

A Discourse Study of Conversations Concerning the Lottery in a Rural Town in Hainan Island (Southern China) *

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The current paper presents a discourse study of conversational exchanges concerning the local lottery, emerging from ordinary conversations at public settings in Shishan Town, located on the northern Hainan Island of Southern China. The data consists of six hours of naturally occurring conversations in Shishan, a previously undocumented non-Chinese regional dialect of Lingao of the Tai-Kadai language family. The dialogues range from mockery of another speaker's gambling habit, lamentations of lost winning opportunities, gossip of others' mischances and fortunes with the lottery, and discussion of the financially draining and addictive nature of playing lottery. The study shows that the dialogues about the lottery coincide with various forms of rhetorical language use and speech play, such as metaphor, retorts, "signifying," mocking, and verbal dueling. The dialogues reflect the speakers' meta-awareness that participation in the lottery is a morally delicate activity.

Key words: rhetorical language, speech play, ethnography of speaking, Shishan, Lingao

1. Introduction

A facet of modern life, common across nations and cultures and one which permeates urban and daily routines, is playing the lottery. Instantiated in small ticket-values to promote individual purchases, lotteries may not constitute a significant form of gambling or pose the danger of addiction. However, the gambling and addictive nature of lotteries is part of the sociocultural constitution of the game. Haakana & Sorjonen (2011), researching on service encounters in convenience stores in Finland, showed that service encounters that sell lottery tickets often depart from an ordinary service encounter frame (Goffman 1974). Buyers often evoke the frame of investing in the stock market, applying for pension, and even buying hot dogs at the hot dog stand, when purchasing lottery tickets. The evocation of different activity frames for lottery-ticket purchases effectuates conversational playfulness. Haakana & Sorjonen (2011) hypothesized that invoking playfulness when purchasing a lottery ticket is not only due to the frequency of such activities, but also reflects buyers' awareness of the moral dimension of the purchase. That is, buying lottery is an "extravagant," non-rational expenditure, an activity "open to problematic implication" (p.1299). Thus,

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evoking a different activity frame and playfulness are strategies for “defending” oneself against potential moral judgment and criticism (p.1299).

The current paper is a discourse-based, ethnographic study of dyadic and multi-party conversational exchanges about the local lottery at public venues in Shishan Town, a rural town on Hainan Island, Southern China. The study illustrates that, similar to the evocation of playfulness in lottery-ticket purchases (Haakana & Sorjonen 2011), Shishan local residents’ casual conversations about playing lottery often resort to various forms of rhetorical language use and speech play (metaphors, retorts, verbal dueling, mocking, sarcasm, parallelism, and “signifying” cf. Bauman 1975, Mitchell-Kernan 2001). The speakers mock their own wishful thinking toward the result of next lottery draw, and their friend’s missed chances, as well as gossip about a third party’s rumored fortunes or misfortunes.

The conversational exchanges concerning the lottery also show contradictions in the local residents’ orientation to the lottery: the speakers, at one moment, employ deductive logic in methodical calculation of the potential number for winning the lottery and at the next moment, evince rueful awareness of the futility of such calculation. Speakers lament engaging in lotteries, where fear of addiction is a mutual sentiment. But, on the other hand, speakers also challenge and contest each other’s alleged shared fate in the game of lottery by highlighting differentials in socioeconomic situations. Thus, ordinary dialogues about the local lottery provide a microscopic view of the role that lotteries play in a rural community in China.

2. Shishan dialect: Regional dialect of the Lingao/Be branch of the Tai-Kadai language family

Hainan is a tropical island off the coast of Southern China which faces Guangxi and Guangdong Provinces across the Qiongzhou Strait. Approximately thirty ethnic groups cohabit on this island and constitute a broad spectrum of linguistic diversities (Zhang et al. 1984, He & Huang 1988, Ruan et al. 1994, Liang & Zhang 1997, Liu 2000). As such, Hainan Island is known as a “linguistic treasure-island” (He et al. 1994:247, Liu 2000:1). The breadth of linguistic diversity in Hainan is due to the fact that Hainan is the destination of migrating populations from mainland China throughout documented history, particularly in times of political turmoil (Zhang et al. 1984, He & Huang 1988, Ruan et al. 1994, Liang & Zhang 1997, Liu 2000, see further discussions in Xiang 2006).

A variety of Chinese languages are spoken in Hainan, e.g., Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Hakka, Fujianese, and Hainanese (Zhang et al. 1984, He & Huang 1988, Ruan et al. 1994, Liang & Zhang 1997, Liu 2000). In particular, Hainanese, a southern

Min dialect, has gained prestige as the de facto official language in Hainan Province and is the medium for province-wide television and radio news broadcasts. Besides Chinese languages, Lingao is among the major non-Chinese languages in Hainan, with approximately 500,000 speakers (He et al. 1994, Liang & Zhang 1997, Liu 2000). Lingao (aka Be or Limkow, see Hashimoto 1980, 1982, 1985) is the primary language in Lingao County, and the majority of Lingao studies have their basis in this particular variety of Lingao (Hashimoto 1980, 1982, 1985, Zhang et al. 1984, Ruan et al. 1994, Liang & Zhang 1997, Liu 2000). The remainder of Lingao speakers are in pocket areas in the northern regions of Hainan (including Shishan Town and areas adjacent to Shishan Town), and a number of isolated fishing villages along the southern coast (Liu 2000).

With a population of 34,001 (based on 2000 census data reported in Hainan Nianjianshe 2002), Shishan Town is a small rural town in the northern region of Hainan, adjacent to the provincial capital, Haikou City. The name of the town, Shishan, literally “Rock Mountain,” is in reference to the surface landscape of the area largely covered with rocks from the lava of volcanic eruptions in prehistoric times (He & Huang 1988).

