

An introduction to Kunming Hua

Thomas M. Pinson, Jacqueline S. Pinson

▶ **To cite this version:**

Thomas M. Pinson, Jacqueline S. Pinson. An introduction to Kunming Hua. 2008. halshs-01383557

HAL Id: halshs-01383557
https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01383557

Preprint submitted on 18 Oct 2016

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - ShareAlike 4.0 International License

昆明话概况

An Introduction to Kunming Hua

Thomas M. Pinson
Jacqueline S. Pinson



SIL International East Asia
世界少数民族语文研究院东亚部

CONTENTS

0. Introduction 1

1. Initials In Kunming Hua 2

2. Finals In Kunming Hua 7

3. Tones In Kunming Hua 19

3.1 Tone 1 Sandhi 21
3.2 Tone 3 Sandhi 22
3.3 Neutral Tone 25
3.4 Intonation 27

4. Lexical Differences In Kunming Hua 28

5. Bibliography 33

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, sɿ^{312}, as ʂɿ^{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.

ts^{h}ɿ^{33}	to eat	吃
zɿ^{312} tsɿ^{55}	day/life	日子
zã^{312}	to permit	让
zã^{55}	to dye	染

pɐ^{42} tsʰɭ^{33}	idiot	白痴
tsu^{33}	pig	猪
zəw^{312} / zu^{42}	meat	肉
sɭ^{42} vu^{312}	food	食物
tjɑw^{312} tsʰɑ^{42}	investigation	调查
sã^{35} sã^{312}	up hill	山上
tsʰəw^{312} lə^{33} tsʰəw^{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}jɑ^{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]

və̃^{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
wə̃^{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]

nj$ã^{42}$ / lj$ã^{42}$	mother	娘
nju^{55}tʂw$ã^{55}$ / lju^{55}tʂw$ã^{55}$	turn around	扭转
nju^{55} nje^{42} / lju^{55} lje^{42}	shy	扭捏
nj$ɛ̃^{42}$ / lj$ɛ̃^{42}$	year	年
nju^{42} næ^{55} / lju^{42} læ^{55}	cow milk	牛奶
ni^{55} / li^{55}	you	你
n$ã^{42}$ / l$ã^{42}$	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]

nj$ɛ̃^{42}$ xu^{33} / lj$ɛ̃^{42}$ 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}sɻ^{33} / fu^{312}sɻ^{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].

xɑw^{55}to^{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, [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.

po^{35}lã^{312}	wave	波浪
sã^{33}pʰo^{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 [ɣ] as in ***ge****ge* (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}laː^{33}	ruined	坏了

The PTH [ɣ] 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}ɕju^{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]		
tɕi^{312}tsɻ^{55}	sentence	句子
tɕjaw^{33}tɕ^{h}i^{33}	suburbs	郊区
ɕi^{35}jaw^{312}	need	需要
ni^{53}nə^{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 [ɣ] or [ə].

fa^{55}li^{312}	law	法律

One exception that we found to this is the following:

lu^{312}sɣ^{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}tĩ^{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 [ɕju^{42}ɕi^{42}], ‘to plunder’ 掠夺 [lju^{312}to^{42}] and ‘brief, sketchy’ 略 [lju^{312}].

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

$p^hɐj^{42}ɕin^{312}$	cultivate	培训
$jin^{42}nã^{42}$	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:

$tɕu^{55}$	nine	九
lu^{312}	six	六
nu^{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 [ɣ] and sometimes [ɐ], a low-central unrounded vowel. This is where it starts to get difficult, as PTH's *ei* [ej] is also pronounced [ɐ] in certain environments but [ɛ] in others, and yet [wej] in others. First consider *ai* [aj] and *uai* [waj].

ai [aj] : KMH [æ]

$ʔæ^{312}$	love	爱
$pæ^{312}$	be defeated	败

tsʰæ^{33}	guess	猜
tæ^{312}	to wear	戴
jĩ^{33}kæ^{33}	should	应该
xæ^{42}	still	还
kʰæ^{33}	open	开
læ^{42}	come	来
mæ^{55}	to buy	买
næ^{55}næ^{33}	grandma	奶奶
pʰæ^{42}twi^{312}	to line up	排队
sæ^{312}	to sun	晒
tʰæ^{312}	too	太
tsæ^{312}	at	在

uai [waj] : KMH [wæ]

kwæ^{33}	well-behaved	乖
xwæ^{312}	bad	坏
kʰwæ^{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}tjɛ̃^{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 [ɣ] and [ɐ]. Consider the following examples:

xɣ^{33}	black	黑
kɣ^{55}	to give	给
pɐ^{53}tɕĩ^{33}	Beijing	北京
mɐ^{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 [tɣ^{53}]. The syllables *cei* and *tei* don't exist. And the syllable *zei*^{2} 贼 'wicked' is the same as PTH.

pɐ^{42}	white	白
pɐ^{55}	hundred	百
p^{h}ɐ^{35}tjɛ̃^{312} jĩ^{55}	to make a movie	拍电影

Because of these variations the words ‘north’ 北 and ‘hundred’ 百 are homophones in KMH: [pɐ^{55}].

