An analysis of Colloquial Singapore English "where got" constructions

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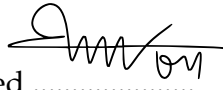
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This Honours Thesis represents my own work and due acknowledgement is given whenever information is derived from other sources. No part of this Honours Thesis has been or is being concurrently submitted for any other qualification at any other university.

Signed ....

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Contents

Abstract

Non-canonical questions in Colloquial Singapore English (CSE) are under-studied in terms of their syntactic constructions and their semantic content. This paper seeks to fill that research gap and account for a particular type of non-canonical question-like utterance in CSE that is marked by the phrase *where got*. *Where got* expresses the belief $\neg p$, and this is a part of a larger body of newly-identified *wh*-constructions called negative *wh*-constructions (NWHCs), proposed by Cheung (2008). This paper is primarily a descriptive account of the usage of *where got* that looks at the discourse contexts required and speaker attitudes encoded by the phrase, and how it fits into the framework of NWHCs.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 A brief look at *where got*

Where got is a phrase in Colloquial Singapore English (CSE; also Singlish) that is used to express belief that a proposition p, which is part of the shared information in the discourse context, is false. (1) is an example of the usage of *where got* in conversation.

(1) **Conversation I**[1]
    CONTEXT. A thought he saw John running the day before. B, however, had actually spent the entire day with John, and had told A prior to this that he would be spending the entire day with John.

    A: i)   Eh, John got run yesterday, you know!
             'Hey, John was running yesterday!'

    B: ii) John <u>where got</u> run yesterday (one)[2]. (I was with him the whole day!)
             'John did not run yesterday. (I was with him the whole day.)'

Native speakers of CSE refer to *where got* utterances as questions, even though they admit that in uttering *where got*, they mean to express that they do not believe p, rather than meaning to ask for information.

The few accounts of *where got* in extant literature are mostly sociohistorical. *Where got* has been described as an idiomatic phrase in CSE that reflects a relexification of Hokkien

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[1]Unless stated otherwise, all the data in this paper is my own.

[2]Sentence-final one in CSE has been mapped to Mandarin *de*, which is has some properties of a complementiser and is associated with cleft constructions.

dolo u (Lee et al., 2009) used in a challenge or disagreement context and loosely translated to *Is it so?* (Siegel, 2012). *Where got* has also been referred to as a rhetorical question (Bao and Lye, 2005).

This paper attempts to provide a more detailed account of the usage of *where got* with the goal of describing what *where got* means and how it might be analysed. The rest of this chapter will explore the backdrop against which *where got* will be described. The next section describes non-canonical questions resembling *where got* that have already been accounted for, and the non-information seeking content they express.

1.2   Non-canonical questions

If *where got* is really a question as native speakers recognise it, then it falls under the category of non-canonical questions. Regular questions in discourse are "interrogatives used to elicit information" (Dayal, 2016, p.268). Non-canonical questions (NCQs) are those that convey other information besides the request for information. According to Dayal (2016), NCQs have at least one of these three characteristics:

  (i) They elicit information but also convey a bias about what that information is likely to be;

 (ii) Their syntactic form does not conform to the standard interrogative form; or

(iii) Their purpose is to engage in some other kind of speech act instead of, or in addition to, eliciting information.

(Dayal, 2016, p.268)

There are various kinds of non-canonical questions, including echo questions, rhetorical questions, and biased polar questions, which will be discussed in the remainder of Section 1.2.

1.2.1 Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions seem to have the opposite function of regular questions. Though they resemble regular interrogative questions in form, rhetorical questions are not information-seeking at all, and instead they function as assertions (Dayal, 2016). The same interrogative question *Who helped Luca when he was in trouble?* can have both regular and rhetorical interpretation. With the addition of *after all* and *yet*, which are appropriate with rhetorical questions (Sadock, 1971), we get the rhetorical interpretation, as shown in (2) below. On the other hand, embedding the interrogative question under phrases such as *I'm really curious* and *I really don't know* forces a canonical question interpretation, as shown in (3):

(2) *Rhetorical interpretation*
    a. After all, who helped Luca when he was in trouble?
    b. Who helped Luca when he was in trouble? Yet he managed to become what he is now.

(3) *Regular question interpretation*
    a. I'm really curious: who helped Luca when he was in trouble?
    b. I really don't know: who helped Luca when he was in trouble?

It is important to note that the questions in (2) are only felicitous when all participants in the discourse share the same answer to the question and are aware of this shared status of the answer. The questions in (3), on the other hand, can be asked without any prior commitment to or bias towards an answer on the speaker's part. A more comprehensive notion of bias will be discussed in Section 1.3.

1.2.2 Echo questions

Echo questions, as the name suggests, are questions that mimic an antecedent proposition. They do not resemble regular interrogative questions, and they primarily "request for clarification of the form or content of their prior utterances" (Noh, 1998, p.604). Echo questions are still information-seeking in the sense that they are requests for information about an utterance. However they are not the same as regular interrogative questions,

because they require some prior utterance which entails a set of propositions that they may echo in order for them to be felicitous (Dayal, 2016).

An echo question need not exactly echo its antecedent proposition, but it may replace a constituent of interest with the appropriate *wh*-word, as shown in (4).

(4) A: I'm leaving on Tuesday.   (Noh, 1998, p.603)
     B1: You're leaving on Tuesday?
     B2: You're leaving when?

B1 and B2 can be asked as a result of B not hearing A say *Tuesday* the first time, or they can function as simultaneous expressions of surprise that A is leaving on Tuesday and requests for confirmation about A's leaving on Tuesday.

Furthermore, Noh (1998) shows that the antecedent proposition need not have been uttered. The antecedent may be a proposition inferred from the context shared by interlocutors, as in (5).

(5) A: [walks towards the door.]   (Noh, 1998, p.603)
     B1: You're leaving?
     B2: You're going where?

B2 in (4) and (5) are felicitous, and they express the same request for clarification as B1. This suggests that the status of the antecedent, be it uttered or inferred, does not alter the interpretation or intended function of the echo question.

1.2.3   Biased polar questions

A biased polar question is a polar question in which the speaker expresses bias towards an answer when they utter it, as shown in (6), adapted from Dayal (2016).

(6) A: i)   Is it raining?
         ii)   Isn't it raining?
        iii)   Is it not raining?
     B: iv)   Yes, it is raining
          v)   No, it isn't raining.

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(6i-iii) all select for the same set of possible answers (as shown in B's response). However, these questions are not understood exactly the same way. (6ii) and (6iii) seem to encode some sort of expectation (on the speaker's part) of the positive answer, while (6i) could either encode some sort of expectation that it is not raining (under the right circumstances), or simply function as a request for information about whether it is raining without any bias towards either of the possible answers.

It seems that the addition of negation does not change the denotation of the question, but it can indicate a shift in the speaker's bias, a non-truth conditional aspect of the question. However, a negated question does not necessarily indicate the bias of the speaker towards the positive answer, as shown in (7) and (8), adapted from Ladd (1981).

(7) **Conversation IIa**
CONTEXT. B's family is visiting A's city.

A: i) You guys must be starving. You want to go get something to eat?

