

***Got*-interrogatives and answers in Colloquial Singapore English**

MIE HIRAMOTO* AND YOSUKE SATO**

ABSTRACT: This paper investigates the use of *got* in interrogative sentences and their corresponding answers in Colloquial Singapore English (CSE). Lee, Ling, and Nomoto analyze CSE *got* as a realis marker from which several different meanings are derived, including temporal location, aspect, and emphasis. While following in their essential claims, we propose that the acceptability of the *got*-interrogatives and their answers depends on the inherent lexical aspect of the verb (aktionsart) that accompanies *got* in interrogative sentences. Concerning *got*-interrogatives and their answers, we discuss situation-based sentences that denote the experiential, habitual, and completive aspects, as well as those sentences that have stative meanings. We suggest that stative sentences are critical to our aspectual analysis, as the notion of stativity, rather than realis vs. irrealis distinction, is the primary determinant of the acceptability judgments concerning the situational interpretations of the *got*-interrogatives and their answers.

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the use of *got* in interrogative sentences and their answers in Colloquial Singapore English (henceforth, CSE).¹ Singapore is a city-state with a population of five million (Statistics Singapore 2010). Historically, its location at the southern end of the Malay Peninsula made it an ideal location as a port of trade for Southeast Asia, a role in which it thrived. Due in large part to its position as a trade hub and the amount of contact with immigrants and foreign workers, CSE (also known as Singlish) developed from the resultant diverse linguistic background and by now has been studied as one of the new Englishes (e.g. Kachru 1992; Ho and Wong 2001).² The current consensus is that the grammar of CSE came about from the intense language contact between the suprastrate language, English, and the local substrate languages, Chinese, Malay, and to a lesser extent, Tamil (Bao and Wee 1999).

While it is accepted that CSE has substrate influences from more than one local language, researchers' claims are not uniform as to which local languages have the most influence, or to what extent. Gupta (1998) and Low and Brown (2005) argue that Baba Malay, a Malay-lexified creole spoken by Peranakans or Straits-born Chinese, and Bazaar Malay, a Malay-based pidgin spoken in trading centers, are primary substrate languages of CSE, whereas others (Alsagoff, Bao, and Wee 1998; Bao 1995; 2005; Lee, Ling, and Nomoto 2009) claim that Chinese languages (Cantonese, Hokkien) are the principal CSE substrates. This paper aims to provide further evidence for the lexical-semantic influences of the Chinese languages on CSE through the analysis of the innovative use of *got* in interrogative questions and their answers.

*Department of English Language and Literature; Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences AS Block 5, 7 Arts Link; National University of Singapore; Singapore 117570. E-mail: ellmh@nus.edu.sg

**Department of English Language and Literature; Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences AS Block 5, 7 Arts Link; National University of Singapore; Singapore 117570. E-mail: ellys@nus.edu.sg

CSE has grammatical features independent from Standard English, as the CSE use of *got* shows. Functions of *got* in CSE have been discussed by some scholars (e.g. Lee 2009; Lee et al. 2009; Nomoto and Lee forthcoming). However, these existing works focus on the use of *got* to mark aspect, and no previous study has yet covered the use of this verb in interrogative questions and their answers. This paper identifies the broader functions of *got* in CSE and demonstrates that the novel use of this morpheme is governed by its own grammar characterized in terms of aktionsart or lexical aspect of the verb involved in a *got*-interrogative. In the next two sections, we will first review the functions of CSE *got* discussed by Lee et al. (2009) and propose a follow-up analysis to complement their findings with special reference to the lexical aspect of verbs and the non-future aspectual functions of *got*. Following this, we will demonstrate characteristics of the non-future aspectual functions of *got* in interrogative sentences and answers. We propose that the notion of stativity is the primary determinant of the acceptability judgments concerning the situational interpretations of the *got*-interrogative-answer pair. The fifth section concludes.