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
tsʰã^{33}tɕja^{33}	to participate	参加
fã^{312}	rice	饭
kã^{55}	to feel	感
nã^{42}	difficult	难
sã^{33}	mountain	山
tʰã^{42}xwa^{312}	to talk	谈话

ien [jɛn]：KMH [jɛ̃]

pʰã^{42}pjɛ̃^{33}	side	旁边
tsʰɿ^{42}tjɛ̃^{55}	dictionary	词典
sɿ^{42}tɕjɛ̃^{33}	time	时间
ljɛ̃^{55}	face	脸
jɛ̃^{33}	smoke	烟

uan [wan]：KMH [wã]

wã^{312}	ten thousand	万
tsʰwã^{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 [ə̃]

$k^ho^{312}pən^{55}$ / $k^ho^{312}pə̃^{55}$	textbook	课本
$fən^{33}$ / $fə̃^{33}$	to divide, part	分
$zən^{55}$ / $zə̃^{55}$	to endure	忍
$sən^{35}lin^{42}$ / $sə̃^{35}lĩ^{42}$	forest	森林

in [in] : KMH [in] or [ĩ]

$lin^{42}tɕi^{33}$ / $lĩ^{42}tɕi^{33}$	neighbor	邻居
$p^hin^{33}jin^{33}$ / $p^hĩ^{33}jĩ^{33}$	pinyin	拼音
$zə̃n^{42}min^{42}$ / $zə̃^{42}mĩ^{42}$	the people	人民
$ɕin^{33}$ / $ɕĩ^{33}$	new	新

un [wən] : KMH [wən] or [wə̃]

$wən^{42}$ / $wə̃^{42}$	writing	文
$ts^hwən^{42}tsə̃^{312}$ / $ts^hwə̃^{42}tsə̃^{312}$	exist	存在
$twən^{33}$ / $twə̃^{33}$	squat on heels	蹲
$k^hwən^{35}mĩ^{42}$ / $k^hwə̃^{35}mĩ^{42}$	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 epenthasized.

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]

pin^{33} / pĩ^{33}	ice	冰
tin^{35}tsɿ^{55} / tĩ^{35}tsɿ^{55}	nail	钉子
tɕin^{55} / tɕĩ^{55}	well	井
nã^{42}lin^{42} / nã^{42}lĩ^{42}	Nanning	南宁

eng [əŋ] : KMH [ən] or [ə̃]

ts^{h}ən^{42} / ts^{h}ə̃^{42}	layer, stratum	层
fən^{33} / fə̃^{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 [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}tɕjɛ̃^{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 [ʊŋ] : 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 [jʊŋ] : 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 *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):

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
xə̃^{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} --> xwa^{35}ts^{h}a^{42}	flower-tea	花茶
səw^{33}tɕi^{42} --> səw^{35}tɕi^{42}	to collect	搜集
sən^{33}xo^{42} --> sən^{35}xo^{42}	to live	生活

Tone 1 preceding Tone 3

swæ^{33}tɑw^{55} --> swæ^{35}tɑw^{55}	to fall	摔倒
vu^{33}zã^{55} --> vu^{35}zã^{55}	pollution	污染
tɕin^{33}tsɻ^{55} --> tɕĩ^{35}tsɻ^{55}	gold	金子

Tone 1 preceding Tone 4

ɕi^{33}jɑw^{312} - -> ɕi^{35}jɑw^{312}	must	须要
jəw^{33}ɕju^{312} - -> jəw^{35}ɕju^{312}	excellent	优秀
wã^{33}təw^{312} - -> wã^{35}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

fɛ^{33}tɕi^{33}	airplane	飞机
tɕja^{33}ɕjã^{33}	hometown	家乡
ɕi^{33}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 1[5]

ɕjaw^{55}tʰəw^{33}	thief	小偷
pʰu^{55}tom^{33}	common	普通
lɑw^{55}sɿ^{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}xɑw^{55}	very good	很好
lo^{55}tʰi^{55}	naked	裸体
kʰəw^{55}ji^{55}	spoken language	口语

Tone 3 preceding Tone 4

paw^{55}kwi^{312}	precious	宝贵
tsʰaw^{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 [pɐ^{53}tɕĩ^{33}]. 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.

