely blue} & \text{蓝了蓝} \\
\text{tsʰ}^{1} & \text{la}^{33} & \text{have eaten} & \text{吃了}
\end{align*}
\]

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

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

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].

- kəw³³tsɿ⁵⁵ --&gt; kəw³⁵tsɿ⁵¹ hook 钩子
- xəw⁴²tsɿ⁵⁵ --&gt; xəw⁴²tsɿ⁵¹ monkey 猴子
- pej³¹²tsɿ⁵⁵ --&gt; pej³¹²tsɿ⁵¹ 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:

```
ni₅³ nə³³ cja₃³ tʃaw₃³ tsa.ky³³ mæ₃¹²
你 的 香 蕉 咋 个 卖
your bananas how to sell
```

*How much do your bananas cost?*
The drift is downward. The syllable [tsa³¹²] and [mae³¹²] are both Tone 4 words, but [mae³¹²] is much lower in actual pitch than [tsa³¹²]. Also, the syllable [kɣ³³], 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 ‘dialectical’, 方言, as if this makes it easier or less important. But the fact is, when a student of PTH first hears the question [ni⁵⁵⁴kʰɣ³¹²⁴na⁵⁵tjə̃⁵³] 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
jəw³¹² & \quad \text{medicine} & \quad \text{药} \\
jəw³³xwi³³ & \quad \text{appointment} & \quad \text{约会}
\end{align*}
\]

The pronunciation of ‘medicine’ is [jaw] in PTH. The first syllable of ‘appointment’ is pronounced [ye] 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kʰɣ}^{312} & \quad \text{to go} \\
\text{na}^{55}\text{tjō}^{55} & \quad \text{where} \\
\text{ni}^{55} & \text{kʰɣ}^{312} \text{na}^{55}\text{tjō}^{53} \\
\text{Where are you going?} \\
\text{你去哪点？（= 你去哪儿？）} \\
\text{na}^{55}\text{jā}^{312} & \quad \text{what} \\
\text{ni}^{55}\text{tɕje}^{33} & \quad \text{you (honorific)} \\
\text{ni}^{55}\text{tɕje}^{33} & \text{ɕju}^{42} \text{ɕi}^{42} \text{na}^{55}\text{jā}^{312} \\
\text{What are you (hon.) studying?} \\
\text{你家学习哪样？（= 您学习什么？）} \\
\text{wi}^{312} & \text{na}^{55}\text{jā}^{312} \text{na}^{33} \\
\text{Why?} \\
\text{为哪样呢？（= 为什么？）}
\end{align*}
\]

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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tɕʰt}^{55} & \quad \text{eat; please} \\
\text{请}
\end{align*}
\]
What would you (hon.) like to eat?
你家请点哪样？ (= 您想吃一点什么？)

Have some more to eat!
再请一点！ (= 多吃一点！)

Have you eaten?
咯请的饭了？ (= 吃饭了吗？)

Please drink some tea.
请茶！

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:

(sending off guest, a polite statement)
慢请！

(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.
kɣ⁴²⁴ cin⁴²
Is it OK?
咯行？ (= 行不行？)

kɣ⁴²⁴ xaw⁵³
Is it OK?
咯好？ (= 好不好？)

kɛ³³ (or: kæ³³) street

ni⁵⁵ kɣ⁴²⁴ sa³¹² kɛ³³
Are you going out?
你咯上街？ (= 你上街吗？)

ni⁵⁵ teje³³ kɣ⁴² jəw³¹² xɛ⁵⁵ cjɛ³³
Do you (hon.) want seafood?
你家咯要海鲜？ (= 您要海鲜吗？)

kɣ⁴²⁴ sɿ⁴²⁴
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.

tʰin³³ tə³³ læ⁴²
understand
听得来 (= 听得懂)

8 There is at least one other example of PTH jie being pronounced as [kɛ] in KMH: [kɛ⁵⁵ fɑ³¹²] ‘liberation’ 解放.
tcje³¹²pu³³ tə⁴²
don’t like to watch
见不得！ (= 不喜欢看)

cjaw⁵³pu³³ tə⁴² (or: cju⁵³ pu³³ tə⁴²)
don’t know
晓不得！ (= 不知道)

zən³¹²pu³³ tə⁴²
don’t know, or can’t recognize
认不得！ (= 不知道，认不出)

tsən⁵³ pu³³ tsʰən⁴²
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 [tsə³¹²kɣ³³] 咋个 ‘how’. Consider the following examples:

tsa³¹²ky³³lo³³
what happened?
咋个了？ (= 怎么了？)

ntsən⁵⁵ to do 整
tsən⁵⁵ na⁵⁵ jã³¹²
what are (you) doing?
整哪样？ (= 干什么？)

tsa³¹²ky³³ tson⁵³
what to do?
咋个整？ (= 怎么办？)

xæ⁴²tsɿ⁵⁵ shoes 鞋子
xæ⁴²tsɿ⁵⁵ tsa³¹²ky³³ ma³¹²
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’.

\[to^{35}tsən^{312}\]
what time, when
多阵？ (= 什么时候？)

\[ta^{55}s₁^{33}\]
to lose

\[to^{35}tsən^{312} ta^{55}s₁^{33}lə^{33}kɣ^{33}\]
when did (you) lose it?
多阵打失了？ (= 什么时候丢失了一个？)

\[na^{55}tsən^{312}\]
what time, when
哪阵？ (= 什么时候？)

\[tsə^{42}tsən^{312}\]
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.
5. Bibliography


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