B: ii) Yeah, <u>isn't there a vegetarian restaurant around here?</u> Moosewood or something like that?

(8) **Conversation IIb**
CONTEXT. A is visiting B's family in B's city.

A: i) I'd like to take you guys out to dinner while I'm here.

B: ii) But there's not really any place to go in Hyde Park.

A: iii) Oh really? <u>Isn't there a vegetarian restaurant around here?</u>

The negated question in (7ii) and (8iii) are identical/ However, B's utterance in (7) expresses the bias s/he has towards the positive answer, while B's utterance in (8) expresses the bias s/he has towards the negative answer, although s/he may have been biased towards the positive answer before this conversation took place. Thus, the presence of the negation alone is insufficient to account for patterns of bias. We take a closer look at bias in the next section.

1.3 Bias

1.3.1 Positive and negative bias

Bias in questions is typically talked about in terms of a dichotomy. The relationship between bias and negation in questions has been studied extensively (Ladd 1981; Gunlogson 2008; Sudo 2011; Dayal 2016). Ladd (1981) focuses on bias encoded in negative polar questions (NPQs). He makes the observation that the same negative question can have two different readings, as shown in (7) and (8) above. Ladd (1981) observed that the negation in (7) takes different scope from that in (8). (7) is analysed as a case of "outer negation", where the negation takes scope over the whole proposition, while (8) is a case of "inner negation", where the negation is found within the proposition.

This alternation can also be seen in how the positive polarity item *too* and negative polarity item *either* are allowed to follow the NPQ in (9), from Ladd (1981).

(9)   a.   Isn't Jane coming <u>too</u>?
          $\rightsquigarrow$ Jane is probably coming.
      b.   Isn't Jane coming <u>either</u>?
          $\rightsquigarrow$ (I thought she was but) Jane probably isn't coming.

However, the simple notion of positive and negative bias has been said to be too coarse to account for biased questions beyond NPQs (Sudo, 2011, p.3). This dichotomy only describes the bias of on the part of the speaker, and leaves out the role of context in selecting the appropriate biased question. Consider (10), an example of positive polar questions (PPQs):

(10)   [Context: My officemate enters the windowless computer room wearing a dripping wet raincoat.]   (Sudo, 2011)
       What is the weather like out there?
       a.   #Is it sunny?
       b.   Is it raining?

In (10), it is reasonable to infer from my officemate's wet raincoat that it is likely to be

raining, which favours the negative answer of (10a) that it is not sunny and the positive answer of (10b) that it is raining. Sudo (2011) suggests that evidence available in the context that is compatible with the negative answer of a PPQ makes it infelicitous in that context. On the other hand, PPQs do not have this problem in neutral contexts, where there is no evidence that will favour either answer, as shown in (11).

(11)   [Context: We are talking long-distance on the phone.]   (Sudo, 2011)
       What is the weather like out there?
       a. Is it sunny?
       b. Is it raining?

The account for bias in Ladd (1981) cannot account for the facts in (10) and (11). Thus Sudo (2011) proposes an alternative account that takes the role of context into account.

1.3.2   Evidential and Epistemic Bias

The alternative framework to the positive/negative dichotomy proposed by Sudo (2011) looks at positive/negative bias on two levels: bias found in contextual evidence, and bias held by the speaker prior to any contextual evidence from the conversation. While Sudo (2011) gives definitions of bias with respect to polar questions (PQ), the types of bias he describes are not exclusive to PQs. Bias from the contextual evidence is what he calls *evidential bias*, and he notes that within the class of evidential bias, there is a distinction between evidence which is incompatible with an utterance (*evidential bias* (−)) and evidence which is necessary for the utterance (*evidential bias* (+)). The definitions of the two types of evidential bias are given below.

(12)   *Evidential bias (-)*:
       If a PQ is incompatible with contextual evidence[3] for the positive [resp. negative] answer, the PQ is said to carry a [-negative] (resp. [-positive]) evidential bias.

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[3]Sudo (2011) also gives a definition of contextual evidence, as show below.

(1)   *Contextual Evidence*:
      Evidence that has just become mutually available to the participants in the current discourse situation.

(13) *Evidential bias (+)*:
If a PQ requires contextual evidence for the positive (resp. negative) answer, the PQ is said to carry a [+positive] (resp. [+negative]) evidential bias.

Bias held by the speaker is what he calls *epistemic bias*. This would be akin to the bias that Ladd (1981) refers to in his paper about bias in NPQs. The definition of epistemic bias is given below.

(14) *Epistemic bias*:
If a PQ carries an implication compatible with the positive (resp. negative) answer based on what the speaker believes, the PQ is said to carry positive (resp. negative) epistemic bias

With this framework of bias, we can now explain how the question *Is it sunny?* is not felicitous in (10) but felicitous in (11). In (10), there is evidence available to the speaker that suggests the negative answer to the question *is it sunny*, while in (11), there is evidence that suggests the positive answer to the question. Furthermore, (11) shows that PPQs are felicitous regardless of the speaker's own bias towards an answer. Thus, it seems that the licensing of PPQs is only dependent on the lack of negative evidence. In other words, PPQs seem to have the requirement [−negative] evidential bias, and no specification of epistemic bias.

It is with this framework proposed by Sudo (2011) that a particular non-canonical question construction, *where got* utterances, in CSE will be discussed.

1.4 Negative Wh-Constructions

One particularly interesting construction that is very relevant to my subsequent discussion is the negative wh-construction (NWHC) discussed by Cheung (2008). This special class of constructions have the form of *wh*-questions built on proposition *p*, but express *No way p*. Such constructions are attested cross-linguistically, as shown in (15)-(18) from Cheung (2008).

(15) Koei bin/bindou   wui sik   Dakman aa3?!
     he   which/where can know German Q   (Cantonese)

     'No way can he know German.'

(16) Eti   John-i   60 sal   i-ni?! (Korean)
     where John-NOM 60 year.old be-Q

     'No way is John 60 years old.'

(17) De   dónde/Qué va   a tener 60 años?!   (Spanish)
     from where/what go.3SG.PRES to have 60 year.old

     'No way is he 60 years old.'

(18) Raam kahãã/kon-saa   yah kitaab parh paayegaa?! (Hindi)
     Ram where/which-MASC this book   read able-FUT

     'No way will Ram be able to read this book.'

Very few studies have been done on this class of constructions. Cheung (2008) describes these NWHCs as yet another type of *wh*-question, paying particular attention to these constructions in Cantonese. *Where got* utterances look very similar to NWHCs in lexical composition as well as function, although they are not accounted for in Cheung (2008). I will take a closer look at the discussion on NWHCs by Cheung (2008) in the subsequent chapters, comparing my findings on *where got* against the data and analysis in Cheung (2008).

1.5   Roadmap

Chapter 2 will elaborate on the information *where got* expresses and the context required in order for a *where got* utterance to be felicitous. Chapter 2 also explores the syntax and functions of constituent lexical items *where* and *got* in CSE and how the syntax and semantics of *where got* relate to them. Chapter 3 discusses the three most common one-word responses to *where got* utterances, and the implications of these answers on the semantics of *where got*. I will then conclude that *where got* is compositional rather than idiomatic, and explore the possibility of coming up with a semantics for *where got*.

