Vernacular Universals and Language Contacts

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9 The Interplay of 'Universals' and Contact-Induced Change in the Emergence of New Englishes

Donald Winford

1. INTRODUCTION

The field of contact linguistics has become more inclusive of late, with increasing attention being paid to the processes and principles of change that are shared across different types of contact languages. One significant development in this regard is the growing rapport between creole linguistics and studies of second-language acquisition (SLA), particularly cases of group SLA or language shift. The New Englishes fall into the latter category, and their relationship to creoles has long been a matter of discussion (see Harris [1986], Odlin [1997], etc. on Irish English; Ho and Platt [1993] on Singapore English). So far, however, we have had no comprehensive comparison of processes that led to the formation of creoles and New Englishes.

One of the major themes in the study of creoles and the (other) New Englishes is the interplay among universals, substrate influence, and internal developments in the emergence of creoles. However, two separate traditions of scholarship seem to have emerged for the study of the two categories of contact languages. One paradigm, research on English as a world language, has been almost exclusively devoted to the 'indigenized' varieties of English spoken in the so-called 'English as a second language (ESL)' communities in Africa, South and Southest Asia, etc., which comprise one division of the 'Outer Circle' of English. The other paradigm, creole linguistics, has been devoted to the study of so-called 'English as a second dialect (ESD)' communities, such as those in the Anglophone Caribbean, where 'creole' varieties of English coexist with local varieties of Standard English. The division is arguably an artificial one given, first, that creoles emerged as second languages and, second, that some creoles have grammars that are so heavily influenced by West African languages that they can hardly be called 'dialects' of English.

Given the similarities in the historical circumstances in which all of these contact Englishes were formed, it seems desirable to account for their origins and development within a unified theoretical framework. It has long been noted that there are significant typological/structural similarities between indigenized varieties such as Irish English and Singapore Colloquial English,

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on the one hand, and English-lexicon creoles, on the other hand. This would suggest that they were shaped by similar processes and principles of change. This chapter argues that all of these contact vernaculars are the result of 'natural' or 'untutored' SLA, and that the theoretical framework within which SLA has been studied is most relevant to a unified explanation of their origins. Such a framework allows us to test the differential impact on these vernaculars of two processes that are central to SLA, viz., universal language learning strategies and L1 transfer. To demonstrate this, I examine the emergence of tense-mood-aspect (TMA) systems in Irish English, Singapore Colloquial English, and Barbadian creole. I argue that there are basic similarities in the paths of development characteristic of these contact varieties, and that these paths are shaped by the interaction of L1 knowledge, input or more accurately intake from varieties of English, and universals of language creation.

Before we proceed, it is necessary to clarify the ways in which the concept of 'universals' has been used and applied to cases of SLA because the term has been used in so many different senses. In its most general sense, we can use the term simply to refer to a set of principles that inform the acquisition process. Within the generative tradition, these principles are seen as innate properties of the human language faculty and referred to as Universal Grammar (UG). This notion is meant to explain the fact that children attain a level of linguistic ability that goes far beyond the input they have access to during first-language acquisition. Hence, it is argued, the gap between the input and the knowledge acquired must be bridged by innate properties of the human language faculty, which constitute UG. There is no need to discuss here all of the details of this theory or the kinds of evidence that have been adduced both for and against it in the generative literature. Suffice it to say that the principles of UG are simply those that underlie the design features of the human language faculty and, by extension, the design of human languages. Given this broad conception, it is difficult to see how one would deny a role for UG in either first-language acquisition or SLA because that role is simply to ensure that the end product of acquisition conforms to universals principles of language design. Thus, it is trivially true that UG constrains language acquisition.

However, as is well known, researchers differ about the extent to which UG plays a role, both in first-language acquisition and SLA. Henceforth, I focus my attention on the latter, which is more relevant to our discussion. The most contentious issue in SLA research has to do with the comparative contribution of UG and L1 influence to the SLA process. Some SLA researchers argue that "UG in its entirety constrains L2 acquisition" and assign little or no role to L1 influence (Epstein, Flynn, and Martohardjono 1996). In this view, SLA is subject to the same principles and constraints as first-language acquisition. The most controversial version of the full access to UG claim is Bickerton's (1981, 1984) claim that UG, or an innate language bioprogram, directly dictates the grammatical features of creole languages. Because this

claim has been thoroughly debunked in the creole linguistics literature, I do not consider it further here.

Many other researchers argue that the course of L2 development is constrained by both UG and the L1 grammar to differing degrees (Schwartz and Sprouse 1996). According to this view, SLA is constrained by three factors: the L1 grammar, the L2 input, and UG. This seems to be a reasonable point of view, and it is the one I adopt here. In principle, the role of universals and L1 influence are not at all incompatible. In fact, the sharp divide created between the two by some scholars is an artificial one because universal principles guide all aspects of the acquisition process, including L1 influence and internal developments in the interlanguage system. The question then arises, how can we identify the relevant principles and the precise roles they play in the emergence of contact languages?