ASPECTUAL MARKING FUNCTIONS OF *GOT* IN CSE

Lee et al. (2009) observe that while CSE *got* shares certain meanings with British English *got* such as possessive, passive, ‘to receive/to obtain,’ and ‘to become,’ the former has acquired other meanings that do not exist for the latter, including existential, realis (temporal locations: non-future; aspect: habitual, experiential, and completive), and emphasis (as used by a hearer like *where got?* ‘how can it be?’ when speaking back to a person in a challenging manner. See Lee et al.’s 2009 discussion on this.) They claim that the CSE-specific meanings of *got* arise due to the substrate lexical influences from terms equivalent to *got*, including Hokkien *ū*, Cantonese *jau*, and Baba Malay *ada*. Below, we provide an overview of Lee et al.’s findings.

Although the lexis of CSE is dominated by Standard (British) English, the grammatical behavior of the two languages is strikingly different. Wee (2008) demonstrates that CSE *got* is used in various ways, for example, as a possessive, a perfective, and an existential marker. These uses are illustrated in examples (1a, 1b, and 1c), respectively.

- (1) a. *You got nice shirt.* (Possessive)
 ‘You have a nice shirt.’
 b. *He got go to Japan³.* (Perfective)
 ‘He has been to Japan.’
 c. *Here got very many people.* (Existential)
 ‘There are many people here.’ (Wee 2008: 595–596)

The use of CSE *got* as a possessive marker, shown in (1a), is one of the overlapping lexical-semantic features with Standard English *got* (e.g. *That cat has got so many kittens*), but the perfective and existential uses of this morpheme illustrated in (1b, c) are CSE-specific characteristics.

While Wee (2008) labels *got* in (1b) as perfective, Lee et al. (2009) and Nomoto and Lee (forthcoming) analyze this type of *got* as an experiential marker. Lee et al. (2009) specifically focus on the aspectual marking functions of *got* in CSE. According to their analysis, CSE *got* marks three aspectual meanings: habitual (denoting regular practices or

recurring events), experiential (concerning prior experiences), and completive (concerning a recent past event that has just been completed). Under this three-way classification, *got* as used in (1b) marks the experiential aspect. Example (2) illustrates the use of *got* for this experiential meaning.

- (2) *I got go Japan.* (Experiential)
 'I have been to Japan.' (Lee et al. 2009: 298)

The completive use of CSE *got* is illustrated in example (3). Lee et al. note that the sentence can only be interpreted as denoting (i), not (ii). That is, (3) cannot be construed as an interrogative questioning the hearer's past experience.

- (3) *You got wash your hands?* (Completive)
 (i) 'Did you wash your hands just now?'
 (ii)*'Have you washed your hands before?' (Lee et al. 2009: 298)

The habitual use of CSE *got* is illustrated in (4a, b). These examples were provided by native CSE speaking students in their class presentations on the CSE features at the National University of Singapore, EL3221: Language in Contact, Semester 2, 2009. Here after, the data resulting from this source will be cited as 'NUS class discussion.'⁴

- (4) a. *Got volunteer at the animal shelter?*
 (i) 'Do you/Did you used to volunteer (regularly) at the animal shelter?'
 (ii) *'Have you ever volunteered at the animal shelter?'
 b. *Got volunteer at the animal shelter before?*
 (i) 'Did you volunteer (regularly) at the animal shelter before?'
 (ii) *'Have you ever volunteered at the animal shelter before?'
 (Data from NUS class discussion)

In (4a), *got* implies (i) the hearer's regular engagement in volunteer activities at the shelter and not (ii) the person's prior experience of volunteering. Similarly, in (4b), *got* indicates (i) the hearer's habitual action and not (ii) his/her prior experience, despite the presence of the adverbial modifier *before*, which would otherwise facilitate the experiential aspect meaning.