Chapter 2

Where got p

2.1 Expressing the belief ¬*p* and speaker expectations

As was mentioned briefly in the introduction, *where got* is a phrase used to express the speaker's disbelief about a proposition *p* in the discourse context. On top of that disbelief, *where got* also encodes the expectation that ¬*p* is common knowledge, or that ¬*p* is apparent to all participants in the conversation. *Where got* necessarily foregrounds the speaker's state of disbelief and expectation, as in (19ii). Simple negation does not always have that effect, although it can when put in the right context (19iii).

(19) **Conversation Ib**
CONTEXT. A and B both know that their mutual friend John does not exercise at all. A, however, just witnessed John running the day before. B has never seen John run.

    A: i)   John was running yesterday.

    B: ii)   John <u>where got</u> run (one).
                'John does not run regularly (and you should know this).'

         iii)   John <u>don't</u> run (one).
                'John does not run regularly (and you should know this).'

(20) **Conversation III**
CONTEXT. A is telling B about his family, and shows B a picture of his extended family. A points out John, his cousin. B knows nothing about John prior to this conversation. Upon seeing the picture of John, B recognises him as the one of the people who ran past him the day before.

B: i) Wait, I think I saw him (John) running yesterday.

A: ii) #John <u>where got</u> run (one).
        'John does not run regularly (and you should know this).'

   iii) Huh? John <u>don't</u> run (one).
         'Really? (I think you are mistaken,) John does not run regularly.'

B: iv) Oh, maybe someone looks like him. He don't run at all?

A: v) Nope. His belly everyday kena[1] poke by wife still don't want to run.
        'No. His belly is poked by his wife everyday, but he still refuses to run.'

Both (20ii) and (20iii) are challenges to the proposition that is entailed by B's statement. However, (20iii) is acceptable as it is a challenge that simply gives B information about John that he does not already have. There is no expectation of the speaker about what B already knows about John that is encoded in a simple negation. On the other hand, (20ii) is challenge to proposition p that also expresses the expectation on the speaker's part that this information ($\neg p$) should not be new to B. Thus it is strange to utter (20ii) in this context as B has no information of John prior to this conversation.

Thus, we see from (19) and (20) how *where got p* expresses more than just simple negation of proposition p, but also encodes the expectation that B knows that the proposition p is false. Simple negation of the proposition p, such as that in (20iii), does not encode such an expectation.

2.2 Requirements for *where got* to be felicitous

2.2.1 A proposition p

Beyond the speaker's expectation that $\neg p$ ought to be knowledge shared by all participants in the conversation, *where got* must also follow some proposition p in the discourse. Only with some prior commitment of knowledge can a challenge context be derived, hence *where got* utterances have to follow some antecedent proposition. This can be seen by

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[1]*Kena* marks the passive in Malay.

comparing the felicity judgements of *where got p* in (1), reintroduced here as (21), and that of (22).

(21) **Conversation I**
CONTEXT. A thought he saw John running the day before. B, however, had actually spent the entire day with John, and had told A prior to this that he would be spending the entire day with John.

    A: i)   Eh, John got run yesterday, you know!
               'Hey, John was running yesterday!'

    B: ii)   John <u>where got</u> run yesterday (one). (I was with him the whole day, remember?)

(22) **Conversation IIIb**
CONTEXT: A is telling B about his family, and shows B a picture of his extended family. B does not recognise A's cousin John in the picture, but he has been told before that John does not run.

    B: i)   [points at John in picture] And who's that?

    A: ii)   That one is my cousin John (lor[2]).

    B: iii)   #Oh yeah, you told me about him before. He <u>where got</u> run (one).

In (21), we can see the overlap in the contents of the antecedent p and the *where got* utterance, and it is clear that what is being challenged is the antecedent p. On the other hand, the *where got* utterance in (22) is not felicitous, even though the speaker has the expectation that $\neg p$ is shared knowledge. In this case, it is clear that $\neg p$ is knowledge shared by both interlocutors. The issue here is that there is no utterance p in this discourse context that precedes *where got p*.

2.2.2   A proposition q that presupposes p

Where got can also be used to challenge a presupposition of a previous utterance. Consider (23):

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[2]*Lor* is a sentence-final particle that tends to be used when the speaker has presented information prior to the conversation that is related to the statement *p lor*, or in answer to the question *what now?* if the answer can be reasonably concluded from information in the context.

(23) **Conversation IV**
Context. A and B are taking a class together. Fifteen minutes into the professor's lecture, B enters the lecture theatre.

   A: i)   Late again?

   B: ii) Eh, I where got come late again/before. First time only.
             'I have never been late to class. This is the first and only time I've been late.'

   A: iii) Last week you came after 10 o' clock!

   B: iv) Aiya³ not counted la⁴, prof haven't come yet!
             'That doesn't count, the professor hadn't come to class yet!'

However, if the *where got* utterance in (23ii) does not clearly refer to the presupposition p, it is ambiguous as to whether the proposition q or its presupposition p is being challenged, as shown in (24) below:

(24) **Conversation IVb**
Context. A and B are taking a class together. Fifteen minutes into the professor's lecture, B enters the lecture theatre.

   A: i)   Late again?

   B: ii) Eh, I where got late again.
             'I am not late/I have never been late to class before this.'

   A: iii) Last week you came after 10 o' clock!

        iv) Now what time, you tell me.
             'And what time is it?'

Both (24iii) and (24iv) are acceptable responses, and the choice of one over the other is heavily dependent on the context. If B is known to be late for everything, A might be able to accept that B is challenging the statement that B is late in this particular instance. This also requires that B is usually much more than fifteen minutes late to appointments. If B is known to be punctual but was one minute late to class the week before, and if B glances at his/her watch when s/he comes into class this time (i.e. indicating to A that B

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³An exclamation.

⁴*La* is another sentence-final particle in CSE. The usage of *la* is beyond the scope of this paper and will not be explained. Furthermore its usage here does not change the interpretation of the sentence.

is aware of the time), then A would most likely favour the reading that B is challenging the proposition that she was late the week before.

2.2.3   A proposition q that entails p

The challenge posed by *where got* also includes propositions that are entailed by the antecedent utterance, as shown in (25) and (26).

(25)   **Conversation Ic**
CONTEXT. A and B both know that their mutual friend John does not exercise at all. A, however, has just seen John run the day before. B has never seen John run.

    A: i)   Eh, John was running yesterday.

    B: ii)   John <u>where got</u> exercise (one).
                'John does not exercise regularly.'

    A: iii)   John <u>where got</u> run (one).
                'John does not run regularly.'

Because running regularly entails exercising regularly, it is not surprising that challenging the proposition that John exercises regularly is acceptable. Furthermore, the challenged posed in (25ii) is stronger than that of (25iii) because that also eliminates other possible alternatives to *John was running* (e.g. *John was power-walking/jogging/hiking/etc.*).

2.2.4   A proposition p beyond the spoken conversation

Sometimes, the antecedent proposition p need not be verbalised by any of the interlocutors. As long as the antecedent p is evident to all speakers from the context, the utterance of *where got p* will be felicitous. Consider (26), where the interlocutors happen to draw from another conversation nearby:

(26)   **Conversation Id**
CONTEXT. A and B both know that their classmate John does not exercise at all. They overhear a conversation their other classmates on the other side of the room talking very loudly about seeing John run the day before.