Various documentations of Lingao include brief mentioning of Shishan as a dialectal variation (Zhang et al. 1984, He & Huang 1988, Ruan et al. 1994, Liang & Zhang 1997, Liu 2000), a view shared by Shishan residents as well. Shishan residents refer to their own language as *cun hua* ‘village language,’ as opposed to Hainanese, which Shishan residents call *ke hua* ‘guest language,’ and Mandarin Chinese, *guan hua* ‘official language.’

Shishan residents indicate that Shishan and Lingao, as spoken in Lingao County, do not maintain complete mutual intelligibility. Lingao speakers tend to find Shishan easier to understand while Shishan speakers find Lingao only partially intelligible. As Liu (2000) observes, Shishan-speaking areas lack socioeconomic connections to Lingao County; consequently, the variation of Lingao as spoken in Shishan has developed its distinct features. In addition, Shishan is adjacent to Haikou where Hainanese is spoken. Shishan’s close socioeconomic ties to Haikou have also led to distinctions in Shishan from other variations of Lingao, largely arising from language contact situations (Liu 2000:2).

Despite the aforementioned differences between Shishan and Lingao, and the classification of Lingao as a Tai-Kadai language, Chinese languages and Lingao (as well as Shishan) are largely comparable, sharing much typological similarity. Except in the case of loan words, morphemes are monosyllabic, which may consist of morphemes of two or more than two syllables. Lexical tones distinguish meaning in these languages. Grammatical categories, such as tense and aspect, do not use

inflectional morphology or syntactic operations, but have their basis in word order and particles. All three languages follow the SVO word order. When using a numeral to refer to an object, a classifier is typically mandatory. One difference between these three languages is the position of adjectives. Adjectives occur in the post-position in Lingao and Shishan, contrary to that in Mandarin Chinese. For instance, Mandarin Chinese, *zao fan* ‘morning meal (breakfast)’ is *diao cao* ‘meal morning (breakfast)’ in Shishan.

As observed during the data collection for the current study, multilingualism is the norm in Shishan Town. Local residents switch with ease between Mandarin Chinese, Hainanese and Shishan (cf. He et al.1994, on multilingualism in Hainan in general). In the current data, code-switching occurs primarily in the following cases: parents speaking to their Mandarin-speaking children (whose primary language is Mandarin due to formal schooling); vendors and business owners speaking to Mandarin-speaking customers who tend to be state employees, such as school teachers and government officials and clerks. Code-mixing is common where expressions, derived from Mandarin Chinese or Hainanese, are incorporated in Shishan conversations. Some of such Mandarin- or Hainanese-originating expressions then become part of the Shishan lexicon, including certain utterance-final particles (e.g., *ma*, a Mandarin question particle) and nominal expressions (e.g., *dianhua*, the Mandarin word for “telephone”).

3. Data and the lottery game in Shishan

Section 3 describes the conversational data that form the basis of the current analysis, followed by a description of the lottery system in Shishan.

3.1 Data description

The data are a subset (six hours) of a 60-hour corpus of data, collected in Shishan Town, during the summer of 2002. The methodology follows the tradition of ethnography of speaking (see, for example, Hymes 1962, 1971, 1974, 1995, Gumperz 1968), which employs audio and video equipment to record naturally occurring conversations from six service-encounter sites, including a roast duck vendor’s stand, a hair salon, a dressmaker’s shop, a noodle restaurant, a convenience store, and a fruit vendor’s stand. The data from the duck vendor’s stand used audio recording equipment alone, due to the lack of electricity at the outdoor location. These sites for data collection, with the exception of the fruit vendor’s stall, are on the main street of Shishan Town and the services cater to local residents. The fruit vendor’s stand,

catering to tourists from mainland China, is in the Volcano Park of Shishan. These locations function as both service encounters and venues where local residents socialize.

Data transcription follows a modified version of Conversation Analysis (CA) conventions (Jefferson 2004), which visually depict the paralinguistic features of the delivery of speech, for example, pauses, restarts, sound stretches, and overlapping speech (see Appendix 1 for a list of abbreviations and Appendix 2 for complete transcription notation).

The data extracts appear in a three-line format: The first line is a Pinyin-based transliteration of the conversation. The second line consists of word-by-word glosses, and the third line presents a translation that captures the original “flavor” of the dialogue (see, for example, the Leipzig Glossing Rules compiled by Bickel, Comrie & Haspelmath 2008).

The conversations in the data feature a diverse range of colloquial speech genres, such as service encounters, speech routines (such as greetings and leave-taking), gossip, and story-telling. Recurrent topics in the conversations include poverty, migrant work experiences, the local lottery, farming, children’s schooling, job prospects, and the ongoing drought in Shishan. Many such conversations, especially those concerning the lottery and migrant work experiences, reflect the socioeconomic situations in Shishan at the crossroads of sociocultural and economic transitions. Section 3.2 describes the lottery activities in Shishan in more detail.

3.2 The (illegal) lottery in Shishan

The word for lottery in Shishan—*ji ǎ ng*—is apparently a loan word from the Mandarin word for the lottery, *ji ǎ ng piào* (aka *c ǎ i piào*). The lottery, institutionalized in various parts in China, ranges from government-organized lotteries to illegal, privately operated number games. In Shishan Town, as in other parts of China, the local government bans private sectors from selling lotteries, but the ban is ineffective. Rural areas, such as Shishan Town, are particularly susceptible to rampant illegal gambling activities due to a lack of government regulation, poor economic prospects and low-levels of literacy of rural residents, among other socioeconomic conditions. Illegal lotteries are the main form of lottery which local Shishan residents engage in. Illegal lottery sellers print their own lottery-tickets or purchase whole-sale lottery tickets from distributors of industrialized illegal lotteries. These illegal lotteries synchronize their results with the official, government-run lotteries (particularly “Sports Lottery”), and sell lottery tickets at various prices, from as low as twenty

cents to as high as one hundred Chinese dollars, each promising monetary reward commensurate with the level of investment.