Lee et al. (2009) also observe that while *got* generally implies non-past aspect as shown in the examples above, there are limited circumstances under which it can be used for the purposes of future reference. Smith (1997) observes that the futurate construction (i.e. *be* Verb-*ing* future) requires some kind of schedule, plan, control, or pattern of events, unlike the *will*-modal construction (i.e. *will* [verb]). Along the same lines, Dixon (2005) states that the *will* [verb] future marks irrealis modality, whereas the futurate construction marks realis modality. The contrast in question is illustrated by the contrast in acceptability between (5a) and (5b) in Standard English.

- (5) a. *It is raining tomorrow. (realis modality)
 b. It will rain tomorrow. (irrealis modality) (Dixon 2005: 213)

The futurate construction in (5a) is deemed unacceptable because the prediction of rain is based neither on an established event nor on a pre-determined schedule or plan. The modal *will* construction in (5b) is acceptable, however, because it denotes irrealis modality.

Lee et al. (2009) as well as Nomoto and Lee (forthcoming) show that *got* is a realis modality marker in the sense of Dixon; it can mark future reference only when the proposition of a sentence is based on some established factuality at the speech time. Thus, the sentence in (6) can mean (i), but not (ii).

(6) *I got go Bali next time.*

- (i) 'I am going to Bali sometime in the future.' (realis modality)
 (ii) *'I will go to Bali sometime in the future.' (irrealis modality)

(Data from NUS class discussion)

The examples in (6) show that the future marking use of *got* in a definite future context is possible. However, this is far less common than its use for non-future reference. For this reason, we will be concerned only with the non-future aspectual functions of *got* in the rest of this paper.

SUBSTRATE INFLUENCES FROM CHINESE LANGUAGES ON THE ASPECTUAL SEMANTICS OF *GOT*

As stated above, researchers fall into two groups with respect to whether the primary substrate languages of CSE are Malay and/or indigenous or southern Chinese languages. Bao (2005) suggests that CSE *got* is a result of substrate lexical influences from Chinese languages (Mandarin as well as the southern varieties, Hokkien and Cantonese). This suggestion is empirically supported from Mandarin *you* 'got/to have,' which may denote the habitual, experiential, and completive aspects, just like CSE *got*, as shown in (7a, 7b, and 7c), respectively.⁵

- (7) a. *Wo (yǒu) qu guo Shanghai.* (Experiential)
 I (have/got) go ASP Shanghai
 'I have been to Shanghai.'
 'I got go Shanghai.' (CSE) ((7a/c) from NUS class discussion)
- b. *Wo yǒu xi shou.* (Completive)
 I have/got wash hand
 'I washed my hands.'
 'I got wash my hands.' ((7b) from Bao 2005: 248) (CSE)
- c. *Wo yóu gei bu xi.* (Habitual)
 I have/got give tuition.
 'I give tuition (regularly). = I give tutoring sessions.'
 'I got give tuition.' (CSE)

Along the same lines, Lee et al. (2009) observe that Hokkien \bar{u} marks completive and habitual aspects, as shown in (8b, c). The experiential aspect, however, is marked by a different marker, namely, *kuei*, as shown in (8a).

- (8) a. *Gwa khe kuei jit poon.* (Experiential)
 I go ASP Japan
 'I have been to Japan before.'

- b. *Li* (*tau sian*) *ū* *sway* *qiu bo?* (Completive)
 you (before) U wash hand NEG
 ‘Did you wash your hands?’
 ‘Have you washed your hands (yet)?’
- c. *Li* *yee zeing* *ū* *pha* *bang gui* *bo?* (Habitual)
 you before U hit tennis NEG
 ‘Do you play tennis?’
 ‘Did you used to play tennis?’ ((8 a–c) Lee et al. 2009: 302)

Cantonese is another language suggested by Bao (2005) to have influenced the novel use of CSE *got*. This language has *jáu*, which is equivalent to Mandarin *yǒu* and Hokkien *ū*. Wang (1965) points out that *jáu* functions as an aspect marker in Cantonese. According to Lee et al. (2009), this morpheme can mark the habitual aspect; the two other aspects, experiential and completive aspects, are marked instead by two other markers, *gwo* and *zoek*, respectively.⁶ These observations are illustrated in (9a–c).