    B: i)   John <u>where got</u> run (one).

      ii)   John <u>where got</u> exercise (one).

  A: iii)   It's not him la, they probably got the wrong guy?

(26) can be a private conversation between A and B, without including the other classmates. This shows that a proposition p need not be part of the spoken conversation between interlocutors, but as long as p is heard by both interlocutors during the course of a conversation, a challenge to p is felicitous.

A proposition p may also be inferred from the context, where it is not spoken by another party, but witnessed by both interlocutors, as in (27) below.

(27) **Conversation Ie**
CONTEXT. A and B both know that their classmate John does not exercise at all. They see John running in exercise gear, and he waves at them as he runs past.

  B: i)   John <u>where got</u> run (one).
      ii) John <u>where got</u> exercise (one).

  A: iii) I dunno, did he lose a bet or something?

(27) suggests there is no need for a proposition p to even be uttered, as long as there is evidence in the context from which both interlocutors can make infer p. As long as both interlocutors have access to the antecedent p, *where got p* is available to a speaker who has the belief $\neg p$ and wishes to challenge p.

Intuitively it might seem irrational for a person to utter $\neg p$ when there is evidence for p. However, this expression of $\neg p$ in light of evidence p is fundamentally an expression of the speaker's attitude towards the veridicality of p.

2.2.5 Bias and *where got*

The account for bias advanced by Sudo (2011) in Section 1.3.2 gives us a comprehensive map of the possible requirements for a *where got* utterance to be felicitous.

As seen in from Sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.4, the antecedent requirements for the utterance of *where got* seem to be very broad. To reiterate, the antecedent proposition must be evident during the course of the conversation, and it can come in the form of:

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(i) an utterance of the proposition that is to be challenged, either by one of the inter-locutors or by someone outside of the conversation;

(ii) an utterance of a proposition that presupposes or entails the proposition that is to be challenged; or

(iii) an inference from the context that is evident to all interlocutors.

In other words, there seems to be a requirement for an antecedent proposition that can come in a variety of forms. This requirement of an antecedent in order for the licensing of a *where got* utterance is a form of positive evidential bias (+)[5], using the framework in Sudo (2011). Furthermore, what is common between the above forms of the antecedent is that they suggest (or in the case of the utterance of p, states as a fact) the truth of proposition p. Thus it seems that this required evidence is positive. Finally, *where got* requires that the speaker holds the belief that the antecedent proposition is false, which according to Sudo (2011) is negative epistemic bias.

Thus, in extending this characterisation of polar questions advanced by Sudo (2011) to *where got* utterances, we get the characterisation of *where got* utterances shown in (28).

(28)

Evidential bias	Epistemic bias
+positive	negative

2.3 Brief syntax of *where got*

2.3.1 Adjacency

As was mentioned in the introduction, extant literature claims that *where got* has idiomatic meaning (Lee et al., 2009). When *where* is immediately followed by *got* in the matrix clause, there is no possibility of interpreting it as a request for a location, even though there is a locative *wh*-word being used. The inverse is true as well, that the utterance will be coded

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[5]Refer to Section 1.3.2 for the definition of *evidential bias (+)*

as a non-information seeking question only if *where* is immediately followed by *got*. This is shown in (29):

(29) a. Here <u>where got</u> OBike?
          =There is no OBike here.
          =#Where can I find an OBike?
      b. <u>Where</u> in Geylang <u>got</u> OBike?
          =Where in Geylang can I find an OBike?
          =#There are no OBikes in Geylang.

This expression of disbelief seems to be triggered by the adjacent *got*. It is worth noting here that the *got* in (29b) and in the following example (30) is actually an existential marker and not the preterite form of English *get*. The various functions of *got* will be discussed in greater detail in Section 2.4. Without the presence of *got*, the hearer gets the regular interpretation of *where* as a request for a location. However, when the *where got* utterance is embedded, it loses its interpretation as an expression of disbelief and becomes a locative question, as shown in (30).

(30) I don't know [<u>where got</u> OBike].
      =I don't know where to find an OBike.
      =#I don't know if there is an OBike here or not.

It is also interesting to note how the syntactic distribution of *wh*-questions is different from that of *where got* in CSE. *wh*-questions in CSE are either fronted or left in situ (as we will see in Section 2.5.1), while *where got* seems to appear immediately after the subject. This seems to further reinforce the difference in functions that *where* and *where got* have.

In a *where got p* construction, *where* and *got* cannot be separated by anything, as seen in (29b) from the previous subsection, and (31a)-(32) below:

(31) a. *<u>Where</u> John <u>got</u> run (one).
      b. *John <u>where</u> Mary <u>got</u> kick (one).
      'John did not kick Mary.'
(32) a. *John <u>where</u> fast *got* run (one).
      b. *John <u>where</u> run <u>got</u> fast.

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'John does not run very fast.'

2.3.2 Order of subject with respect to *where got*

Where got more often than not comes immediately after the subject, as seen in the examples (33)-(35a).

(33) Flower <u>where got</u> pretty? (Lee et al., 2009, p.293)
    'The flower is not pretty.'

(34) Homework also he <u>where got</u> do?
    'Among the many other things he does not do, he also does not do his homework.'

(35)   a. John <u>where got</u> run (one).
       'John does not run regularly.'
    b. ?<u>Where got</u> John run *(one).
       'John does not run regularly/is not the type to run regularly.'

Native speakers did not always accept (35b), and those who did say that *one* in this case is obligatory. Native speakers who did not accept (35b) corrected it to (35a). (34) also shows that topicalisation is compatible with *where got*.

    However, there are *where got p* constructions in which *where got* can precede the subject, as shown in (36) and (37) below:

(36)   a. People in China <u>where got</u> go (to) English school.
    b. In China, <u>where got</u> people go to English school *e*?[6] (Bao and Lye, 2005, p.279)
    'In China, where do you find people that go to English school?'[7]

(37)   a. Cats <u>where got</u> swim (one).
    b. <u>Where got</u> cats swim (one).
    'Cats do not like to swim.'

    One of the differences between the clause-initial *where got* utterances in (33) and (35a) and utterances in which *where got* follows the subject (36) and (35b) is that the subjects in the latter have a kind reading. Consider (38):

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[6]This construction is a result of topic prominence in CSE (see Bao and Lye 2005). The *e* at the end of the utterance is the original position of the topic *in China*.

[7]This described as a rhetorical question in Bao and Lye (2005). It is a negative rhetorical question, so the proposition expressed here is *People do not go to English school in China*.

(38) a. i. *<u>Where got</u> the cat swim one.
   ii. The cat <u>where got</u> swim one.
   'This particular cat does not swim.'
 b. i. *<u>Where got</u> John's cat swim one.
   ii. John's cat <u>where got</u> swim (one).
   'John's cat does not swim.'