Along with lottery tickets, vendors also sell pamphlets which elaborate an assortment of *hi-du* ‘Iron Rules,’ summarize the trends in previous lotteries and predict results of the upcoming game. The lotteries have also spawned a particular profession called the *Dabe* (lottery master, an expression modeled after the Mandarin expression *d(lo ī)*). The *Dabe*, in the tradition of fortune-tellers, sells lottery pamphlets, makes predictions about the upcoming game and offers consultation to those who are willing to pay for advice.

The conversational exchanges among dyads and multi-parties concerning the local lottery reflect certain emotional conflicts for those involved in the lottery: While speakers are conscious of the futility of the gambling, excitement and a sense of opportunity underscore episodes of heated discussions about the lottery. The following sections focus on particular conversational episodes involving the local lottery and featuring rhetorical language use and speech play of various kinds.

4. Mischances with the lottery: Self-mocking and mocking of others

One of the recurrent themes among conversations about the local lottery in Shishan concerns winnings and losses in the lottery game. When a speaker confesses a rueful loss at a lottery game, mockery is a common response among friends. Mocking is a speech play among diverse cultures (also known as “marking” in studies of African-American speech communities; see, for example, Mitchell-Kernan 2001). The speaker scornfully ridicules the addressee, or mocks someone by “parody and caricature” (Mitchell-Kernan 200:161-162).

Extract (1) occurs between a male (coded MP) and two females (coded M and H) in the hair salon. MP laments his mischance arising from ignoring the lottery master’s tip. M and H show no sympathy but jocularly mock MP.

(1) ((H is the hairstylist and owner of the hair salon. M is H's senior relative. Both H and M are female. MP is a male passerby.))

- 1 MP: Ehh ehh ziu dabe, ziu dabe nia lui xiu
 INT INT ask master ask master come analyze
 that.time
 meng dlou ehh.
 havereach INT
 'Ehh ehh (i.e. sighing). The time when I asked (for advice from) the (lottery) master, when I asked the master, (the master's advice) got the number (i.e., the master predicted the winning number accurately).'
- Ao mo, ao mo ce dlou luei.
 bring 2SG bring 2SG touch reach together
 'If you (here "you" is the speaker's self-reference, meaning "I") bought it, if you (I) bought it, you (I) would have gotten rich (i.e., if I had listened to the master's advice, I would have won the lottery already).'
- 2 M: → **Mo n dia migo lah.**
 2SG NEG willing.to.depart.from what PRT
 'You're just stingy. (That's why you can't win a penny. There is no other reason.)'
- 3 MP: ((laughing))
- 4 H: → **Go-ong Go-ong dli dlou jiang la der!**
 Go-ong Go-ong M reach lottery PRT PRT
 'Go-ong (MP's name), Go-ong surely is gonna win the lottery now!'
- 5 MP: → **Dabe ho dun dun en-ey.** ((laughing))
 master CLS accurate accurate PL-PRT
 'This master is really accurate. ((laughing)).'
 ((indistinct))
- 6 → **Dli dlou jiang la.**
 M reach lottery PRT
 '(I) am gonna win the lottery now.'
- 7 → **Ga ga kuai o gen eyla.**
 already already open money up PRT
 '(I) have so already bet my money up (on the winning lottery ticket)!'

M's remark (Line 2) constitutes a common response in Shishan to someone who boasted of foreknowledge of the lottery's winning number (either by dream, by calculation, or due to the lottery master's tip), but did not buy, or bought tickets of insufficient quantity/value for the prophesied number. The typical response is a retort,

as uttered by M, which “cuts to the chase,” asserting that the addressee should admit a flaw in his character, that is, stinginess. If MP had been a generous person, he would not have withheld investment for the lottery number that had a guaranteed return. M’s retort mocks MP by dismissing other explanatory accounts (the final particle *lah* in Line 2 signals the notion “nothing else.” Xiang 2011). Also dismissed is MP’s original appeal for consolation and empathetic comments from onlookers. MP responds to M’s retort with hearty laughter (Line 3), manifesting his reciprocal orientation to M’s remark as non-serious and playful.

Rather than addressing MP using the second person pronoun *mo* ‘you,’ H’s response uses MP’s full name, uttered twice (Line 4). The utterance with the future-time modal marker *dli* ‘will/is going to’ shifts the discussion from lamentation of MP’s missed chance of winning to a mocking premonition that MP is going to hit the jackpot next time. H’s statement uses the declarative marker *der*, and the inceptive marker *la*, both of which mark certainty of the predication. The reference to MP by his full name (Line 4), repeated twice, construes a scenario where an onlooker “cries out” the premonition (cf. “Response Cry,” Goffman 1967). MP plays along this mocking premonition, using three utterances (Lines 5, 6, and 7) to mock himself. In this self-mockery, MP repeatedly uses the aspectual marker *ga* ‘already’ and emphasizes the accuracy of the lottery master’s prediction. The utterances constitute caricatures of a naïve gambler, wishfully expecting a large monetary return after adopting the lottery-master’s advice.

The jocular undertone throughout the extract (laughing and playful language) indexes the participants’ meta-awareness of the fortuity of the lottery game. That is, a person may simultaneously participate willingly in the lottery, and mock his or her own involvement in it. The non-serious frame of talk signals this duality.

Extract (2) contains three speakers’ gossip about a third party who, according to rumor, had dreamt of a lottery number which turned out to be the winning number. However, the person was too poor to afford the purchase of lottery tickets thus lost a great chance.