- (9) a. *Nei heoi gwo jat bun mei?* (Experiential)
 you go ASP Japan NEG
 ‘Have you ever been to Japan?’
- b. *Nei sai zoek sau mei?* (Completive)
 you wash ASP hand NEG
 ‘Did you washed your hands?’
- c. *Nei jáu mou daa mong kau?* (Habitual)
 you JAU NEG hit tennis
 ‘Do you play tennis regularly?’ ((9a–c): Lee et al. 2009: 305)

In addition to the shared meanings of possession, Mandarin *yǒu* and Hokkien *ū* and Cantonese *jáu* all share the same Chinese character 有 (Lee 2003; Ministry of Education Language Committee, ROC 2008). Given this fact, the novel existential usage of CSE *got* illustrated in (1c) suggests that all three languages discussed here must have had substrate influence on the existential/possession meaning of CSE *got*. As for the aspectual functions of CSE *got*, as we have seen, these CSE features are also available in a number of Chinese languages; Mandarin *yǒu* (completive, habitual, and experiential aspects), Hokkien *ū* (completive and habitual aspects), and Cantonese *jáu* (habitual aspect). The shared functions of *got* and its Chinese equivalents strongly suggest that the three aspectual meanings of CSE *got*, in addition to the existential meaning of CSE *got*, have emerged due to its contact with the Chinese substratal languages.

GOT-INTERROGATIVE QUESTIONS AND SINGLE WORD ANSWERS IN CSE

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of *got*-interrogatives and answers that are based upon different situational meaning types. As stated above, Lee et al. (2009) analyze CSE *got* as a realis marker from which several different meanings such as temporal location, aspect, and emphasis are derived. We follow their analysis, but with the proviso that the acceptability of the *got*-interrogative questions and their answers is determined as a result of the interaction between the inherent lexical semantics of the verbs and the aspectual properties of CSE *got* reviewed above. For this purpose, we discuss

situation-based sentences that denote the experiential, habitual, and completive aspects, as well as sentences that have stative meanings. The inclusion of stative sentences is critical because we will show that the notion of *stativity*, rather than the aspectual (realis vs. irrealis) distinction, is the primary determinant of the acceptability judgments concerning the situational interpretations of the *got*-interrogatives and their answers.

In CSE, acceptable positive answers to *got*-interrogatives include *yes*, *got*, and *have*. Acceptable negative responses to this type of question, on the other hand, include *no*, *don't have*, and *never*. Below, we present three interrogative questions (10–12) with the habitual, experiential, and completive aspects of *got*, in that order, followed by the list of replies.

- (10) a. *Got give tuition?* (Habitual *got*)
 'Do/did you have a tutoring job (regularly)?'
 b. *Yes. / Got. / Have.* [positive answer]
 c. *No. / Don't have. / Never / *Don't get.* [negative answer]
- (11) a. *Got go Japan last time?* (Experiential *got*)
 'Have you been to Japan before?'
 b. *Yes. / Got. / Have.* [positive answer]
 c. *No. / Don't have. / Never / *Don't get.* [negative answer]
- (12) a. *You got wash your hands?* (Completive *got*)
 'Did you wash your hands (just now)?'
 b. *Yes. / Got. / Have.* [positive answer]
 c. *No. / Don't have. / Never / *Don't get.* [negative answer]
- (Data from NUS class discussion)