This distinction between nouns that have kind reading and those without will be explored further in Section 2.4 with respect to CSE *got*. This section focuses on what seems to be the unmarked form of *where got p*, which has the order of topic (optional), subject, *where got*, and the rest of *p*. Section 2.4 provides an account for *got* that draws heavily from Lee et al. (2009) and compares that to the data shown in this chapter, while Section 2.5.1 looks at the structure of *wh*-questions in CSE, and shows how the lack of *got* changes not just the function of *where*, but also the position that *where* can take.

2.3.3 Ellipsis

One may also respond to *p* with just *Where got* (without *p*) as in (39). However, when one utters *where got* alone, one is limited to challenging *p*, but not *q* which entails *p*. Furthermore, the utterance of *where got* alone is not felicitous when *p* is inferred from the context and requires that *p* be uttered.

(39) **Conversation Iw**
   CONTEXT. A and B both know that their mutual friend, John, does not exercise at all. A saw John run the day before, while B has never seen John run.

   A: i) Eh, today John ran again, is it?
      'Hey, did John go for a run again today?'

   B: ii) <u>Where got</u>!
      'No, he didn't run again today!'
      #'No, he doesn't exercise, of course he wouldn't run!' #'No, this is the first time he's running.'

      iii) John <u>where got</u> run (one).

      iv) <u>where got</u> exercise (one)

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Notice that when *where got* is used alone, the negation can only be understood to apply to the proposition p, and not to its presupposition or what it entails.

2.4   CSE *Got*

2.4.1   Function of *got*

Got in CSE is not only the preterite form of *get*. It also has other functions mapped from the equivalent terms in Hokkien (*u*), Cantonese (*jau*), Mandarin Chinese (*you*), and Malay (*ada*) (Lee et al., 2009; Cheung, 2008; Hiramoto and Sato, 2012). CSE *got* functions as a marker of possession, existence, passive voice, and realis modality, which includes temporal location (with the exception of indefinite future), habitual, completive, and experiential aspect, and emphasis, as seen in (40)-(45) from Lee et al. (2009).

(40)   I got two brothers, one sister.   *possessive*
         'I have two brothers and a sister.'

(41)   a.   Got two pictures on the wall.[8]   *existential*
              'There are two pictures on the wall'
         b.   Here got many nice houses.   *existential*
              'There are many nice houses here.'

(42)   I got go Japan before/these days/next time.   *temporal location*
         'I have been/go (regularly)/am going to Japan'

(43)   a.   You got play tennis?   *habitual*
              'Do you play tennis regularly?'
         b.   You got stay in Ang Mo Kio *(before)?   *experiential*
              'Have you ever lived in Ang Mo Kio?'
         c.   You got wash your hands?   *completive*
              'Did you wash your hands just now?'

(44)   I got scolded by teacher.   *passive*
         'I was scolded by the teacher.'

(45)   A: You never sweep the floor ah?   *emphasis*
         'You didn't sweep the floor, did you?'
         B: I got sweep!

---

[8]CSE is a pro-drop language, and here the expletive *there* that occurs before *got* is dropped.

'I did sweep the floor.'

CSE *got* thus performs more functions than English *got*, going beyond denoting the acquisition of something and extending to aspect and existential marking and even the marking of passive voice.

2.4.2 Brief syntax of CSE *got* constructions

Notice that in almost all of the examples from (40)-(45), *got* follows the subject and precedes the predicate. (41) is the exception to this, with the subject coming after the *where got* utterance. However, the existential construction may be reinterpreted as the following in (46):

(46)   (There) got two pictures on the wall.
       'There exists two pictures on the wall.'

CSE is a pro-drop language Sato (2011), thus it is not unusual that the omission of *there* in (46) is allowed. This also extends to nouns with kind readings, such as the ones in (36) and(37) from Section 2.3. Thus *got* can be analysed as remaining in the auxiliary position, and the word order for *got* constructions can be anaylised as a result of pro-drop rather than movement.

2.4.3 A comparison with *where got*

The word order of *got* constructions is topic (optional), subject, *got*, and then the rest of *p*, which is identical to that of *where got* constructions except for the difference between *where got* and *got*. If *where got* and *got* occupy the same position, it should be very easy to modify an utterance *got p* via negation in order to yield the utterance *where got p*. The following *got* utterances are adapted from Lee et al. (2009):

(47)   a.   NEG(John **got** run).
       b.   John <u>where got</u> run.

'John doesn't run regularly.'

(48) a. NEG(John **got** exercise).
 b. John <u>where got</u> exercise.
 'John doesn't exercise regularly.'

(49) a. NEG(I **got** two brothers, one sister).
 b. I <u>where got</u> two brothers, one sister.
 'I do not have two brothers and one sister.'

(50) a. NEG(**Got** two pictures on the wall).
 b. <u>Where got</u> two pictures on the wall.
 'It is not the case that there are two pictures on the wall.'

(51) a. NEG(Here **got** many nice houses).
 b. Here *where got* many nice houses.
 'There aren't many nice houses here.'

(52) a. NEG(I **got** go Japan before/these days/next time).
 b. I <u>where got</u> go Japan before/these days/next time.
 'I haven't been to/haven't been going to/won't be going to Japan.'

(53) a. NEG(I **got** stay in Ang Mo Kio before).
 b. I <u>where got</u> stay in Ang Mo Kio before.
 'I have never stayed in Ang Mo Kio.'

(54) a. NEG(You **got** wash hands).
 b. You <u>where got</u> wash hands.
 'You didn't wash your hands just now.'

(55) a. NEG(I **got** scolded by teacher).
 b. I <u>where got</u> scolded by teacher.
 'I wasn't scolded by the teacher.'

Notice that no other alteration to the syntax of the original *got* statements were made, except for the addition of *where* just before *got*. This suggests that (at least syntactically), *where got* was derived from *got*, and the underlying form of a *where got* utterance is a *got* utterance, which is something not covered in the analysis put forth by Cheung (2008) about NWHCs.

Cheung (2008) defends the view that NWHCs embody regular *wh*-questions, because they share certain syntactic properties. One is that the only available position of NWH-words in *wh*-movement languages is always clause-initial, while the NWH-words in *wh*-in situ languages are consistently in the sentence-medial position. The other common

property is that in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, question particles are incorporated in the construction in both canonical *wh*-questions and NWHCs. However, his analysis does not provide a reason as to why NWH-words in *wh*-in situ languages are found in sentence-medial positions. If an NWHC in a *wh*-in situ language is understood as being derived from an auxiliary, that might explain why the NWHC has such a close connection with the auxiliary as well as why it seems to move to the same position as the auxiliary.

2.5 *Where* in CSE

2.5.1 *Wh*-questions in CSE

For *wh*-questions, CSE allows both *wh*-in situ and *wh*-fronting (with the exception of *why* and *how* questions), as shown in (56)-(62). Unlike English, the *wh*-in situ configuration does not convey a request for an expectation to be checked.

(56) a. <u>What</u> you want (to) eat?
      b. You want (to) eat <u>what</u>?
      'What do you want to eat?'

(57) a. <u>Where</u> you go?
      b. You go <u>where</u>?
      'Where did you go?'

(58) a. <u>Which book</u> you buy?
      b. You buy <u>which book</u>?
      'Which book did you buy?'