This question is confounded by the fact that many different types of universals have been discussed in the literature. For instance, a broad distinction has been made between universals of language design (UG) and typological universals, which are empirically based generalizations about the similarities and differences across languages. Although the latter are of great value in determining taxonomies of linguistic phenomena and their distribution in the world's languages, one can scarcely argue that they are explanatory principles. Chambers' 'vernacular universals' are a subtype of such typological universals, as found in the various forms of nonstandard English that are spoken throughout the English-speaking world. They include phenomena such as morpheme-final consonant cluster simplification, leveling of irregular verb forms (*John seen the movie*), regularization of subject–verb concord (*They/you/we was*), multiple negation, and copula absence/deletion (Chambers 2004: 129). Chambers argues:

> In so far as these processes arise naturally in pidgins, child language, vernaculars, and elsewhere, they are primitive features, not learned. As such they belong to the language faculty, the innate set of rules and representations that are the natural inheritance of every human being.
>
> (Chambers 2004: 129)

This sounds very much like a strong version of the full access to UG hypothesis, recalling Bickerton's claim that features shared across creoles are in fact directly selected by the language bioprogram. Like Bickerton's hypothesis, Chambers' claim seems overstated and has not in fact been demonstrated to be true. It seems more reasonable to claim that such 'vernacular universals' arise through similar processes of language acquisition and change, guided by true universal principles. In other words, we need to keep the notions of typological and 'innate' universals separate and acknowledge that only the latter play a role in shaping the outcomes of language acquisition and change. As Kiparsky (2008: 52) notes, we need to reconcile

research that seeks to uncover typological generalizations, which are the result of recurrent processes of language change, with research directed at uncovering the universal principles underlying such processes. This kind of integration of approaches is what contact linguistics now lacks, although much progress has been made in the area of typological generalizations about certain classes of contact languages, such as creoles.

I here adopt Siemund's (2004: 402) view that "universals of language architecture, language acquisition, processing and development—in short, language universals"—are what shape the grammars of contact varieties such as creoles and indigenized Englishes. But my primary focus is on universals of SLA as they apply to the three contact languages that are the subject of this chapter. I proceed first by trying to arrive at the kinds of typological generalizations we can make about the structure of the tense/aspect systems of these languages, and I then consider how the similarities and differences we find might be explained in terms of universal processes interacting with other influences, such as the nature of the targeted input, and of the substrate languages involved.

But before we proceed, it is important to note that there are many variables involved in contact situations that make it very difficult to compare contact languages. Such variables include the types of linguistic input present in the contact situation, the degree of access to the language being targeted, the degree of typological distance between the input languages, and the degree of homogeneity in the L1s (or substrate languages) of the learners. Thus, we would expect a great deal of similarity between the outcomes of contact situations that differ only in terms of one or two of these variables. One example might be the high degree of similarity in the circumstances in which more radical Caribbean creoles emerged, involving similar English dialectal and West African inputs, and conditions that allowed for relatively little access to the superstrate dialects of the colonizers. Such circumstances led to various shared characteristics of their TMA systems, and of certain other areas of their grammar, which testify that similar principles of contact induced change were at work. In comparing contact languages of very different circumstances of origin, our task of identifying common explanations for any similarities we find becomes far more difficult. It is not necessarily the case that such similarities emerged for the same reasons or because of similar processes of change. If we could find quite different contact situations that resulted in very similar innovations in the contact languages, such innovations would be prime candidates for explanation in terms of universal principles.

There are some interesting similarities as well as differences among the situations in which the three languages discussed here emerged. Irish English and Singapore English were 'endogenous' varieties created in the home communities of their learners, whereas Bajan was an 'exogenous' language acquired by African slaves transported to plantations in Barbados. However, Irish English and Bajan were both created during the seventeenth century

and shared somewhat similar superstrate inputs, including SW English dialects. Singapore English, in contrast, was a creation of the earlier twentieth century, and its learners had access to both standard and nonstandard varieties of English. Finally, although Irish English and Singapore English had relatively homogeneous substrates (Irish and Southern Chinese, respectively), Bajan was created by West Africans speaking languages of different families, although New Kwa languages were apparently the dominant ones. The differences go some way toward explaining why each language developed the way it did, yielding quite different tense-aspect systems. However, similarities in the ecology of the contact situations explain why certain similarities emerged.

In sections 2, 3, and 4, I present a brief overview of the contact situation that led to the emergence of each contact variety, paying special attention to the linguistic inputs and the social circumstances in which the contact took place. I then describe the tense-aspect system and compare it with those of the superstrate and substrate languages, with a view toward determining the relative strength of influence from each. In each case, I point to both similarities and differences in the three tense-aspect systems. In section 5, I discuss the various factors that might account for the similarities and differences, and I assess the extent to which they might be explained in terms of universal principles of contact-induced change.

2. IRISH ENGLISH

Irish English seems to have had its roots in the period 1500–1700, when the English-speaking population grew steadily, owing to migration of settlers from other parts of Britain. British colonial settlements were established in Ulster (Northern Ireland) and eastern Ireland. Large numbers of settlers were introduced to Ulster from Scotland and northern England, while eastern Ireland attracted settlers from various regions of England, especially the south and southwest midlands. There appears to be general consensus that the chief superstrate input to Irish English in its formative period (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) came from nonstandard varieties of Early Modern English, particularly those introduced by the English and Scottish settlers of that period. All varieties of Irish English share various characteristics that include continuities from these early Modern English dialects, as well as features due to Irish substratum influence and other processes of contact-induced change.

2.1 English and Irish Influences on Irish English Tense Aspect

There seems to be general agreement that the overall organization of the tense-aspect system of Irish English is a blend of continuities from both of its source languages. Within the tense system, the categories of present, past,

and future are modeled directly on those of English. In contrast, the rich aspectual system reflects influences from both Early Modern English and Irish.

2.1.1 Tense in Irish English

In the present tense, Irish English uses concord -s with both singular and plural third-person subjects (Harris 1993: 154).

(1) Her grandchildren comes down.

In the past tense, we find leveling of strong verb systems to one- or two-form patterns. Two form patterns include: *do*, *done*, *done*; *go*, *went*, *went*; and *come*, *come*, *come*. Other verbs following this pattern include *bite*, *hide*, *sing*, *drink*, *break*, *see*, and so on. Verbs with just one form include *come*, *run*, *give*, *beat*, and *loss* 'lose' (Harris 1993: 153). These are all well-known features of nonstandard English dialects.