The possible positive answers for (10a–12a) are 'yes,' 'got,' or 'have'; among them, 'have' does not seem to be as expected as a response as 'yes' and 'got.' 'Have' as a response to a *got*-interrogative seems to be a direct translation of the Chinese substrate languages. The words equivalent to English 'got' in Mandarin (*yǒu*), Hokkien (*ū*), and Cantonese (*jau*) all translate as 'got' or 'have.' Moreover, Mandarin (*yǒu*), Hokkien (*ū*), and Cantonese (*jau*) are used to answer interrogative sentences equivalent to (10a–12a) in the Chinese languages. The possible negative answers for (10a–12a) are 'no,' 'don't have,' or 'never.' Here, interestingly, the phrase 'don't get' is not grammatical. The reason why the negative answers of the substrate languages are not translated into 'don't get' is not clear to us. According to our group of native Singapore English speaking students at the National University of Singapore, Mandarin (*mei yǒu*), Hokkien (*bō*), and Cantonese (*móu*) are translated as 'don't have' or 'never'; 'don't get' was hardly an option. At the same time, the positive answers in Mandarin (*yǒu*), Hokkien (*ū*), and Cantonese (*jau*) were all translated as 'got' or 'have' as mentioned above. Regarding how to explain this asymmetry in translation of 'have/got' and 'don't have/*don't get,' one could hypothesize that 'get' used under a negative context is interpreted as an inchoative change of state verb which thereby is semantically incompatible with the three aspectual meanings illustrated in (10 – 12). Accordingly, 'have' is selected by CSE speakers as negative reply. This is an expected result because *have* in English can independently express the three aspectual meanings.

Another point is that 'never' as the negative reply does not denote tense or aspect marking. Answering the *got*-interrogative with 'never' does not mean that 'one has never done [the action denoted by a verb] before.' Rather, it just provides simple negation in an answer to a question. In fact, 'never' is frequently used interchangeably with 'no' in CSE. A number of native CSE speakers we consulted mentioned that Mandarin (*mei*

yǒu), Hokkien (*bō*), and Cantonese (*móu*) can be translated as ‘don’t have’ or ‘never.’ In other words, the negative responses in the substrate languages seen in the data (10c–12c) do not necessarily imply any explicit sense of aspect in the same manner as Standard English.

Note that the verbs in (10a–12a) are all categorized as dynamic verbs, namely, verbs that denote either events (including actions) or processes (including activities). Concerning the tense aspect of the interrogative questions, as for the reply to (10a), both positive (10b) and negative (10c) sets of answers can be interpreted as past or non-past: ‘yes, I do/did’ or ‘no, I do/did not.’ That is, either the past or non-past interpretation of the answer depends on the context to which the corresponding *got*-interrogative refers. If the question refers to a non-past event, the answers mean ‘yes, I do’ or ‘no, I don’t,’ whereas if the question refers to a past event, the corresponding answers mean ‘yes, I did’ or ‘no, I didn’t.’ In (11b), the positive answer means ‘yes, I have’ and in (11c), the negative answer means ‘no, I haven’t,’ while in (12b), the positive answer means ‘yes, I did’ and in (12c), the negative answer means ‘no, I didn’t.’ The verbs following *got* in these examples are called ‘dynamic’ because they all show qualities capable of change over time. As we will see below shortly, when the verbs in *got*-interrogatives are replaced with stative verbs, the response pattern seen in (10a–12a) changes dramatically. In what follows, we will first review semantic differences between the dynamic and the stative verbs in terms of Aktionsart or lexical aspect of the verb, as originally suggested by Vendler (1957).

Dynamic verbs are commonly divided into three classes: activity, accomplishment, and achievement verbs (Vendler 1957), based on their aktionsart or lexical aspects. The lexical aspect or aktionsart of a verb is a part of the way in which that verb is structured in relation to time. Lexical aspect is distinguished from grammatical aspect in that lexical aspect is an inherent property of an eventuality, whereas grammatical aspect is a property of a specific verb form. To illustrate, for the verb *break* there is an inherently expected time at which the action of breaking drinking will be completed, whereas for the verb *know* the state of knowing will continue without an expected end point. As such, *break* and *know* here have two distinct lexical aspects.