(59) a. <u>Who</u> the man kick?
      b. The man kick <u>who</u>?
      'Who did the man kick?'

(60) a. <u>When</u> your son enlist?
      b. Your son enlist <u>when</u>?
      'When will your son enlist?'

(61)   a.   <u>Why</u> the girl so angry?
       b.   * The girl so angry <u>why</u>?[9]
       'Why is the girl so angry?'

(62)   a.   <u>How</u> you go to work?
       b.   * You go to work <u>how</u>?
       'How do you get to work?'

In no case of asking a *wh*-question will the *wh*-word occur immediately after the subject. In addition, no *wh-got* compound seems to have the non-canonical question use, expressing ¬*p*, except *where got*.

(63)   a.   *What got
       b.   *Which got
       c.   *Who got
       d.   *When got
       e.   *Why got
       f.   *How got

The productivity of only *where got* out of all the available *wh*+got questions reflects one of patterns of negative *wh*-constructions found by Cheung (2008), which is that more often than not, the locative *wh*-question is favoured (Cheung, 2008, p.29).

2.5.2   Favouring the locative in NWHCs

Recall that there is a special class of questions called negative *wh*-constructions (NWHCs) that was suggested by Cheung (2008) to be underlying a *wh*-construction. His findings show that among NWHCs, the one that utilises the locative *wh*-question tends to be the most favoured cross-linguistically. He argues that the reason *where* is favoured is that it has a "natural affinity to the domain of circumstances" (Cheung, 2008, p.29). This can be seen in the following data in (64)-(67), adapted from Cheung (2008).

(64)   *English*

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[9]However, the *wh*-word can be left in situ if the question is of the form *The girl so angry for what?* which loosely translates to *Why is the girl so angry* or *What is the point of the girl being so angry?*

    a. This is the <u>case/scenario/situation where</u> 10 patients have to be crammed into a small ward.

    b. In a <u>skit where</u> the Hillary character is jailed by the Mayor Giuliani character, she...

(65) *Spanish*

Este sería   un caso donde la gente sería   egoísta.
this be.SUBJ a   case where the people be.SUBJ selfish

'This is the case where the people would be selfish.'

(66) *French*

C'est le   cas où   les gens   se détestent les uns les autres.
this.is DEM case where DEM people self hate   DEM each DEM other

'This is the case where people would hate each other.'

(67) *German*
    a. ... der Fall, wo   ...
       the case where

    b. in einer Welt, wo   ...
      in a   world where

Thus we see that cross-linguistically, *where* tends to be the unmarked form of the NWHC. Interestingly, there does not seem to be an equivalent of (64)-(67) in CSE, in that there is no usage of *where* as a head that scopes over the domain of circumstances. The closest rephrasing of (64a) and (64b) in CSE is shown in (68) and (69) below:

(68)   a. This case/scenario/situation is the one (that) *(got) 10 patients need to cram inside one small ward (one).

    b. This case/scenario/situation is the *(got) 10 patients need to cram inside one small ward *(one[10]).

(69) In a skit, the one (that) *(got) the Hillary character kena[11] jail by the Mayor Giuliani character (one), she...

In CSE, there does not seem be an instance where the *wh*-question takes scope over circumstances. However, *got* can be used to introduce the details of a scenario. Recall that CSE *got* can be used as an existential as well as a possessive marker. The *where* in English as shown in (64) relies on the treatment of a case/scenario/situation as a metaphorical

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[10]*One* at the end of a relative clause in CSE is said to be a relative pronoun (see Alsagoff and Ho 1998)

[11]*Kena* is a passive marker borrowed from Malay.

place in which an event occurs. In the same way, CSE *got* in (68) and (69) relies on the treatment of a case/scenario/situation as a metaphorical container in which the details of an event will exist. In marking a metaphorical containment relation between the situation and the circumstances introduced, *got* seems to be the thing that triggers the scoping over circumstances. Thus it may well be the case in CSE that it is not the *wh*-word itself that triggers the change in scope, since *where* in CSE by default is interpreted as a request for location information and only expresses ¬*p* when followed immediately by *got*.

That being said, *where* is still central to the *where got* utterance in that *where* is the one that actually scopes over circumstances when triggered by *got*. Somehow, the *wh*-feature interacts with *got* in such a way that *where got* is interpreted as a challenge rather than a question per se. The prevalence of the locative *wh*-question as the unmarked option for NWHCs suggests that accessing the circumstantial scope reading from the locative *wh*-question might have the lightest processing load among all the other *wh*-words. This might then explain why CSE favours *where* over every other *wh*-question in combining with *got* in order to express the belief ¬*p*. Thus on top of the relexification analysis discussed by Lee et al. (2009) that involves the literal translation of Hokkien *dolo u* to English to yield the phrase *where got*, we also have a map of how *where got* might be understood through the combination of its constituent parts.

2.6   The compositionality of *where got*

Beyond the notion that *got* is a catalyst for a change in scope and that all *where got* utterances seem to have *got* counterparts, there are some other properties of *where got* utterances that suggest that they are most likely compositional. One is how many native speakers very easily describe *where got* as a question of *in what universe could this possibly be true?* and how they very quickly say that that particular world is impossible or does not exist. Another property of *where got* utterances is the ability for inner negation of *where got p* to take place,

while it is generally not possible for *got*.

2.6.1 Inner negation of *got* and *where got*

Unlike outer negation of *got* constructions, inner negation of *got* constructions cannot apply to *got* constructions, as shown in (70).

(70)   a. *I **got** don't have two brothers.[12]
       b. *I **got** not two brothers
       c. *I not **got** two brothers.
       d. *I don't **got** two brothers.
       'I don't have two brothers.'

The equivalent *where got* construction, however, do not have this same constraint as shown in (71).

(71)   a. I where got don't have two brothers
       b. *I where got not two brothers
       c. *I not where got two brothers
       d. *I don't where got two brothers
       'I have two brothers (and it's surprising that you think I don't).'

This asymmetry can be seen in other uses of *got* that is not the possessive, as seen in (72)-(76).

(72)   a. i.   *John **got** don't run
           ii. *John don't **got** run
           iii. *John **got** never run
           iv. *John never **got** run
           'John doesn't run at all.'
       b. i.   John where got don't run (one)
           ii. *John don't where got run
           iii. ?John where got never run
           iv. *John never where got run
           'John *does* run.'

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[12]This is not the same as *I got no brothers*. This construction is still expressing *p*, only that the argument *brothers* within *p* is quantified by *no*. The sentence *I got no two brothers* is ungrammatical.

(73) a. i. *Here **got** don't have many nice houses
          ii. *Here don't **got** many nice houses
          'There aren't many nice houses here.'
      b. i. Here <u>where got</u> don't have many nice houses
          ii. *Here don't <u>where got</u> many nice houses
          'There *are* many nice houses here.'

(74) a. i. *I **got** never go Japan before
          ii. *I never **got** go Japan before
          iii. *I don't **got** go Japan before
          iv. *I **got** don't go Japan before
          'I haven't been to Japan.'
      b. i. I <u>where got</u> never go Japan before
          ii. *I <u>where got</u> don't go Japan before
          'I most definitely have been to Japan before.'