Finally, future is expressed by *will*, as in the English sources.

2.1.2 Aspect in Irish English

Within the aspectual system, there is a conservative Progressive that may be modeled on Irish, although it also bears resemblance to the pattern found in earlier English and contemporary nonstandard varieties such as those in southwest England.

(2) She is at the milking of the cow (Schlauch 1973: 172, quoted in Siemund 2004: 404)

The more usual means of expressing Progressive is by V-*ing*, with both statives and nonstatives allowing *-ing*.

(3) Everyone was wanting to see. (Siemund 2004: 404)

The Habitual is expressed either by *be* + Pred in copula-type constructions or *do* + Verb, as in the following examples from Henry (1957: 168–72, quoted in Kallen 1989: 3).

(4) There be's a lot of people at the fairs of O'Boyle

(5) It does rain a lot in winter.

Habitual *be* appears to derive from so-called 'finite' *be* which is found both in southwest English dialects and earlier Scots. However, in the latter dialects, finite *be* is a simple copula and does not express the sense of habituality.

The opposition between simple copula forms of *be* (*am*, *is*, *are*) and habitual *be* in Irish English copula-type constructions seems to have its source in Irish, which makes a similar distinction. Compare the following:

(6) a. She's here now.
b. She be's here often.
'She's often here.'

The same distinction is found in Irish, as in:

(7) a. Tá sí anseo anois.
Be+nonpast she here now.
b. Bíonn sí anseo go minic
be+nonpast+hab. she here often

An alternate to habitual *be* with progressive verbs is a complex tense consisting of *do* + *be* + *V-ing*, expressing the sense of a habitual progressive.

(8) They do be fightin' among other
'They're usually fighting among themselves'

Bliss (1984) observed that *be('s)* was more common than *do* + *be* in Northern Ireland, perhaps reflecting greater Scottish influence, although *do be* was 'the more general.'

Present habitual *do* appears to derive from simple periphrastic *do* in seventeenth-century English dialects, especially those of the Southwest. The reanalysis of *do* as a habitual auxiliary seems to have been motivated both by the fact that it often conveyed habitual meaning in those dialects and the fact that Irish had a distinct habitual category that provided a model for its reinterpretation (Harris 1986: 180). A similar reinterpretation of *do* occurred in Bajan (Barbadian English) for much the same reasons (see below).

The most interesting area of the aspectual system, and one that has generated much debate, is the system of Perfect marking. There are two categories in this subsystem: the Resultative and the "hot news" Perfect. The Resultative displays two patterns: one using *have* with transitive verbs and the other using *be* with intransitives such as *leave*, *die*, *go*, *come*, and so on. These are illustrated in examples (9) and (10), respectively.

(9) She's nearly her course finished. (Harris 1984: 307)
'She's nearly finished her course.'

(10) All of 'em people are come down here now. (Filppula 1999: 116)

As has frequently been pointed out, both of these constructions have models in Early Modern English:

(11) E.Mod.E. Thou hast thy father much offended (Siemund 2004: 410).

But there is also a somewhat similar construction in Irish, which may have also acted as a model.

(12) Tá an leobhar leite aige. (Siemund 2004: 410)
Is the book read at him
'He has read the book.'

The 'hot news' Perfect is illustrated in the following:

(13) She's after selling the boat.
'She's just sold the boat.'

Irish has a very similar construction, exemplified in the following:

(14) Tá sí tréis an bád a dhíol.
Be+nonpast she after the boat selling. (Harris 1984: 319).

As can be seen, the Irish English construction conforms to English rather than Irish word order, but the Irish influence is clear.

Much attention has also been paid to the fact that Irish English expresses the sense of a 'continuative' or 'extended' Perfect with present-tense forms and the sense of an experiential perfect with the simple past, whereas Standard English uses *have V-ed* in both cases.

Continuative:

(15) We're living here seventeen years (Harris 1993: 161)
'We've been living here seventeen years'

Experiential:

(16) I didn't hear him playing with years and years (Filppula 1997: 52)
'I haven't heard him playing for years and years'

It has been noted that there are similar constructions in Irish as in the following:

(17) Tá sé marbh le fada riamh (Harris 1984: 318)
Be + non past he dead with long-time ever
'He's been dead a long time'

The use of 'temporal' *with*, as in *with years and years*, directly reflects the Irish pattern. At the same time, it has been argued that such constructions also have models in Early Modern English.

Table 9.1 Correspondences Between Irish English and Early Modern English Dialects in Tense/Aspect Marking

Time Reference	*Irish Eng.*	*17th c. SW Eng. Dialects*
Simple present	ø ~ -s	*do/does* + V or V + pres. infl.
Simple past	V-ed	*did* + V OR V + past infl.
Future	*shall/will* + V	*shall/will* + V.
Aspectual Reference	*Irish Eng.*	*17th c. SW Eng. Dialects*
Pres. Habitual	Inflected *do* + V 'Finite' *be* +VP	n/a
Past habitual	*used to* + V	*used to* + V
Progressive	Cop. *be*+ *V-ing*	*(do) be (a)* V-*ing*
Resultative Perfect	*have NP V-ed* Cop. *be*+ *V-ed*	*have NP V-ed* *be V-ed*
"Hot news' Perfect	*after V-ing*	n/a

Table 9.1 makes a comparison between the forms used for the tense-aspect categories of Irish English and those of Early Modern English, particularly the southwest English dialects.