- (2) ((VR is the duck vendor. P4 and P5 are both acquaintances of VR and came by the vendor’s stand to chat. VR initiates the topic about the person who did not buy the lottery number that he dreamt of. P5 has previous knowledge of the gossip and P4 does not.))

- 1 VR: → **Dai lah!** Go na gei ho jiang mo n dong biang.
die PRT thing DEM type CLS lottery CLS NEG know buy
'**Die! (i.e. Gosh!)** That person didn't have the sense to buy (the lottery number that he dreamt of).'
- 2 → **Gunia hun dlou, dlou lu heh shie o mo li ge der.**
if come tell 1PL 1PL all okay give.away money CLS to him PRT
'**If (he) had come to tell us (that he dreamt a number but didn't have the money), we'd have given him a dollar (so he could buy the lottery number he dreamt of).'**
- 3 P4: Beina?
who
'Who?'
- 4 VR: Sheng-zhe.
Sheng-zhe
'Sheng-zhe.'
- 5 P5: [Dle hao jiang roh.
get head/top lottery EXIS
'(The number he dreamt of) turned out to be the top-winning lottery number.'
- 6 P4: [Ge ranggei ho?
3SG how know
'How did he know about (the number)?'
- 7 VR: ((responding to P5))
Se der loh.
ADV COP PRT
'For sure.'
- 8 P4: Ge ranggei ho?
3SG how know
'How did he know about (the number)?'
- 9 VR: Saga aolap lah.
self dream PRT
'He himself dreamt (it).'
- 10 P4: Ge AOLA::P?
3SG dream
'He dreamt (it)?'
- 11 P5: Aolap lah. (indistinct) ((to VR)) mo ru gang mo:::: n biang?
dream PRT 2SG ADV say 2SG NEG buy
'(Of course he) dreamt (it). You said you didn't buy?'

- 12 P4: N ao o mo da li ge (indistinct).
 NEG bring/take money CLS half give 3SG
 ‘Why didn’t you give him a dollar or half a dollar?’
- 13 P5: → Li o mo da, biang gi bun ey,
 to money CLS half buy several piece PRT
gu o be lu shie ge ni.
 ADV money hundred all give.away 3SG PRT
 ‘As much as **100 dollars (I) would have given to him** to buy a couple of
 lottery tickets, let alone giving him a dollar or half a dollar.’
- 14 VR: Se der.
 ADV COP
 ‘That’s right.’
- 15 Ho ey, ao o mo da ge biang di no.
 know PRT bring/take money CLS half 3SG buy PRT PRT
 ‘If I had known, I would have given him a dollar or half to buy the lottery.’
- 16 Shie o mo da ge no.
 give.away money CLS half 3SG PRT
 ‘(I’d) give him a dollar or half, (I tell you!)’
 ((indistinct))
- 17 P5: Aolap go gei mo dun-dun en-ey. N arh hun.
 dream thing type CLS accurate-accurate PL-PRT NEG want tell
 ‘Dreams, such kind of things, are so accurate. There is no need to talk about
 it.’
 ((indistinct))
- 18 Aolap gei mo gu giuliao diu lu biang ben mo lo eii.
 dream type CLS if how.much small all buy two CLS into PRT
 ‘Dreams, this sort, no matter how little you can afford, you should at least
 buy two tickets (of the number that you dreamt).’
- 19 → **O mo ah meng,**
 money CLS also have
 ‘**There are one dollar tickets.**’
- 20 → **Ao go ah meng,**
 five dime also have
 ‘**There are 50 cent tickets.**’
- 21 → **Dum go ah meng.**
 three dime also have
 ‘**There are 30 cent tickets.**’

- 22 → **Ben go ah meng eydei^.**
two dime also have nowadays
'(And) **there are 20 cent tickets nowadays.** (= There are all these extremely affordable prices!)

While P4 only learns about the unfortunate person's mischance with the lottery through the current conversation, both VR and P5 have prior knowledge of this rumored incident and use hindsight to lament this spoiled rare foreknowledge. After all, not many people have winning lottery numbers revealed to them in dreams. VR relays the rumor with exclamatory remark (Line 1) and a hypothetical conditional (Line 2). P5 upgrades the hypothetical conditional used by VR with a hyperbole, that is, the amount of money which P5 is willing to give away to fund the person to buy the lottery number, would be as much as one hundred dollars (Line 13), a drastic contrast to the more realistic figure, a dollar or half of a dollar. This hyperbole is apparently only for rhetorical effect, as VR agrees to P5's assertion and repeats her realistic hypothetical conditional (i.e., a dollar or half a dollar monetary support for the person in concern, Line 15). As Akatsuka (1985, 1997, 1999) argues, conditionals both mark the speaker's reasoning process and express the speaker's stance toward the desirability/undesirability of the situation in concern. In extract (2), the repeated uses of hypothetical conditionals, coupled with exclamatory remarks and hyperbole, express the speakers' strong lamentation of the situation as highly undesirable.

To further show how exacerbating the mischance is, P5 uses the rhetorical strategy of repetition and parallelism (Lines 19 to 21). The focus particle *ah* 'also' occurs four times in four utterances of parallel structure, highlighting the co-existence of a variety of extremely affordable lottery options (see Xiang 2009 which is a case study of the focus particle *ah* 'also'). By delineating the affordable prices from as low as one dollar to the lowest 20 cents in ticket-value, P5 enhances the emotive and evaluative stance toward the rumored mischance, construed as highly ridiculous and greatly regrettable.

A winner of the lottery may not want to boast of winning. If the winning amount is extremely trivial, the reward itself is a mockery. Extract (3) shows three fruit vendors in gleeful gossip of two brothers who, according to a rumor, won two and half dollars and five dollars, respectively, in a lottery. The payout is so small that the two brothers have become a laughing stock of the neighborhoods. LCW1 initiates the gossip and relates with relish the story to her companions, LCW2 and LCW3.