(75) a. i. I **got** never stay in Ang Mo Kio before
          ii. I never **got** stay in Ang Mo Kio before

(76) a. i. *I **got** not scolded by teacher
          ii. *I not **got** scolded by teacher
          iii. I didn't **get** scolded by teacher
              'I was not scolded by the teacher.'
          iv. I never **get** scolded by teacher
              'I was not scolded by the teacher.'
              'I have never been (and will never be) scolded by the teacher.'
      b. i. ?I <u>where got</u> not scolded by teacher
          ii. *I not <u>where got</u> scolded by teacher
          iii. *I <u>where got</u> didn't get scolded by teacher
              'I was definitely scolded by the teacher.'
          iv. I <u>where got</u> never get scolded by teacher (one)
              'I am scolded regularly/have been scolded by the teacher.'

It seems there is no way for *got* to remain in the sentence when it is negated, no matter what function *got* may have in that sentence. On the other hand, there is always a way to express *where got* ¬*p*, and it always seems to emphasise the truth of *p*.

The possessive and existential *where got* constructions allow for the use of *don't have*, while the habitual, experiential, completive, and temporal location allow the use of CSE

never[13]. In addition to this, the passive doesn't seem to allow *where got ¬p*, though that might be a result of having conflicting constraints on the dual function of *got* in *where got*. *where got* cannot be separated from the subject by any other lexical item (including negation), so *where got* takes scope over the negation. However, negation seems to always have to precede (and take scope over) *got*. Thus the derivation crashes, as in (76i-iii). The passive allows for get though (as seen in (76iv), where this *get* is semantically different from the *got* in *where got* in the same sentence. In the case of (76iv), the *got* in *where got* no longer marks the passive, but functions as an existential marker. Thus we see that the function of *got* as was discussed in Section 2.4 is still retained even when in combination with *where got*. It seems that the function of *where got* is not an emergent property of the combination of *where* and *got*, suggesting that *where got* is indeed compositional.

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[13]'Never' in CSE can be used as 'not ever' like in English, as well as 'did not'.

Chapter 3

Responses to *where got*

Where got utterances do not require an answer, because they are not information seeking. Thus it is not an incomplete exchange if a *where got* utterance is not responded to. However, in most cases, there will be a response to a *where got* question.

3.1 *Got!* (and *got* utterances) as a response

A classic response to a *where got* question is to insist that p is true, and then support it with some other evidence that supports the claim that p is true. Consider yet another variation of Conversation I, shown in (77).

(77) **Conversation If**
   CONTEXT. A and B both know that their mutual friend, John, does not exercise at all. A, however, has just seen John run the day before, while B has never seen John run.

   A: i)   Eh, I saw John running yesterday

   B: ii)   John where got exercise (one)

   A: iii   <u>Got!</u> (I saw him yesterday!)
         iv)   He <u>got</u> exercise/run (one)!
               'He *does* exercise/run!'

A's response in (77iii) is the insistence of the truth of p in B's *where got* utterance. If B responded with (77ii), A's elided response *got!* would be understood as *John <u>does</u> exercise*

(the emphatic reading as described in Section 2.4). It cannot be understood as *John does run*. The converse applies if B responds to (77i) with *John where got run*, where A's protest of *got!* will only be understood as insisting the truth of the proposition *John does run*.

It is also worth noting that either version of the full *got* statement (77v) can be uttered in response to (77ii). The p in (77) can be the same as that which is under the scope of *where got*, or it can entail the proposition under the scope of *where got*. If the *got* proposition p entails the latter proposition q, A puts forth the challenge against $\neg q$.

(78) **Conversation Ig**
CONTEXT. A and B both know that their mutual friend, John, does not exercise at all. A, however, has just seen John run the day before, while B has never seen John run.

    A: i)   Eh, I saw John running yesterday

    B: ii)   John where got run (one)

    A: iii)   Got! (I saw him yesterday!)
          iv)   ?John got exercise (one)!
              'John does exercise.'

However, if the full *got* proposition p is entailed by that of the *where got* utterance q, the response does not make much sense, as shown in (78). This is because there are other propositions that will entail q without requiring p to be true.

3.2 *Have!*

Another possible response to *where got* utterance is *have!*, as shown in (79) below:

(79) **Conversation V**
CONTEXT. A believes that John has two brothers and a sister, while B believes that John is an only child.

    A: i)   Eh, John's sister not bad ah, smart and pretty.

    B: ii)   John where got sister.
         iii)   John where got siblings.

    A: iv)   Got/Have (one)!
              'He *does* have a sister/siblings!'

Notice that in the *got* reponse in (79iv), *got* is functioning as a marker of possession. If *got* in the response to the *where got* utterance is functioning as a habitual marker as in (78iv), the response *have!* would be ungrammatical. However, if the response to a *where got* question involves *got* functioning as an experiential marker, *have!* is also a possible alternative response. Consider (80):

(80) **Conversation Vb**
CONTEXT. A and B know that John has a sister. Neither of them have met her.

    A: i)   Eh, John's sister not bad ah, smart, pretty, and funny somemore.

    B: ii)   You where got meet her before.

    A: iii) <u>Got/Have</u> (one)!
              'I *have* (met her)!'

As we can see, *have* has limited applications as a one-word response to *where got* utterances as compared to *got*. Unlike *got*, the meaning of *have* in CSE has not been influenced by Hokkien *u* and so it retains its English meaning and function, and no more than that.

3.3 *There!*

Another typical response to a *where got* utterance is the exclamation *there!*, which is used to point out evidence that the antecedent proposition is true. However, the utterance *there!* does not actually refer to a physical location at which you may find evidence of *p*. Consider (81):

(81) **Conversation Vc**
CONTEXT. A believes that John has a sister, while B believes that John is an only child. They are at John's house. A family photo is nearby.

    A: i)   Eh, John's sister not bad ah, smart and pretty.

    B: ii)   John where got sister.

    A: –   <u>There/#Here!</u> The girl in the family photo!
              'He *does* have a sister! She's the girl in the family photo.'

On the surface, *there!* in (81) resembles a locative because there is something physically available for someone to point at. Furthermore, that *here!* is unacceptable in contrast suggests that there is more to *there* than the simple locative reading. Some may argue, however, close proximity to a photograph does not necessitate the use of *here*. People tend to use *there* to point things out in photographs even if they are holding them in their own hands. A clearer example of this lack of sensitivity to proximity is found in (82) below:

(82) **Conversation VI**
CONTEXT. A and B are at the canteen. A has reason to believe that the canteen sells waffles. B has reason to believe that the canteen does not sell waffles. A happens to be standing right next to the waffle stall but B does not realise it.

   A: i)   Let's have waffles here.

   B: ii)   The canteen where got sell waffle.

   A: –   <u>There/#Here!</u>

Here we see that *there!* is an appropriate response, while *here* is not, even though both should be acceptable if it were a matter of pointing out evidence in a physical space. No matter how close A is to the waffle stall, s/he would not be able to say *here!* in response to *where got p* in (82ii). Even if A were behind the counter in the stall, *here!* would not be felicitous in response to *where got p*. This inability to respond with proximity-sensitive alternations confirms that *where got* as a phrase does not function as a request for location information. It seems that *there!* is used to point something out in more abstract terms, for example, in pointing out a shared memory, rather than physical evidence, as in (83) below:

(83) **Conversation VII**
CONTEXT. John is known not to exercise. He has, however, recently started exercising, and both A and B witnessed him running a week ago. A remembers seeing him run, but B does not.