The general conclusion we can draw from this is that Irish English owes its tense-aspect system to the combined influence of both Early Modern English and Irish. It may be the case that, as Bliss (1984: 143) claimed, "Southern Hiberno English has precisely the same range of tenses as Irish has, but the forms are built up of English material" (quoted by Filppula 1997: 62). But this is because the tense-aspect categories of Irish and Early Modern English overlap to a considerable extent, except in the case of categories like the Present Habitual and the 'hot news' Perfect, which were modeled on Irish alone.

3. BARBADIAN ENGLISH (BAJAN)

In the four decades after the English colonization of Barbados in 1624, the vast majority of British settlers came from southwest England, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, and Dorset in particular (Le Page 1960: 12; Niles 1980: 25–30). On the whole, the British arrivals consisted of a minority of planters, merchants and proprietors, and a large majority of servants and poorer White laborers and small farmers. Niles (1980: 24) tells us that the southwest region of England supplied 78.6 percent of the total number of

servants shipped from Bristol to Barbados between 1655 and 1660. Because new migration of British settlers to Barbados had practically ceased by 1700 (Williams 1987: 48), it is clear that we must look to the dialects introduced in the seventeenth century as sources of the features of Bajan.

The linguistic evidence lends support to the previous scenario. Many of the distinctive features of Bajan, both in phonology and morphosyntax, are clearly derived from English regional dialects of the seventeenth century—particularly those of the southwest. Researchers such as Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985: 41) argue that the Barbadian English vernacular "is much closer to British English in its grammar, and contains far fewer Africanisms . . . than does, for example, Jamaican or Belizean or Guyanese creole. Moreover, it contains some features of pronunciation and grammar which are closely associated with the West of England and Ireland".

3.1 The Emergence of the Bajan TMA System

As in the case of Irish English, the forms that express tense and aspect in Bajan have their sources in the English dialects introduced to Barbados in the seventeenth century, but there are often significant differences in the meanings they convey.

3.2 Tense in Bajan

There are three tense categories in Bajan: Relative Past, Future, and Prospective Future. Bajan has no present or absolute past-tense category, but expresses the meanings of simple present and past-time reference in ways quite similar to other Caribbean creoles (i.e. by use of unmarked verbs, which have perfective aspect). Unmarked statives express simple present, whereas unmarked nonstatives convey simple past (in both cases, when the reference point is S). In the southwest English dialects, these meanings are expressed by present and past forms of *do*, respectively.

The Relative Past category is expressed by preverbal *did*, which is used with both statives and nonstatives to convey the sense of a past in relation to S or some other reference point in the past (Winford 1993a).

(18) I di see din fo bring yo broda. (Burrowes 1983: 43)
I PAST say NEG for bring your brother
'I said not to bring your brother'

By contrast, most researchers seem to agree that periphrastic *did* conveyed simple past meaning in Early Modern English, sometimes alternating with the past-inflected verb in this function. This use of periphrastic *did* would have made it amenable to reanalysis as a Relative Past marker in the Bajan tense-aspect system.[1] Another difference between Bajan *did* and its southwest English cognate can be seen in their use in conditional and

temporal clauses. In Early Modern English, *did* seems to function in much the same way as the simple past in (unreal) conditional clauses (i.e. to convey hypothetical meaning). Elworthy (1877: 50) points out in a footnote that *If I did dig* in Somerset is equivalent to *If I should dig*. In contemporary southwest English dialects, *did* seems to be used in a similar sense in conditional clauses, as in the following example from E. Somerset (Ihalainen 1976: 617):

(19) If you *did buy* up a load of peat in them days, it used to cost you ten shillings.

By contrast, *did* in conditional clauses in Bajan conveys the sense of a counterfactual past or present, as in the following examples:

(20) a. If I did run off the road there, ah di goin in a precipice.
'If I had run off the road there, I would have gone over a precipice.'
b. If I did have money, I woulda go.
'If I had money, I would go' OR 'If I had had money, I would have gone'

Both in meaning and pragmatics, then, Bajan *did* is similar to basilectal creole *ben* and quite unlike English periphrastic *did*.

It is possible that the meaning of Bajan *did* is due to substrate influence, although the precise source of this influence is difficult to pinpoint. Some of the relevant substrates, including Akan and some Gbe varieties, have an opposition between a simple past expressed by the unmarked verb and an Anterior or Perfect category expressed by an overt morpheme. Another possibility is that Bajan *did* was reinterpreted on the model of Relative Past marker *ben*, which had emerged in the more 'basilectal' rural creole that developed on some plantations in the eighteenth century. This is speculative, however, and still leaves unanswered the question of the original source of the semantics of *ben* and *did*.

Future is expressed by *gon* rather than by *will* as in the English dialects. Prospective Future, in contrast, is expressed by *goin' (to)*, the only difference from the English dialects being the absence of auxiliary *be* support. Note, however, that the expression of the two future categories reflects that found in other creoles.

3.3 Aspect in Bajan

The Bajan aspectual categories of Progressive and Past Habitual seem to be modeled directly on those of English dialects. But there are sharp differences with regard to the expression of Present Habitual and Perfect aspect.

Present Habitual is conveyed by preverbal *does*.

(21) He does catch fish pretty.
'He catches fish nicely.'

Does clearly has its source in the third-person present form of periphrastic *do* as used in the seventeenth-century southwest English dialects. Present forms of *do* in these dialects conveyed the same meaning as the simple present tense of contemporary southeast (Ellegård 1953: 209).

