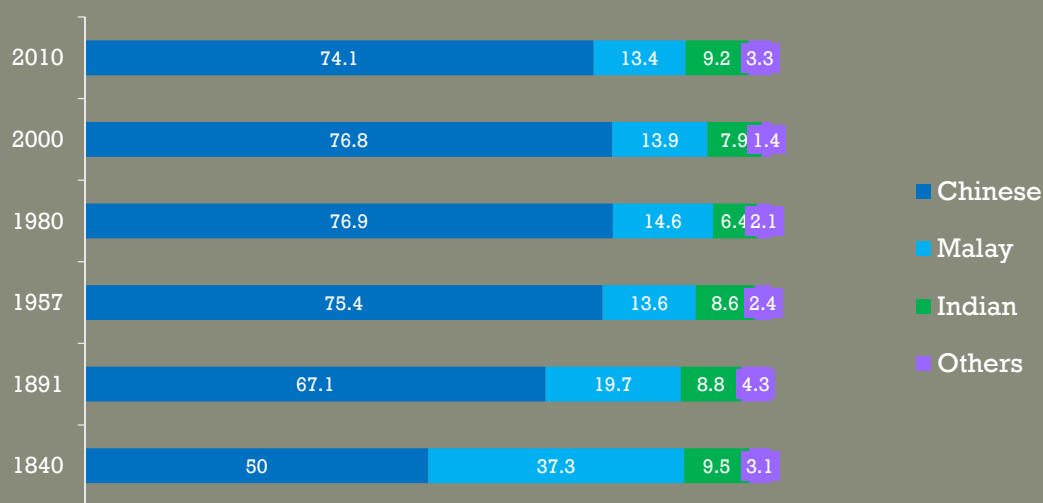


Systemic Nature of Substratum Transfer: The case of *Got* in Singapore English

ISLE-2, Boston University
20 June 2011

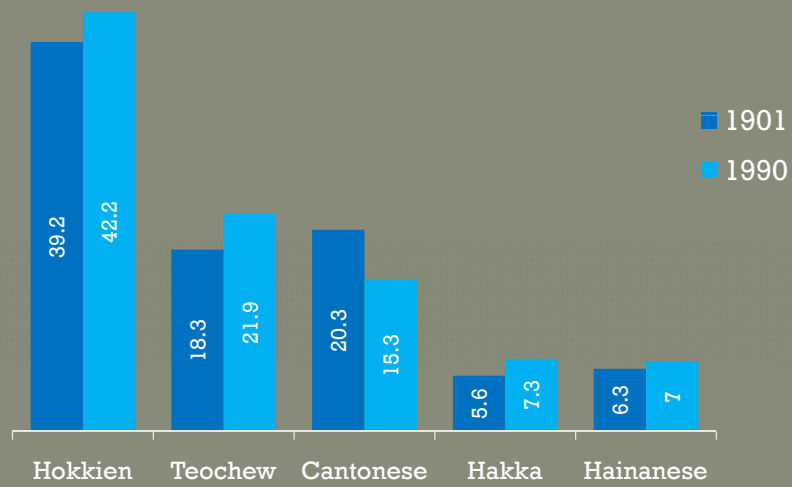
Bao Zhiming
National University of Singapore

Demographics of Singapore since 1840



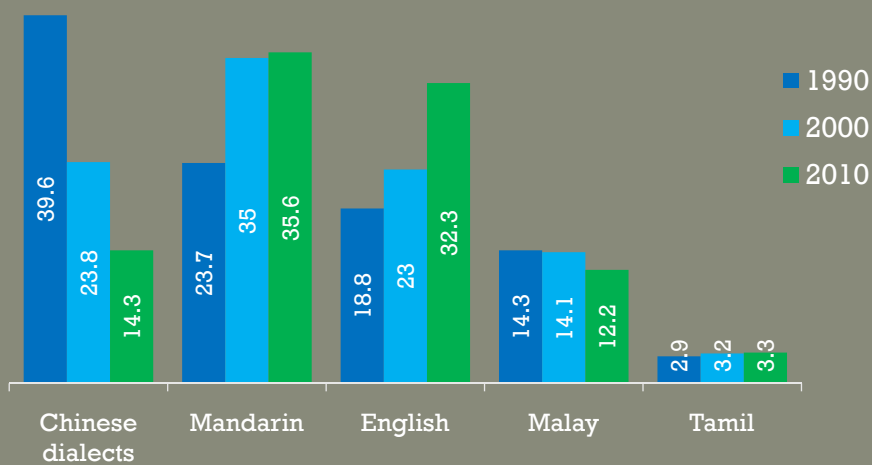
Source: *Census of Population 2000, 2010; Bao 2001, 2003*