   A: i)   Eh John slim down, is it? Must be the exercise lor.
                  'Did John slim down? It must be the exercise.'

   B: ii)   John where got exercise (one).

A: iii) <u>There!</u> That day last week we saw him, what. Remember?
'He does! We saw him last week, don't you remember?'

In example (83) above, the utterance *there!* is in no way indexing a physical location, because the following proposition is about the time they saw him, rather than the place they saw him. What seems to be an index specific to location has been altered such that it can refer to events in time as well.

3.4   Responses as a reflection of *where got*

These responses to *where got* utterances clearly show us that *where got* utterances are non-information seeking, and in addition to that, they reveal the possibility of a compositional account of *where got*.

That *there!* points out a particular circumstance in response to *where got p* suggests that the challenge encoded in *where got* was a matter of there being no circumstance under which *p* is true.

Furthermore, the fact that *got!* is an acceptable response and that it can introduce a circumstance in which *p* in *where got p* is false also reinforces the notion that *got* can in fact take scope over circumstances. In addition to this, responding with the full *got*-utterance highlights just how closely related *got* and *where got* are.

Chapter 4

Conclusion and future research

4.1 So what is *where got*?

In the previous chapters, we have seen how *where got* behaves in terms of what is expressed and when it can be said. To recap, *where got* has [+positive] evidential bias and negative epistemic bias. That is, *where got* requires an antecedent, be it spoken or inferred, and requires that the speaker has the belief that the antecedent is false. *Where got* expresses the belief $\neg p$ and the expectation on the part of the speaker that all participants in the discourse are aware that p is false.

4.1.1 *Where got* is not an echo question

It may look as though *where got* is an echo question since it requires an antecedent proposition to challenge. However, echo questions are information-seeking in the form of checking the veridicality of the proposition. *Where got* utterances, on the other hand, are not requests for information.

4.1.2 *Where got* is not a polar question

In the same vein, *where got* is not a polar question, as *where got* is non-information seeking.

4.1.3 *Where got* is not a rhetorical question

While it may look like a negative rhetorical question, *where got* is not a rhetorical question. Similarly to rhetorical questions, embedding a *where got* utterance prevents the interpretation of expressing the belief ¬p, forcing the canonical question reading. Furthermore, both *where got p* and rhetorical questions are not information-seeking and instead express a proposition.

However, rhetorical questions are those with the same interrogative form and can be used as a regular question. *Where got p*, on the other hand, does not have an alternative regular question reading.

4.1.4 *Where got* is a special NWHC

Where got in CSE is an exclusive phrase that expresses the belief ¬p. No other *wh*-word may combine with *got* or any other auxiliary to get the same meaning as *where got*. *Where* on its own also cannot perform the same function as *where got*, unlike Chinese *nali/nar* and Cantonese *bin/bindou* (Cheung, 2008). *Where got* is borrowed and directly translated from Hokkien *dolo u* (Lee et al., 2009). Thus, it is not surprising that it is not as productive as Cantonese or Chinese *wh*-constructions.

Cheung's account for NWHQs (2008)

The semantic analysis of NWHCs proposed by Cheung (2008) looks at NWHCs as another form of *wh*-questions that quantify over sets of circumstances. He equates NWHCs with the question "under what circumstances q is it true that if q then p?" (Cheung, 2008, p.76). Under this analysis, a NWHC itself contains the scoping property, and combines with what he calls a silent Empty Answer Set Morpheme such that the obligatory negative interpretation of the NWHC can be accounted for.

4.2 *Got* as the catalyst of scope shift in CSE

We have seen in Section 2.1 that *where got p* expresses the challenge ¬*p*. We have also seen in Section 2.3 how *where* on its own cannot be used to express ¬*p*, but requires *got* to be present and adjacent to it. When a *got* construction is altered by *where*, its truth conditional value is negated, and there is an addition notion of speaker expectations. In contrast, the effect of *got* on a *where* question changes the scope of the question such that *where* is no longer a request for location information, but something that is akin to a negative rhetorical question. Besides its properties as an auxiliary (as described in Section 2.4), *got* has also been shown to be capable of scoping over a particular circumstance the way *where* in English does. This suggests that the lexical item controlling the scope of the phrase is actually *got*, rather than *where*.

The analysis proposed by Cheung (2008) suggests the opposite. He advances the claim that the *wh*-word scopes over circumstances. The data he provides shows multiple instances of *wh*-words (beyond just *where*) being used to express ¬*p*, without the use of an auxiliary. However, while this analysis could account for his data, it is unable to describe the characteristics of the less productive *where got* utterances.

Two issues arise when attempting to apply the analysis in Cheung (2008) to *where got*. Firstly, Cheung (2008) analyses NWHQs as a subset of regular *wh*-questions through some regularity in distribution within the group of *wh*-fronting languages and within the group of *wh-in situ* languages, and how question particles are utilised in both NWHCs and regular *wh*-questions. CSE is a language that allows both *wh*-fronting as well as *wh-in-situ* configurations, but does not require the use of question particles in order to utter *where got p*. However, the favoured configuration in CSE is the one that is found in *wh*-in-situ languages, which is the sentence-medial position. Furthermore it is still unclear as to why the *wh*-word will move into the sentence-medial position. Secondly, Cheung (2008) makes little mention of the auxiliaries that are closely related to *wh*-questions, but does not pursue an analysis of the relation between the two.

With the analysis of *got* as the lexical item that shifts the scope of *where* to quantify over circumstances, there is now a reason for *where* to move into the auxiliary position and combine with *got*, which is to be able to scope over circumstances.

4.3   *Where got* **is ultimately compositional**

We see in previous chapters how *where got* is really the combination of the one of the many functions of *got*, in this case the ability to shift scope through marking a metaphorical containment relation between modified and modifier, and the role of *where* as a negative rhetorical question to which the answer is assumed to be obvious. Thus we have a compositional account of *where got* from the perspective of *where got* being a part of the CSE lexicon, rather than the perspective that *where got* is an idiomatic phrase resulting from relexification Lee et al. (2009) for which only a few of the points discussed in Cheung (2008) apply.

This account is quite different from that of Cheung (2008), but they are not incompatible. For one, this might be able to explain why *wh*-words in *wh*-in-situ languages move to a sentence-medial position in other languages. Although not all *wh*-words must combine with something in the auxiliary position in order for them to be interpreted as NWHCs, it could potentially explain the impetus for an otherwise non-moving *wh*-word to move.

4.4   **Further research**

Though there exists Cheung's (2008) formal account of his analysis of NWHCs, there has yet to be formal analysis done on *where got*. Beyond coming up with a semantic type for the phrase *where got*, it also be interesting to see what a formal semantics of the relationship between *where* and *got* look like.

More in-depth studies of NWHCs in other languages from other language families could be done as well, as this is a very new area of study in the field.

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