The habitual meaning of *does* seems to derive in part from the fact that, like the present tense, present periphrastic *do* often conveyed the sense of habituality, as illustrated in the following example from Elworthy (1886: xx, xlvi):

(22) I du zay zom prayers now and again. (Devon)

This habitual interpretation is, of course, typical of the Standard English present tense. But there are also significant differences between the use of *does* and that of periphrastic *do*. For example, like the Standard English present tense, present periphrastic *do* could be used with stative verbs to express simple present-time reference, as in the following:

(23) I do know (Cornwall: Jago 1882: 57)
'I know'

In addition, periphrastic *do* conveyed present time in open conditional and temporal clauses:

(24) I shall pick it up whun I da goo whom. (Somerset: Elworthy 1877: 52)

Bajan never uses *does* in these contexts, preferring, instead, the unmarked verb.

(25) a. I ø know you vex, but Barrie bring she dey. (Burrowes 1983)
b. We gon pick it up when we ø go home/

Finally, *does* can be used with all verbs, including *be*. By contrast, periphrastic *do* is not, and has never been used with *be* in the southwest English dialects (Klemola 1996: 68).

(26) Wha does be wrong wid you though?
'What's always wrong with you, though?'

The evidence available to us indicates that most of the likely substrate languages introduced to Barbados in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries had a distinct Habitual category. This applies to Kikongo (Mufwene 1988: 38), Akan (Kós-Dienes 1984), and Gbe dialects like Gengbe (Kós-Dienes

1984: 40) and Fongbe (Lefebvre 1996: 271). The reinterpretation of *does* would have been facilitated by the fact that present periphrastic *do* often expressed habituality, providing a basis for the interlingual identification that often triggers reinterpretation of TL forms in terms of L1 functions.

Completive Perfect Completive Perfect is expressed by preverbal *done*, which had its source in English dialectal *done*, used both as a main verb meaning 'finish' and as a past participle in a perfect construction consisting of (*be/have*) + *done* + *V-en*. The latter was apparently common throughout all English dialects up to the fifteenth century and was more confined to northern dialects after that (Traugott 1972: 146, 193). Ellegard (1953: 143) suggested that the construction was characteristic of uneducated usage because it was common in the fifteenth-century Paston letters and in the sixteenth-century Machyn's diary.

(27) a. I have . . . . done dewely examyned the instrument. (The Paston letters, ed. by J. Gardiner 1904: letter 12, p. 26, line 5). (Ellegard 1953: 143).
b. As I afore have done discuss . . . (William Lauder 1556. Scots. Office and Dewtie of Kyngis, 340).

Unfortunately, we have no evidence from earlier grammars, dictionaries, and dialect surveys to confirm this use of *be/have* + *done* + *V-en* in the southwest dialects of the seventeenth century. Nor are there any attestations of it in the SED apparently. Despite this, it seems indisputable that this construction was the source of preverbal Perfect *done* in varieties like Southern (White) American English (including Appalachian English) and African American Vernacular English. In these cases, however, the source was most probably Ulster Scots, which may also have provided a model for Completive/Perfect *done* in Bajan and other creoles. Another possible source is the past-tense form *done*, which was (and still is) the past form of *do* in southern English dialects (Niles 1980: 123).

Like the other forms of *do*, preverbal *done* in Bajan differs in both semantics and syntactic properties from its English dialectal cognate. With nonstative predicates, *done* functions as a Resultative Perfect, whereas with statives (including progressives, adjectives, and locatives), it describes a state that has been in existence for some time, up to and including S. In both cases, it conveys the sense of 'already.'

(28) a. The man done paint the car.
'The man has already painted the car.'
b. Dat time I done know wo ii see aredi. (Borrowes 1983: 43)
'By that time I already knew what I had seen.'

This syntactic distribution is clearly different from that of English dialectal *done*, which, as far as we know, could not be used with statives in

Table 9.2 Correspondences Between Bajan and SW English Dialects in Tense/Aspect

Time Reference	*BC*	*17th c. SW Eng. Dialects*
Simple present	ø (statives)	*do/does* + V or V + pres. infl.
Simple past	ø (non-statives)	*did* + V OR V + past infl.
Relative past	*did* + V	———
Future	*go(n)* + V	*shall/will* + V
Prospective	*goin to* + V	*be going to* + V
Aspectual Reference	*BC*	*17th c. SW Eng. Dialects*
Pres. Habitual	*does* + V	n/a
Past habitual	*useto* + V	*did/used to* + V
Progressive	V-*in*	*(do) be* + *(a)* V-*ing*
Perfect	*done* + V	*be/have (done)* + V-*ed* ?

base form or with adjectives, locatives, and progressives. Moreover, English dialectal *done* conveys the sense of a perfect of result and does not always force the 'already' interpretation (Winford 1998).

The reanalysis of *done* as a marker of Completive Perfect seems clearly due to West African substrate influence. All of the relevant substrates (Gbe, Kikongo, and Akan) have a Completive/Perfect category which is similar in semantics to *done* (Winford and Migge 2007). In general, these markers of Perfect derive from a verb meaning 'finish'. It is therefore not surprising to find that *done* is used in all Caribbean English-lexicon creoles both as a verb meaning 'finish' and as a marker of Completive Perfect. It is also possible that the semantics of *done* was also modeled after preverbal *done* in the more basilectal variety of rural Bajan which had been shaped under West African substrate influence.

Table 9.2 compares the inventory of tense-aspect categories in Bajan with those of southwest English dialects as described in the dialectal literature (Barnes 1886; Elworthy 1877, 1886; Klemola 1996).

It is clear that the Bajan tense-aspect system is not a straightforward replica of its seventeenth-century source.