$k^haw^{55}sɿ^{312}$ 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:

$tɕjɛ^{55}tɕjɛ^{55}$ --> $tɕjɛ^{55}tɕjɛ^{33}$ older sister 姐姐

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

$sɿ^{55}lə^{33}$ --> $sɿ^{53}lə^{33}$ 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.

$lɑw^{55}li^{55}$ $mæ^{55}$ $xɑw^{55}$ $tɕu^{51}$
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
$p^ho^{42}p^ho^{42}$ - -> $p^ho^{42}p^ho^{33}$	mother-in-law	婆婆

In PTH when a noun suffix like 头 [$t^həw$] 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[7]:

$sə^{42}t^həw^{42}$ - -> $sə^{42}t^həw^{33}$	tongue	舌头
$tɕ^hiɛ^{42}t^həw^{42}$ - -> $tɕ^hiɛ^{42}t^həw^{33}$	fist	拳头
$wæ^{312}t^həw^{42}$ - -> $wæ^{312}t^həw^{33}$	outside	外头
$xəw^{312}t^həw^{42}$ - -> $xəw^{312}t^həw^{33}$	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 Survery, 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].

kəw^{55}tʰəw^{42}	dog's head	狗头
səw^{55}tʰəw^{42}	at hand	手头

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.

ɕja^{312}səw^{55} --> ɕja^{312}səw^{33}	below	下首
kaw^{33}səw^{55} --> kaw^{33}səw^{33}	above	高首
tɕʰjɛ̃^{42}səw^{55} --> tɕʰjɛ̃^{42}səw^{33}	front	前首

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

ja^{42}tsʰɿ^{55} --> ja^{42}tsʰɿ^{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:

pɐ^{42}lə^{33}pɐ^{42}	extremely white	白了白
lã^{42}lə^{33}lã^{42}	extremely blue	蓝了蓝
tsʰɿ^{33}la^{33}	have eaten	吃了

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

$k^hã^{312}k^hã^{312}$ --> $k^hã^{312}k^hã^{33}$ 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].

$kəw^{33}tsɿ^{55}$ -->	$kəw^{35}tsɿ^{51}$	hook	钩子
$xəw^{42}tsɿ^{55}$ -->	$xəw^{42}tsɿ^{51}$	monkey	猴子
$pej^{312}tsɿ^{55}$ -->	$pej^{312}tsɿ^{51}$	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.kɣ mæ
$ni^{53}nə^{33}$ $ɕja^{33}tɕjaw^{33}$ $tsɑ^{312}kɣ^{33}$ $mæ^{312}$
你 的 香 蕉 咋 个 卖
your bananas how to sell
How much do your bananas cost?

The drift is downward. The syllable [tsɑ^{312}] and [mæ^{312}] are both Tone 4 words, but [mæ^{312}] is much lower in actual pitch than [tsɑ^{312}]. Also, the syllable [kɣ^{33}], which carries a neutral tone, is much lower in pitch than [nə^{33}], 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 [ni^{55} k^{h}ɣ^{312} na^{55}tjɜ̃^{53}] 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:

$k^hɣ^{312}$	to go	去
$na^{55}tjə̃^{55}$	where	哪点

$ni^{55}\ k^hɣ^{312}\ na^{55}tjə̃^{53}$
Where are you going?
你去哪点？(= 你去哪儿？)

$na^{55}jã^{312}$	what	哪样
$ni^{55}tɕjɛ^{33}$	you (honorific)	你家

$ni^{55}tɕjɛ^{33}\ ɕju^{42}ɕi^{42}\ na^{55}jã^{312}$
What are you (hon.) studying?
你家学习哪样？(= 您学习什么？)

$wi^{312}\ na^{55}jã^{312}\ na^{33}$
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:

$tɕ^hĩ^{55}$	eat; please	请

ni^{55}tɕjɛ^{33} tɕ^{h}ĩ^{55}tjɛ̃^{55} na^{55}jã^{312}
What would you (hon.) like to eat?
你家请点哪样？(= 您想吃一点什么？)

tsæ^{312} tɕ^{h}ĩ^{55} ji^{312}tjɛ̃^{53}
Have some more to eat!
再请一点！(= 多吃一点！)

kæ^{42} tɕ^{h}ĩ^{53} tə^{33} fã^{312}lə^{33}
Have you eaten?
咯请的饭了？(= 吃饭了吗？)

tɕ^{h}ĩ^{55} ts^{h}ɑ^{42}
Please drink some tea.
请茶！

tɕ^{h}ĩ^{55} tɕu^{53}
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:

mã^{312} tɕ^{h}ĩ^{53}
(sending off guest, a polite statement)
慢请！

tɕ^{h}ĩ^{55} lju^{42}pu^{312}
(guest to host on leaving: ‘Don’t bother sending me.’)
请留步。