Dialects in Chinese community



Source: Bao 2001

Most frequent home language



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

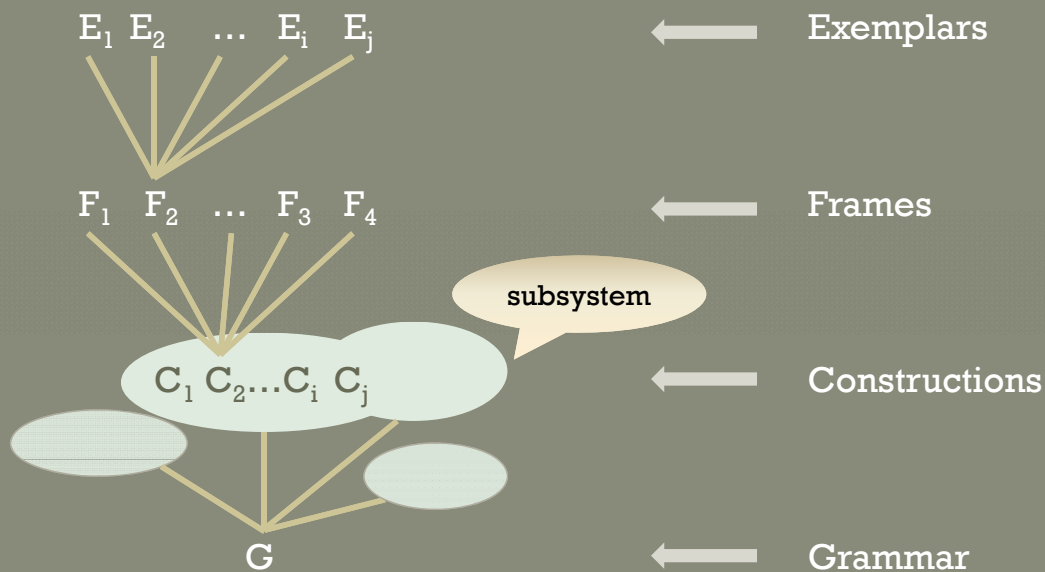
- Target of transfer: grammatical subsystem

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



Got as part of aspectual system

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

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:

Locative [*you*] NP

limian *you* ren
inside have people
'There are people inside'

Got/you as existential marker

Additional meanings of *you* 'have':

(2) b. Existential Quantification

[*you* Quantifier] S

you ren xiyan
have people smoke
'Someone is smoking.'

Got/you as existential marker

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

[*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

The quantification cluster

(4) a. Universal Quantification

Quantifier [*also* VP]

Everything *also* you never learn
'You did not learn anything.'

Anything you have, I must also have

The quantification cluster

(4) b. Concession

Condition [*also* VP]

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

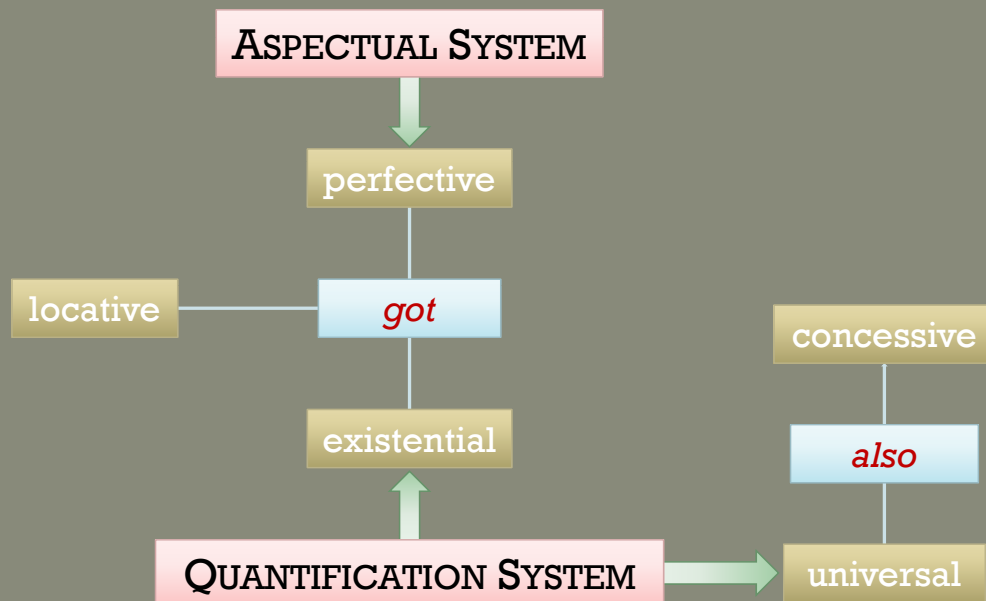
Even when he finish, he cannot sit down *also*

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*



Thanks!



**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***