- (3) ((LCW1, LCW2 and LCW3 are fruit vendors at the Volcano Park. The two brothers in the narrated event are Shawu and Shadin.))

- 1 LCW1: Shawu len ey, rong diu Shawu gang,
Shawu return PRT people ask Shawa say
'As soon as Shawu came back home, people asked Shawu.'
- 2 → **Go qun mi go gia er?**
thing true or thing false PRT
'Is that thing true or is that thing false?'
- 3 → **Gang ao jiao dlao go qun ang a er?**
say bring still reach thing true PRT PRT PRT
'(They) said, you got the thing (i.e. you won the lottery), right?'
- 4 LCW2: Dlao danggei?
reach what?
'Got what??'
- 5 LCW1: Rong ziang gang Shawu dlao jiang o aop mo.
people spread say Shawu reach lottery money five CLS
'People spread the news that Shawu won five dollars in lottery.'
- 6 LCW2: Hmm?
INT
'Really?'
- 7 LCW1: Shadin dlao o ye mo wu.
Shadin reach money two CLS five
'Shadin (Shewu's brother) got 2.5 dollars.'
- 8 LCW2: ((laughing))
- 9 LCW3: Bei rah ey rong ga ziang en-eeey lah?
go home PRT people already spread like-that PRT
'Before (the two brothers) even got home, people had already spread the news?'
- 10 LCW1: Heh. Ra n man ay ziao. Shawu n hen ling.
yes 1SG NEG control able laugh. Shawu NEG agree admit
'Yes, I couldn't help laughing. Shawu wouldn't admit it.'
((changing her voice in ventriloquy of her talk to Shawu))
- 11 → **Wu, go qun mi go gia, en-eeey ra dui ge...**(indistinct)
Wu thing true or thing false PL-PRT 1SG ask 3SG
'**Wu, is that true or just rumor? Like this, I asked him,**'
((three utterances omitted of repeated contents))
- 12 Ey ra gang eii- ra gen Yi-Xian ey, ra gang eii,
PRT 1SG say PRT 1SG go.up Yi-Xian PRT 1SG say PRT
'I said- (I) went up to Yi-Xian (i.e. a nearby village), I said (to Ge-va),'

- 13 Ge-va gang,
Ge-va say
'Ge-va said,'
- 14 → ((representing Ge-va speaking to one of the brothers))
Hmm, ra ah dunbi diu mo,
INT 1SG also prepare ask 2SG
(Ge-va said to one of the brothers) 'hmm, I also was gonna ask you,'
- 15 → **gaer ra ru mang dli diu mo ey,**
but 1SG ADV fear M ask 2SG PRT
'but I was afraid that if I ask you (about your lottery win),'
- 16 → [**o na gei mo da mo n heng ao.**
money DEM type CLS half 2SG NEG agree bring
'this little money, a dollar or half a dollar, you won't admit (having won it).']
- 17 LCW2: [Ge-va ah ho?
Ge-va also know
'Ge-va also knew? '
- 18 LCW1: → **Gang mo gei ho dai kang eyla der,**
say 2SG type CLS die half PRT PRT
'(One of the brothers) said, "you are half-dead for sure.'
- 19 → **Guse, mo ho go, mo n hen gang gua... (indistinct)**
ADV 2SG know thing 2SG NEG agree say words
'You know it (that I didn't win the ridiculous sum of money), but you didn't speak up for me.'
- 20 → **Mo dai kang eyla der.**
2SG die half PRT PRT
'You are half dead for sure!'
- 21 LCW3: Hmmm guagei zian mang go na der.
INT why always fear thing DEM type
'Hmmm (disapprovingly) why does (he) always fear such kind of things (it's just harmless talk if it's not true).'
- 22 LCW1: → ((continuing ventriloquy and speaking in the voice of one of the brothers))
Mo ga ho rong gang ey,
2SG already know people say PRT
'You already knew that people had started the rumor,'

- 23 → **mo men n ho gang he.**
 2SG good NEG know say ever
 ‘(but) you did not know to speak up (for me), ever.’
- 24 → **Vennai ra n gen nia gang mi,**
 today 1SG NEG go.up come say PRT
 ‘If I didn’t come to the market to talk to you today,’
- 25 → **mo ah din din gang ra ah dlong jiang di da! Dai la!**
 2SG ADV silent silent say I ADV reach lottery PRT PRT die PRT
 **‘you’d keep silent and let other people gossip that I really won the
 lottery! (You) are dead!’**

Gossip, a sub-genre of small talk, not only provides entertainment to the interlocutors, but also functions as normative talk. Through gossip, speakers evince their negative stance toward socially unacceptable behaviors and signal in-group vs. out-group identities (see Eggins & Slade 1997, Coupland 2009). The gossip in Exact (3) manifests such typical gossip that recounts the “misfortunes” of others through story-telling and explicit stance-marking (Eggins & Slade 1997:276, see also Coupland 2009:657).

LCW1 first depicts a scenario where curious onlookers seek confirmation of the rumor by the lottery winners (Lines 2 and 3). The quoted questions are colloquial and highly contextualized (for example, using vague reference, *go* ‘thing,’ both to refer to rumor in Line 1 and to lottery in Line 3). The speaker then relays a chain of events where rumor circulated from one person to another, from town to town. LCW quotes herself speaking to one of the brothers (Line 11). Then she speaks in ventriloquy of a mutual friend who, following the spread of rumor, confronts the brothers (Lines 14 to 16). All the inquiries, re-enacted by LCW1, are tongue-in-cheek, masking mockery in quotations of curiosity and feigned sympathy. Finally, LCW1 delivers caricatures of one of the brothers using ventriloquy (see Tannen 2010). Ventriloquy enables the speaker to “borrow” the identity of one of the brothers, speaking in voices of agitation and disbelief at the rapid spread of rumors and his friends’ disloyalty (Lines 18 to 20, Lines 22 to 25). Such extensive uses of quoted speech and ventriloquy offer concrete details that “authenticate” the gossiped event (Eggins & Slade 1997).