4. COLLOQUIAL SINGAPORE ENGLISH

Colloquial Singapore English (henceforth SingE) emerged in the period 1930–1960. The English input came from English taught in schools by

teachers from Britain, Ireland, India, and Sri Lanka, but also from second-language varieties spoken by speakers educated in Tamil-, Malay-, and Chinese-medium schools, as well as from pidginized forms of English spoken by the older generations. The dominant substrate influence came from southern Chinese, particularly Hokkien, and from Malay varieties, including Bazaar Malay, used earlier as a lingua franca, and Baba Malay, a hybrid of Malay and Hokkien (Ho and Platt 1993: 8–9). SingE gradually became a lingua franca for the ethnically diverse population and is now increasingly being used as a first or primary language by younger generations of Singaporeans. Platt, Weber and Ho (1983: 9) explain its origin as due to the fact that "children were using English in natural communication situations while still in quite early stages of acquisition," and hence there was strong influence on their English from Chinese and, to a lesser extent, Malay. The extent of substrate influence in colloquial SingE has led some scholars (e.g. Ritchie 1986) to suggest that this contact vernacular is typologically closer to Chinese than to English. The strong influence of Chinese is evident in the tense and aspect system as a whole, particularly the latter.

4.1 Tense in SingE

The categories of present and past tense in SingE show evidence of considerable reduction as well as variability in the use of inflection. Present-time reference, in particular, seems to be marked more by temporal adverbials such as *today*, *now*, and so on. Hence, there is variable use of third sing -s. Similarly, past-time reference tends to be marked by adverbials such as *yesterday* and the like. The patterns of tense marking seem to be ascribable partly to a universal tendency to simplify inflectional morphology in the acquisition process and partly to influence from the substrates, which lack such inflection.

Ho and Platt (1993: 88) found that past marking varied according to the morphological subtype of the verb, according to the following hierarchy:

VC type (strong)	>	-id type	>	Vd	>	CC
see		*want*		*die*		*love*

This hierarchy generally reflects the pattern of past marking found in other contact varieties of English, such as African American English and Trinidadian English (Winford 1993b). Ho and Platt also found that past marking was highest with punctual verbs (56.2 percent), then statives (36.9 percent) and finally nonpunctuals (14.7 percent). They claim that this reflects similar findings by Bickerton's (1981: 170) study of Hawai'i Creole English and Guyanese creole, as well as his claim that children tend to use a similar hierarchy of past marking in the early stages of L1 acquisition. Hence, they conclude that "the punctual-nonpunctual distinction is a language universal." Whether this means that the pattern of tense marking they observe also represents a language universal is, however, debatable. At best, it seems to represent a general tendency in the acquisition of tense marking, and it might therefore be regarded as a 'vernacular universal' in the sense of Chambers (2004). But, in general, absence of tense inflection was almost certainly encouraged by the fact that the substrate languages are isolating in nature and do not mark tense via inflection (Ansaldo 2004: 136).

Future-time reference is often expressed by *would* + *V*, a pattern also found in contact Englishes such as Trinidadian English. Even so, future-time reference is also marked by adverbials like *tomorrow*. English *will*, in contrast, tends to be used for present habitual situations (see below).

4.2 Aspect in SingE

The aspectual system of SingE has its sources in both English and the substrates, but the influence of the latter, especially Chinese, is much stronger. Progressive and Habitual, expressed by (*be*) *V-in* and by *useto* + *V*, respectively, clearly derive from English. The former, like progressive *V-in* in other contact Englishes, requires no auxiliary support and can be regarded as another vernacular tendency, if not universal. The fact that Chinese has a progressive category may have reinforced the emergence of this category. Choice of *useto* for present habitual, contrast, seems odd in view of the fact that the cognate *used to* expresses past habitual in English. Ho (2003: 42) suggests that this use of *useto* may have been influenced by the fact that Chinese Pefective *le* cannot occur with verbs in habitual contexts. Because Chinese lacks a category of past habitual, selection of *useto* for present habitual would not have seemed incongruous. This may also reflect the fact that learners have a tendency to associate habitual action with present situations (Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds 1995: 119).

Deterding, Ling, and Brown (2003: 35) note that the use of *will* to describe habitual action is common in SingE and suggests that it may be due to influence from Chinese *hui*, and possibly from Malay *akan*. Ho (2003: 43) also notes that speakers often use *will* + *V* rather than *would* + *V* for past habitual, although they also use *would use to*. In addition to possible substrate influence, this use of *will* may reflect a general tendency cross-linguistically for future-tense markers to be extended to habitual functions, a tendency that is well documented in the typological literature on tense aspect (Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994).

The categories that show strongest influence from the substrates are the Completive Perfect and Experiential Perfect. The former is expressed by *already*, which has a distribution and range of interpretations quite distinct from those of its English cognate. Bao (2005) demonstrates how the use and meaning of *already* parallels that of the Chinese Completive Perfect marker *le*. Thus, both *already* and *le* convey the sense of incompletive with a non-stative verb, as in the following examples (I label *le* as COMPL):

(29) I wash my hand already (Bao 2005: 239)
'I (have) washed my hand'

(30) wǒmen chī le liúlián (Bao 2005: 242)
We eat COMPL durian
"We ate durian'

Similarly, both *already* and *le* convey an inchoative sense with statives (including habituals).

(31) The wall white already. (Bao 2005: 239)
'The wall (has) turned white/ *The wall was white'

(32) qiáng bái le (Bao 2005: 242)
wall white COMPL
'The wall is whitened.'

Finally, both VP-final *already* and VP-final *le* convey the sense of 'inceptive' (the start of an event):

(33) It rain already (Bao 2005: 241)
'It has started to rain.'

(34) xià yǔ le (Bao 2005 : 242)
down rain COMPL
"It started/is about to rain.'

Bao also demonstrates that the English adverbial *ever* is used in much the same way as Chinese marker *guo* to express the sense of an Experiential Perfect (i.e. the sense that some event occurred at least once in the past).