Vendler (1957) categorizes verbs into four types: those which express ‘activity,’ those which express ‘accomplishment,’ those which express ‘achievement,’ and those which express ‘state.’ The first three types of verbs are known as dynamic verbs while the last type is known as non-dynamic verb. Activity verbs such as *walk*, *dance*, and *run* denote events with no built-in boundaries and stretching out over time. Achievement verbs such as *reach*, *die*, and *win* denote events construed as occupying no time at all. Accomplishment verbs denote events with an activity phase, followed by a closure phase with a built-in boundary. Stative verbs denote continuous action without an expected end point unless more details are added. There are many diagnostics to tell the difference between dynamic and non-dynamic verbs; here, we mention just three of them that are relevant to our discussion of CSE *got*-interrogatives and their answers. First, the progressive form can only occur with dynamic verbs, accounting for the contrast between (13a–c) and (13d).

- (13) a. John is running. (dynamic: activity verb)
 b. John is winning. (dynamic: achievement verb)
 c. John is breaking the vase. (dynamic: accomplishment verb)
 d. *John is knowing the answer. (stative: stative verb)

Second, if a clause can be used to answer questions such as *What happened?* or *What's up?*, it contains a dynamic verb; if a clause cannot be so used, it contains a stative verb.

- (14) Context Question: What happened?
- a. John ran! (dynamic: activity verb)
 - b. John won! (dynamic: achievement verb)
 - c. John broke the vase! (dynamic: accomplishment verb)
 - d. *John knew the answer! (stative: stative verb)

Finally, it is well known that, in contrast to dynamic verbs, stative verbs cannot be complements of verbs such as *force*, which require the infinitival complement to be eventive in nature. This point is illustrated in (15a–d).

- (15) a. I forced John to run. (dynamic: activity verb)
 b. I forced John to win. (dynamic: achievement verb)
 c. I forced John to break the vase. (dynamic: accomplishment verb)
 d. *I forced John to know the answer! (stative: stative verb)

We are now ready to return to the discussion of the CSE *got*-interrogatives. The stative verbs include *like*, *believe*, *know*, *feel*, *love*, and *hate*. When a *got*-interrogative question uses a stative verb, the possible replies change, as shown in (16–20).

- (16) a. *You got like chocolate?* 'Do you like chocolate?'
 b. *Yes. / Got. / *Have.* [positive answer]
 c. *No. / *Don't have. / Never.* [negative answer]
- (17) a. *You got believe her story?* 'Do you believe her story?'
 b. *Yes. / Got. / *Have.* [positive answer]
 d. *No. / *Don't have. / Never.* [negative answer]
- (18) a. *You got feel sick?* 'Do you feel sick?'
 b. *Yes. / Got. / *Have.* [positive answer]
 c. *No. / *Don't have. / Never.* [negative answer]
- (19) a. *You got love her?* 'Do you love her?'
 b. *Yes. / Got. / *Have.* [positive answer]
 c. *No. / *Don't have. / Never.* [negative answer]
- (20) a. *You got hate vegetable?* 'Do you hate vegetables?'
 b. *Yes. / Got. / *Have.* [positive answer]
 c. *No. / *Don't have. / Never.* [negative answer]

(Data from NUS class discussion)

The examples in (16–20) show that among (b) positive and (c) negative answers for these *got*-interrogatives, the *have*-type answers are unacceptable. As discussed in regard to examples (10–12), the *have*-type answers are acceptable when the verb is construed as a dynamic predicate. In other words, it is the stativity property of the verbs involved that causes the unacceptability of the *have*-type answers. Another difference between the stative and dynamic verbs in the *got*-interrogatives is that *got* is optional when combined with stative verbs. Thus, all the interrogatives in (16a–20a) are grammatically acceptable without *got*. However, when *got* is omitted in the interrogative sentences in (16a–20a), only 'yes' in (16b–20b) becomes an acceptable answer.