The emotive and jocular undertone evinces the lottery players’ conscious understanding of the lottery as a morally delicate phenomenon. The narrative suggests that, at least in the Shishan culture, winning of an extremely trivial sum of money incurs shame. After all, the trivial monetary reward, not even sufficient to cover one’s initial expenditure, creates reason for public mockery of one’s unwarranted wishful thinking. However, also revealed in the gossip, is a generalized view that, despite the

laughable nature of winning a trivial lottery award, one should be honest to admit to such winning.

5. Moral characters of lottery winners

A lottery player may be truly fortunate and wins a considerable sum. In the current data, when a truly fortunate winner is the subject of gossip, the speaker is often negative and critical, exposing the lottery winner's stinginess. Extract (4) contains gossip about a person who, as rumor has it, hit the jackpot, but did not even share his winnings with his wife. Nor did he wisely use the windfall.

(4) ((MO1 and MO2 are female. ML is male and the protagonist's friend.))

1 WO1: Dai la! dlou jiang mo ey de mainian ho rang ho luei,
die PRT get lottery CLS PRT COP wife CLS NEG know together
'Die! (He) won a lottery and (his) wife didn't even know about it,'

2 **Zhenjia dou na en.**
really 1PL DEM PL

'You guys are really something (you men are really bad)!

3 ML: Ge hun di mainian, gi dianhua di mainian ho,
3SG tell to wife make telephone to wife CLS
'He told his wife, he telephoned his wife,'

4 mainian ho de n jun.
wife CLS DEM NEG believe
'(but) his wife didn't believe him.'

((6 turns omitted of repeated contents discussing the behavior of the winner's wife))

5 WO2: Dei Gurong na yo, o giu-liao du rong yin.
like (person name) DE type money how-much all use finish
'People like Gurong (the winner of the lottery), no matter how much money he's got, he spends all of it.'

6 ML:→ **Mo gu dun man nia lu yin.**
2SG even ten 10.thousand come all finish

'Even if you gave him ten thousand dollars, he would spend all of it.'

- 7 WO1:→ **O man da lo dagu mo ey, n shie,**
 money 10.thousand half into pocket CLS PRT not share
‘If he’s got ten thousand dollars or so in his pocket, he won’t share it,’
- 8 → **Daduo eii de ah yin ey di no.**
 fart PRT COP also finish PRT PRT PRT
‘(the money would) all be gone like a fart.’

The gossip is animate with exclamatory remarks (Line 1), hyperbole (Lines 5 to 7) and metaphor (Line 8). It resembles an episode of gossip analyzed in Coupland (2009) where a lottery winner is presented as “scandalous” and “undeserving” of the lottery-induced fortune (658-659). Gossip discourse, and other such normative discourse, tends to evoke categories of social groups and associated group identities (see Eggins & Slade 1997, Coupland 2009). Both the females in the dialogue, WO1 and WO2, use the case of Gurong to generalize negatively either about men as stingy and selfish (Line 2), or about the type of lottery winners who do not benefit from any winning amount due to their faulty character (see Line 5). In the end, both the protagonist’s friend (ML) and the two females (WO1 and WO2) lament the extravagant lifestyle and selfish character of Gurong. The story ends with hyperbole and metaphor comparing Gurong’s squandering the fortune with the quickness and triviality of the bodily function, *daduo* ‘farting’ (Line 8). The metaphor creates a vivid image of the rapid dissipation of fortune and depicts the understanding that the lottery winning, if not wisely used and shared with friends and family, is simply trivial and distasteful.

6. Verbal dueling and contestation of shared sentiments

In the conversation about lotteries, besides relating stories of mischances or undeserved fortune, speakers may engage each other in verbal dueling regarding particular experiences with and sentiments toward the lottery. Verbal dueling is a form of speech play in which participants’ verbal virtuosity and cleverness compete. For example, an extensively-studied form of verbal dueling is “sounding” (Labov 1972a, 1972b, Kochman 1983), which is characterized by speakers’ engaging each other in escalation of untruthful verbal insults. Other forms of verbal dueling may involve witty retorts using puns or alterations in speech register (Sherzer 1993). Alternatively, the speaker may “signify” an indirect message, that is, innuendo in the spirit of “if the shoe fits” (Mitchell-Kernan 2001).

Although types of verbal dueling differ from speech community to speech community (for example “sounding” in the African-American speech communities differs from the employment of speech register and puns in the Balinese community, Sherzer 1993), verbal dueling features “rapid exchange of non-serious insults” (Schwebel 1997:326). In the current data, such instances of rapid exchanges and witty retorts do not particularly express negative insults toward the addressee. A verbal duel involves one of the speakers eager to defend dignity and pride through fast-paced verbal riposte.

Exact (5) takes place in the dressmaking shop. The dressmaker (coded D) assumes a signifying frame for the dialogue (Mitchell-Kernan 2001). D pretends to talk to her apprentice and seamstress, Fei, while her intended addressee is Y, a senior relative of D, present at the shop. The background is that, previously, based on D’s version of the story, D had advised Y to purchase a certain lottery ticket, which turned out to be the winning number. Y did not heed D’s advice and lost the chance to win. D is under the impression that Y has been avoiding her due to embarrassment. Y disagrees and claims that the alleged “advising” never took place.

(5) ((D is owner and dressmaker of the dressmaking shop. Y is D’s senior relative. Fei, coded F here, is D’s employee and seamstress in the shop.))