(35) I ever try this type of fruit before (Bao 2005: 244)
'I have tried this type of fruit before.'

(36) wǒ yǐqián shì guo zhè zhǒng shuǐguǒ (Bao 2005: 245)
I before try EXP this type fruit
'I have tried this type of fruit before.'

Bao concludes, with good reason:

> Given the convergence in aspectual meanings between Singapore English and Chinese, we conclude that *already* and *ever* are English words which have been grammaticalized to express the perfective aspects derived from Chinese.
>
> (Bao 2005: 245)

Table 9.3 Tense/Aspect Categories in Singapore English and Their Models

Time Reference	*Sing Eng*	*Model(s)*
Simple present	ø (variable 3sg *–s*)	English (with Chinese influence)
Simple past	ø (variable *-ed*)	English (with Chinese influence)
Future	*would* + V Or V + fut. adv.	English English/Chinese
Aspectual Reference	*Sing Eng*	*Model(s)*
Pres. Habitual	*useto* + V	English (with Chinese influence)
Progressive	(be) V-*in*	English
Completive Perfect	VP *already*	Chinese *le*
Experiential Perf.	*ever* + VP	Chinese *guo*

Table 9.3 presents the putative models on which the tense and aspect categories in SingE are based.

5. ON THE ROLE OF UNIVERSALS AND SUBSTRATUM INFLUENCE IN CONTACT ENGLISHES

It seems clear from the overview provided earlier that the tense-aspect systems of Irish English, Bajan, and SingE are organized in very different ways, and that there are very few tense-aspect categories that match closely across all three languages. Hence, we cannot claim that these categories provide any evidence for typological universals shared by contact Englishes, far less for the hypothesis that such categories are in some sense predetermined by UG, in the sense that Bickerton's language bioprogram hypothesis proposed.

Recall that, according to this hypothesis, radical creole tense-aspect systems are shaped directly by UG and consist of three basic oppositions: punctual versus nonpunctual aspect, anterior versus nonanterior tense, and realis versus nonrealis mood. These labels are sufficiently vague that they can apply to just about any creole tense-aspect system or indeed, to the tense-aspect systems of other languages. Recent research (Singler 1990; Winford 2000; etc.) has demonstrated that there are significant differences across creoles in the inventory of their tense-aspect categories and in their overall organization. Such similarities as are found across, say, Atlantic creoles can be explained more feasibly in terms of shared substratal influence

from West African languages or, indeed, in terms of the diffusion of particular creoles. It seems hardly likely, then, that the tense-aspect systems of contact Englishes formed in very different circumstances would display the kinds of similarities found across the creoles. Yet some scholars have claimed precisely this. For instance, Ansaldo (2004: 136–7) claims that "SE [Singapore English] shows the classic TMA system that has been observed in Creole languages." But this claim is based on a somewhat idiosyncratic analysis of the tense-aspect system as consisting of four aspectual classes: Anterior (marked by *last time*), Perfective (marked by *already*), Nonpunctual (marked by 'Durative' *still* or habitual *always*), and Irrealis (marked by *would*). This is an unfortunate instance of confusing notional meanings that appear in all languages, with TMA categories, which are the grammaticalized expression of a subset of such meanings. It is clear from the analysis of SingE presented earlier that its tense-aspect system bears little resemblance to those of Atlantic creoles.

Because 'innatist views are clearly suspect, we need to seek explanations in terms of universals "which have been claimed to pertain to the language acquisition process in general, and to language learning/acquisition in a language contact situation in particular" (Filppula 1990: 48). Research on SLA involving learners of different L1s attempting to learn different L2s has shown that the development of L2 tense-aspect systems follows a very similar pattern of development in all cases. Bardovi-Harlig (2000: 25 ff) summarizes the stages as follows:

> Stage 1: The pragmatic stage. This is characterized by use of bare verbs, reliance on chronical order, and the strategy of 'scaffolding' or reliance on the other interlocutor's utterances.
>
> Stage 2: The lexical stage. In this stage, the use of bare verbs continues, and there is strong reliance on temporal and locative adverbs to convey time reference. Other strategies include the use of connectives (e.g. 'and, then'), the use of dates or days of the week, and the use of temporal verbs like 'start' and 'finish.'
>
> Stage 3: The morphological stage. Again, use of bare verbs continues, but then verbal morphology begins to appear, usually in a fixed order, depending on the target involved. For instance, the (Perfective) Past tense emerges first in all cases, followed by the Imperfective Past in L2 varieties of Romance languages and the Perfect in L2 varieties of Germanic languages. Studies by Klein (1993, 1995) and his associates have demonstrated this general pattern of acquisition (see Bardovi-Harlig [2000: 119] for a summary).

We can assume that the first two of these stages were replicated in the construction of individual interlanguages that formed the basis for the tense-aspect systems of contact Englishes. These are the stages associated with processes of 'simplification', including loss/nonacquisition of inflectional morphology and regularization of simple strategies for conveying temporal and other meanings. These are what might be referred to as 'vernacular universals'. For instance, the use of bare verbs and nouns is a universal feature of early interlanguage systems. Similar universal features include variable use of copula/auxiliary *be*, omission of subject pronouns, the use of a single all purpose negator, and so on. The universality of several of these features in contact Englishes, as well as in creoles and early interlanguage, suggests once more that all of these situations are characterized by very similar types of restructuring in the early stages of acquisition.