Below we present our analysis of the paradigm presented above. First of all, ‘yes’ is the universally available positive reply to all types of interrogative *yes-no* questions (in both CSE and Standard English). Second, ‘got’ is acceptable for all *got*-interrogatives due to the fact that the use of ‘got’ in an interrogative question influences the response pattern to that question using the same word as a priming effect. Moreover, since CSE is a null subject language (Tay 1979; Platt and Weber 1980; Alsagoff and Ho 1998; Gupta 1998; Bao 2001; Tan 2003; 2007; 2009), ‘got’ can work as a stand-alone response marker. Finally, we saw in the data presented above that ‘have’ is acceptable only when it is used in a *got*-interrogative where *got* serves as one of the three aspectual markers (experiential, completive, and habitual). This pattern directly follows from the fact that *have* plays the role of past participle to denote the sense of completion of an action/process denoted by a dynamic verb. Accordingly, this verb cannot be used in an interrogative question with stative verbs because the question denotes a state of affairs with no specific endpoint, therefore having no actual completion of the action.

Turning to the negative responses to *got*-interrogatives, ‘no’ is the universal negative reply to all types of interrogative *yes-no* questions. Typically, adding ‘no’ or ‘not’ to an answer would create a negative answer, but ‘no got,’ ‘don’t got,’ or ‘got not’ do not exist as grammatical options in CSE. Instead of ‘don’t got’ (or ‘don’t get’), ‘don’t have’ is a possible negative response to *got*-interrogatives. ‘Don’t have’ seems to be a direct translation from the Chinese substrate languages: Mandarin (*mei yǒu*), Hokkien (*bō*), and Cantonese (*móu*) as these phrases are commonly translated as ‘don’t have’ in English. In CSE, ‘never’ is not used to mark aspect; it is often used as a negation of actions indicated by a verb in a non-future setting. Thus, it is used interchangeably with ‘no’ as an answer to *got*-interrogatives. As with the positive answer ‘have,’ its negative counterpart ‘don’t have’ can be used for all three aspectual meanings of the *got*-interrogative—experiential, completive, and habitual. However, ‘don’t have’ is not used as an answer to *got*-interrogative questions with stative verbs.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have investigated the use of *got* in interrogative sentences and their answers in CSE. Lee et al. (2009) and Nomoto and Lee (forthcoming) analyze CSE *got* as a realis marker where several different meanings including temporal location, aspect, and emphasis are derived. We followed their analysis concerning the acceptability of the *got*-interrogative questions and their corresponding answers and found that the inherent lexical semantics of the verb (aktionsart or lexical aspect) is relevant to the corresponding answers to *got*-interrogatives. To make this point, we discussed situation-based sentences whose verbs mark aspects (experiential, habitual, and completive) as well as stative meanings. Following up on the study by Lee et al. (2009), we have proposed that the notion of *stativity*, rather than the aspectual (realis vs. irrealis) distinction, is the primary determinant of the acceptability judgments concerning the situational interpretations of the *got*-interrogatives and their answers.

NOTES

1. Our sincere thanks go to two anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions and comments on earlier versions of this paper.
2. We categorize the immigrants and foreign workers into two different types of newcomers to Singapore. While most of the immigrants moved to Singapore to settle, many of the foreign workers came to Singapore for temporary work purposes.

3. This sentence is interchangeable with 'He got go Japan' (see Example (2)). This example is a direct quote from Wee (2008); as the meanings are the same, we did not modify the original form.
4. We would especially like to thank Chia Wen Jun Shaun, Tan Wan Yee Jacqueline, and Zechy Wong for providing the CSE examples used in this paper and useful discussion on the use of *got* in CSE.
5. The following abbreviations are used in this paper. ASP: aspect; NEG: negation
6. One of the reviewers pointed out that most descriptions of Cantonese recognize only *gwo* to be an aspect marker in the given case. Although it may be the case for Cantonese spoken in its homeland, our observation is based on Cantonese used in Singapore. For this reason, we follow Lee et al.'s (2009) examples here.

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(Received 14 July 2011)