- 1 D→: .hhhehe. Fei ra^ hun ge bia:ng (.) ge n- ge n- ge
 Fei 1SG tell 3SG buy 3SG NEG 3SG NEG 3SG
 n NIA^^::.
 NEG come
 ((chuckling)) ‘Fei, I told her to buy (the lottery ticket), she didn’t-
 she didn’t- she didn’t come.’
- 2 → (.) Ge::rhh dli GIAaarrrrrh (.) DIA^ng (indistinct) er, Fei er?
 3SG M pretend avoid PRT Fei PRT
 ‘She is pretending and avoiding me. (indistinct). Right? Fei, right?’
- 3 Y: Danggei^:::?
 what
 ‘What (are you talking about)?’
- 4 D: Ra hun mo biang, mo gia n .hh HE^N.
 2SG tell 2SG buy 2SG pretend NEG hear
 ‘I told you to buy (the lottery ticket), you pretended you didn’t hear
 (me).’

- 5 Y: → **MO hun ra bei NE::?**
 2SG tell me DEM where
 ‘WHERE did YOU tell me?’
- 6 D: ((laughing))=
- 7 Y: → = **MO hun ra QI^:-DEI↑**
 you tell me when
 ‘WHEN did YOU tell me?’
- 8 D: N DUI RA: .hhh he::
 NEG ask I ever
 ‘(Okay) (you) never asked me.’ (signaling concession to Y).
 (1.0)
- 9 F: ((indistinct))
- 10 D: → Ge:::rr (.) ge dia biang mmmmm liao wei dang ve gei.
 3SG 3SG like buy INT firm tail single number type
 ‘She- she likes to buy lottery tickets with numbers that end with the same digit.’
- 11 → Ra hun duei-diao de dlou mo jun ang? Fei?
 2SG tell must-must COP get 2SG believe PRT Fei
 ‘I told (her) (about a particular number that) definitely was going to win. Do you believe it, Fei?’
- 12 Y: **GA:NGKIA::O!**
 brag
 ‘(Such) bragging!’
- 13 Passer-by: Weilo! N ho hun dlou he?
 INT not know tell us ever
 ‘Wow, how come you never knew to tell us about these predications?’
 (1.2)
- 14 D: Ra ga venhen- ra ga::nnng (.)
 1SG already the.day.before.yesterday 1SG say
 ‘I already- the day before yesterday, I said-‘
- 15 nian [migo ho lo shiu ra ga::ng-
 wife PRO CLS into time 1SG say
 ‘The time when the wife of that someone came, I said-‘
- 16 Y: → [**VENHE:N ra:: N NI::A.**
 the.day.before.yesterday 1SG NEG come
 ‘THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, I wasn’t here (I didn’t come to your shop).’

- 17 D: Venhen mo n nia mi::?
the.day.before.yesterday 2SG NEG come PRT
‘The day before yesterday you weren’t here??’
(0.8)
- 18 Ra gang (.) de::: li::nnnn (.) la:: wei.
1SG say COP 0 6 ending
‘I said (the winning number) must have either 0 or 6 as the last digit.
((six turn exchanges omitted where Y and D debated on number
sequences of the lottery))
- 19 Y: → **Mo ru n hun MA:: dou BI^::ANG?**
2SG ADV NEG tell mother 2PL buy
‘(If you were so sure), why didn’t you tell your mom to buy (the
lottery number)?’
(1.0)
- 20 Y: Mo ru gang-’
you ADV say
‘You just said-’
- 21 D: Ra hun ma dlou biang .hhhehe
I tell mom my/our buy chuckling.sound
‘I tell my mom to buy ((chuckling)) (that’s funny).’
(3.0)
((D continues calculating lottery numbers.))

At the beginning of the extract, through talking to her seamstress, Fei (F), D mocks Y with an innuendo. The innuendo is that Y has been avoiding D due to embarrassment (Lines 1 and 2; and see Lines 11 and 12). Y understands the innuendo to be directed toward her. Y quickly launches a competent retort in the form of rapid succession of interrogatives (Lines 3, 5, and 7), calling into question the evidential support of D’s allegation. That is, D should be able to state the time and location of the alleged “advising,” if it indeed took place. In the end, Line 14 and Line 15 include D producing evidential support for the time when the advising took place. But, again, Y launches a quick and competent defense, claiming that she wasn’t even near the place of the “advising” at the time alleged (Line 16).

Y’s counter-assertion does not result in heated arguments or escalation in verbal dueling. D concedes or pretends to not hear the import of Y’s retorts (Line 17). Y then launches yet another verbal assault, asking why, in possession of such potent information about the lottery, D did not tell her own mother to buy the lottery number, thus making her mother a rich woman (Line 19). D repeats Y’s suggestion and

chuckles at the idea. D does not pursue the verbal dueling further, probably as Y's question is quite cogent and difficult to refute.

Extract (6) contains a different type of verbal dueling in the dressmaker's shop, between the seamstress, F, and the dressmaker's senior relative, Y. After lengthy dueling between the dressmaker and Y (as shown in extract 5), all present at the dressmaker's shop agree that the lottery is a futile game to play. However, Y contests F's claim of sharing with Y in the sentiment of futility and doom.

