Systemic Nature of Substratum Transfer: The case of *Got* in Singapore English

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Demographics of Singapore since 1840

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Malay</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dialects in Chinese community

[Bar chart showing dialects in Chinese community with data points for 1901 and 1990.]

Source: Bao 2001

Most frequent home language

[Bar chart showing the most frequent home language with data points for 1990, 2000, and 2010.]

Source: Census of Population 2000, 2010
Linguistic ecology of Singapore English

- Continued presence of languages in contact
  - ‘Mother tongues’ — Chinese, Malay, Tamil
  - ‘Working language’ — English
- Constant contact with same mix of languages throughout history

Explaining substrate influence

- Clustering effect in substratum transfer
  - Target of transfer: grammatical subsystem
- Exponencing of appropriated system
  - Be faithful to grammar of source
  - Be faithful to grammar of exponence

Antagonistic tension of competing demands shapes grammar of Singapore English
Explaining substrate influence

E₁ E₂ … Eᵢ Eⱼ Exemplars

F₁ F₂ … F₃ F₄ Frames

C₁ C₂…Cᵢ Cⱼ Constructions

G Grammar

Got as part of aspectual system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perfective</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Sing Eng</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completive</td>
<td>V-le</td>
<td>S already</td>
<td>V-ed, V-en</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*V already</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
<td>V guo</td>
<td>ever V</td>
<td>≈ ever V-en</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphatic</td>
<td>you V</td>
<td>got V</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V-wan</td>
<td>V finish</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inchoative</td>
<td>S-le</td>
<td>S already</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfective</td>
<td>zai V</td>
<td>V-ing</td>
<td>V-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
<td></td>
<td>≈ V-ing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>V zhe…(ne)</td>
<td>≈ V-ing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>V-zhe V</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tentative</td>
<td>V-V</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bao 2005
**Got/you as aspect marker**

(1)  a:  *Got* bring your workbook?

b:  *You* dai zuoyebu ma
got bring workbook Q
‘Did you bring your workbook?’

Source: All Singlish data are cited from SCORE corpus, National Institute of Education, Singapore. I thank Dr Hong Huaqing for his help with the data.

**Got/you as existential marker**

Additional meanings of *you* ‘have’:

(2)  a.  Existence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locative</th>
<th>you</th>
<th>NP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>limian</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>ren</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
inside have people
‘There are people inside’
Additional meanings of you ‘have’:

(2) b. Existential Quantification

\[ \text{[you Quantifier] S} \]

you ren xiyuan
have people smoke
‘Someone is smoking.’

Additional meanings of got:

(3) a. Existence

Locative [got NP]

In front got camera

[The shopping centre] downstairs got a basement.
Got/you as existential marker

Additional meanings of got:

(3) b. Existential Quantification

\[ \text{[got Quantifier] S} \]

*Got* one question I write wrongly

How come suddenly ah, *got* so many people coming to my rescue?

The quantification cluster

- **existential quantification**
  - **got**
- **universal quantification**
  - **also**
(4) a. Universal Quantification

Quantifier [also VP]

Everything also you never learn
‘You did not learn anything.’

Anything you have, I must also have

(4) b. Concession

Condition [also VP]

Even your bus driver, you also address as uncle okay?

Even when he finish, he cannot sit down also
Also/dou as concessive marker

Cantonese: *dou* ‘all, also’

(5)  a. Universal quantification
    Moye lei *dou* m jee
    everything you not know

    b. Leih bei kui kui *dou* m ao
    you give he he also not want
    ‘Even if you give him, he does not want (it)’

The clustering of *got*

```
[ASPECTUAL SYSTEM]

    perfective
    got
    existential

[QUANTIFICATION SYSTEM]

    also
    universal
```
Durian: from Malay, *duri*, thorn, prickle. The oval or globular fruit has a hard prickly rind and luscious cream-colored pulp, of a strong civet odor, but agreeable taste.  - *OED*