KMH uses the particle [kæ^{42}/ kɣ^{42}] 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.

kɣ^{42} ɕin^{42}
Is it OK?
咯行？(= 行不行？)

kɣ^{42} xɑw^{53}
Is it OK?
咯好？(= 好不好？)

kɛ^{33} (or: kæ^{33}) street 街[8]

ni^{55} kɣ^{42} sã^{312} kɛ^{33}
Are you going out?
你咯上街？(= 你上街吗？)

ni^{55}tɕjɛ^{33} kɣ^{42} jəw^{312} xɛ^{55}ɕjɛ̃^{33}
Do you (hon.) want seafood?
你家咯要海鲜？(= 您要海鲜吗？)

kɣ^{42} sɻ^{42}
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^{h}in^{33}tə^{33} læ^{42}
understand
听得来(= 听得懂)

[8] There is a least one other example of PTH *jie* being pronounced as [kɛ] in KMH: [kɛ^{55}fã^{312}] 'liberation' 解放.

tɕjɛ̃^{312}pu^{33} tə^{42}
don't like to watch
见不得！(= 不喜欢看)

ɕjaw^{53}pu^{33} tə^{42} (or: ɕju^{53}pu^{33} tə^{42})
don't know
晓不得！(= 不知道)

zən^{312}pu^{33} tə^{42}
don't know, or can't recognize
认不得！(= 不知道、认不出)

tsən^{53}pu^{33} ts^{h}ən^{42}
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 [tsɑ^{312}kɣ^{33}] 咋个 'how'. Consider the following examples:

tsɑ^{312}kɣ^{33}lə^{33}
what happened?
咋个了？(= 怎么了？)

tsən^{55} to do 整

tsən^{55} na^{55}jã^{312}
what are (you) doing?
整哪样？(= 干什么？)

tsɑ^{312}kɣ^{33} tsən^{53}
what to do?
咋个整？(= 怎么办？)

xæ^{42}tsɻ^{55} shoes 鞋子

xæ^{42}tsɻ^{55} tsɑ^{312}kɣ^{33} mæ^{312}
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 [tsən^{312}] 阵 is used to mean ‘time, period of time’.

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

tɑ^{55}sɻ^{33} to lose 打失

to^{35}tsən^{312} tɑ^{55}sɻ^{33}lə^{33} kɣ^{33}
when did (you) lose it?
多阵打失了个？(= 什么时候丢失了一个？)

nɑ^{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

Cheng, Chin-Chuan. 1973. *A synchronic phonology of Mandarin Chinese*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois). The Netherlands: Mouton & Co.

Gui, Mingchao. 1990. *The phonology of Yunnanese and Kunming Chinese: a comparative study*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Arlington.

Hanyu Fangyan Cihui, 汉语方言词汇。1964. Beijing: 文字改革出版社。

Hanyu Fangyan Gaiyao, 汉语方言概要。1960. Beijing: 文字改革出版社。

Hanyu Fangyan Zihui, 汉语方言子汇。1962. Beijing: 文字改革出版社。

Ma, Yao (ed.) 1983. *Yunnan Jianshi*. Kunming: 云南人民出版社。

Wu, Ji-cai et al. 1985. 云南方言概述，*Yunnan Fangyan Gaishu*. (A survey of Yunnan dialects). Kunming, China: The Scientific Research Section of Yunnan Teachers University and the Editorial Department of Yuxi Teachers College.

Yip, Moira. 1990. *The tonal phonology of Chinese*. (Doctoral dissertation, MIT). Outstanding Dissertations in Linguistics, ed. Jorge Hankamer. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Yunnan-sheng Zhi, 云南省志，卷五十八，汉语方言志，*Yunnan-sheng Zhi, Juan Wushiba, Hanyu Fangyan Zhi* (Yunnan Survey, vol. 58 of the Chinese Dialect Survey). 1989. 中华人民共和国方言丛。Kunming: 云南人民出版社。

Zhang Huawen and Mao Yuling 张华文、毛玉玲。1997. 昆明方言词典，*Kunming Fangyan Cidian* (A dictionary of the Kunming dialect). Kunming: 云南教育出版社。