(6) Contestation of sentiments as shared

- 1 F: Nagu dlong go yin jiang ven luei kim pai se.
as.long.as reach thing sell lottery day PRT must waste money
'As long as lottery is sold, (we) are gonna waste money.'
- 2 Y: Dou jiao gang lei lei ey.
2PL ADV say look.for look.for (money) PRT
'People like you still can go look for money.'
- 3 Da dei dlou en-ey wen en be dai.
PRT like 1PL PL-PRT stoic PL tear die
'People like us have no choice but to buy lottery until we die (here the verb *be*, 'to tear,' denotes the action where lottery-selling clerk tears a lottery ticket from a ticket book, and is a reference for the act of buying lottery in futility).'
- 4 F: → **Dlou lei lei lah der!**
1PL look look PRT PRT
'We've got means to get money, of course, surely!'
- 5 → **Dlou lei nia n rai guan lou.**
1PL look come NEG enough eat PRT
'We go get money, come back, and can't even have enough to eat.'
- 6 **Dlou lei lei.**
1PL look look
'We've got means to get money! (Easy for you to say!)

Both Y and F express similar predicament about the lottery. That is, the lottery is a doomed activity which leads one to waste money (Lines 1 to 3). The awareness of the game's addictive nature and futility of playing the lottery is acute, and both Y and F express resignation to this fate. However, despite this shared sentiment, Y contends that F (being young) has means of livelihood while people like Y herself (of older age) have no choice but to play the lottery until death. Y speaks with hyperbole and F returns with similar hyperbole and sarcasm. F's utterances (from Lines 4 to 6) are

emotive retorts which superficially accept Y's assessment, but add contradictory evidence that her income does not even cover the family's basic expenditures. F's remarks, in effect, refute Y's contestation, and re-assert her and Y's shared predicament and fate in the vagaries of the lottery.

7. Conclusion

When new commercial models such as lotteries, organized by the government and exploited by local tradesmen, become an accepted daily routine in a rural town in southern China, the language of the local community reflects many facets of the localized lottery practice and particularly the lottery players' orientation to the economic and moral dimensions of the fortuity-based endeavor. The dialogues involving the lottery, as the current study shows, coincide with rhetorical language use and speech play, such as mockery, verbal dueling, metaphor, rhetorical questions, parallelism, hyperbole, and hypothetical conditionals. These rhetorical language use and speech plays are collaboratively constructed, in the moment-by-moment unfolding of the interaction. The moments of playfulness toward discussing the lottery do not undercut but rather often coincide with speakers' acute awareness of their potential for addiction to the lottery and the game's futility.

Just as emotion is rarely expressed by emotion-descriptive words (Goodwin & Goodwin 2000) and aesthetic assessments are rarely marked with assessment-denoting adjectives (Wittgenstein 1938), the speakers' meta-awareness of the moral underpinning of playing the lottery is not through explicit morality-assessing vocabulary. In moments of jocular and sometimes rueful, speech play in the discussions of the local lottery, Shishan residents mark their conscious awareness to the negative role that lotteries plays in their life. One is able to mock one's wishful thinking on basis of one's awareness of the gambling nature of lotteries. Public announcement of one's trivial lottery winning becomes itself a mockery and the cause for jest and laughter for onlookers and a source of shame for the protagonists. Further, as the conversations evince, the lottery may render life more trivial for the lottery winners and subject individuals to resignation to the fate of losing money and addictions to playing the lottery.

Overall, as has been amply demonstrated across languages, the affective and (inter)subjective nature of language is a universal. All languages have means for expressing stance, affect and emotion (Benveniste 1971, Ochs & Schieffelin 1989, Maynard 1993). In the context of conversations about the lottery, an emotion-inducing social activity, the emotive nature of language is ever more evident and intertwines with creative language use.

These instances of conversational exchanges about the local lottery in Shishan Town provide glimpses of the changing ways of life in Shishan, like many rural societies in a rapidly metamorphosing nation. The expressions of playfulness and conflictive orientations to the economic manipulations of the lottery industry not only provide glimpses of the effect of a lack of employment for the residents in the local economy, but also portray the resilience of human nature which makes laughter possible in harsh economic situations.

The propensity for speech play and the significance of speech play for portraying sociolinguistic practices in the Shishan community, suggests that the documentation of previously undocumented languages, such as Shishan, can benefit from examining the language in natural contexts of use. Not only are the structural properties of the local linguistic variety worth documenting, but also the various forms of rhetorical language use and speech play are integral to the linguistic characteristics of the indigenous language.

Appendix 1. Abbreviations

1PL	first person plural
1SG	first person singular
2SG	second person singular
ADV	adverb
CLS	classifier
COP	copula
DEM	demonstrative
EXIS	existential
INT	interjection
M	modality marker
NEG	negation
PL	plural marker
PRT	particle

Appendix 2. Transcription Convention

The data transcription follows a modified version of Conversation Analysis transcription conventions (Jefferson 2004).

Overlapping utterances [

[

Contiguous utterances by =

Intervals within and between utterances by (.) (2.0)

Untimed pause indicated by a dash –

Elongating indicated by colon :::

Pitch peak indicated by ^.

In-breath indicated by .h

The conversational background indicated by double parenthesis (())

Bold letters indicating features of interest

Sharply rising intonation indicated by ↑

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關於海南島北部鄉村城鎮「地方彩票」的話語分析

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本文採用話語分析的方法研究中國南部鄉村城鎮公眾場合中發生的關於當地彩票的自然對話交流。自然對話資料採集自海南島北部石山鎮的公共場所，時長六小時。以往研究者未曾對石山方言進行過具體的語言研究。石山話是臨高語的地方方言，臨高語從屬於台語。本文重點分析交流者如何調侃他人「買獎如賭」的習慣，悲嘆個人如何與中獎機會失之交臂，八卦他人因彩票而失意或以彩票而暴富的經歷，議論彩票對理財的影響以及彩票使人成癮的本性。文中表明，有關彩票的對話常以各種修辭語言的形式出現，如比喻、反駁、象徵、調侃，及口頭對戰。這樣的對話反映了交流者將彩票活動當作一種與道德操行有微妙關係的社會活動。

關鍵詞：修辭語、語言遊戲、社會與話語、石山方言、臨高語