By contrast, the developments that occur in Stage 3 of the acquisition of tense-aspect clearly differ across interlanguages and contact languages. The development of verbal morphology outlined by Bardovi-Harlig applies only to those learners who have close and continuing access to input from native models of the target language. At this stage of SLA, we do find some 'universal' features such as variable marking of past tense depending on predicate type (telic/nontelic), the stative/nonstative distinction, and the effects of phonetic environment. This pattern of past marking is quite similar across contact Englishes. In these cases, substratum influence or L1 retention appears to play a secondary role to 'universal' acquisitional processes such as simplification. This said, contact languages that arise from communal language shift may follow very different paths of development depending on the ecology of the contact situation, including demographics, patterns of interaction between speakers of the languages in contact, the nature of the superstrate and substrate inputs, the motivations of learners, the social functions of the contact language, and so on. It would therefore be simplistic to expect some 'universal' pattern of development in every stage of acquisition. The differences among Irish English, Bajan, and SingE are testimony to the fact that different sociolinguistic ecologies may result in both similarities and differences in the outcomes of contact.

For instance, given the fact that southwest English dialects were a significant part of the superstrate input to both Irish English and Bajan, it is not surprising to find a certain degree of similarity in the tense-aspect systems of these languages, particularly with regard to the functions of forms of *do*. By the same token, correspondences between the relevant substrate languages can also result in similarities across contact languages. The best-known examples of this include Caribbean creoles (as discussed earlier) and the Melanesian Englishes of the Pacific (as discussed by Keesing 1988; Siegel 2000; and others). Another case in point is the similarities we find between SingE and Hawai'i Creole English because of their shared Sinitic substrate. For instance, the adverb *already* has been grammaticalized in both languages as a marker of Completive aspect with similar functions. In short, just as in the case of Atlantic creoles, such similarities as we find between HCE and SingE tense-aspect systems can be more readily explained in terms of shared substrate influence than in terms of some putative bioprogram.

Similarities among different substrates can also lead to similar outcomes across contact situations. Thus, Ho and Platt (1993: 1) note that 'basilectal' SingE shares many features with Caribbean creoles, including directional serial verb constructions, variable marking of past tense, variable absence of copula and auxiliary *be*, existential *got*, and so on. The fact is that these features are not uniquely 'creole', but rather result from the fact that the respective substrates have similar structures. At the same time, we can find subtle differences in the nature of the substrate influence despite their apparent similarities. For example, SingE displays a hierarchy of copula absence in which forms of *be* appear most often with locatives, then nominals, progressive V-ing, and Adjectives, in that order:

Locatives > Nominals > V-ing > Adjectives

As Ho and Platt (1993: 55–68) argue, this pattern corresponds closely to that in Chinese. In contrast, Bajan and other intermediate creoles display the following hierarchy:

Nominals > Adjectives/Locatives > V-ing

This appears to reflect, in part, the pattern in West African languages. Such data are clear evidence that substratal inputs can lead to subtle differences in what might appear at first glance to be an innovation that is shared across contact languages.

None of this is meant to imply, however, that the nature of the substrate influence alone explains the similarities and differences we find across contact Englishes or that universal principles played no role. There is an unfortunate tendency to treat universals and substrate influence as if they were opposing factors in the genesis of contact languages. It seems more feasible to view them as complementary, with universal principles acting as constraints on the role of substrate influence and other factors.

Recent research on creole formation has attempted to provide a more explicit formulation of some of these principles. First, the research of Siegel (2003) builds on the insights of research in SLA to explore the various constraints on the role of transfer (L1 influence) in creole formation. Siegel argues that such constraints fall into two broad categories: 'availability constraints' and 'reinforcement principles'. The former are based ultimately on Andersen's (1983, 1990) "Transfer to Somewhere Principle" for SLA and have to do with whether there is a salient morpheme or string of morphemes in the superstrate input, which "can be used or reanalyzed according to the rule of the substrate" (2000: 83). Reinforcement principles have to do with the degree of homogeneity among the substrates, which has the effect of ensuring the preservation of certain features rather than others.

A complementary line of research is that of Lefebvre (1998) and her associates, which attempts to explain substratum influence in terms of the process

of 'relexification', by which superstrate forms assume the functions and syntactic properties of semantically related items in the substrates. This approach provides a more formal framework in which to investigate such changes. A third line of research is that of Myers-Scotton (2002) and her associates, which appeals to psycholinguistic models of language production to account for how speakers combine aspects of the lemmas of superstrate items with those of corresponding substrate items. All three approaches are concerned with the same problem: how to account for the ways in which substratum influence is regulated by universal principles. These principles provide an explanation for how several tense-aspect categories emerged in contact Englishes. Cases in point include the *after* Perfect of Irish English, the *already* Completive of SingE, and the *done* Perfect of Bajan. Research on contact Englishes, therefore, has much to gain from these approaches to creole formation.

In summary, we have to recognize that differences in both the linguistic inputs as well as the social settings of the contact play a major role in determining the nature and extent of the restructuring that takes place in the emergence of contact languages. The fact that the outcomes are not identical in all cases is clear evidence that such differences are crucial. At the same time, we should recognize that all such outcomes are shaped by similar principles that regulate contact-induced language change. Understanding how the different sociolinguistic ecologies, linguistic inputs, and universal principles interact with each other constitutes one of the central goals of a theory of contact-induced change. Students of contact Englishes can contribute much to this endeavor by documenting the details of the sociohistorical settings which gave rise to the new Englishes and creating taxonomies of the typological similarities and differences that they manifest. We can then achieve the goal of explaining our typological generalizations in terms of the general principles that underlie processes of contact-induced change.

NOTES

1. It has also been claimed that *did* has habitual function in contemporary southwest English dialects (Ihalainen 1976: 615). Klemola (1996: 123) analyzed data from three southwestern dialect corpora (twentieth century) and concluded that, although "there is a clear tendency" for *did* to receive a habitual interpretation (67–85 percent of all tokens), *did* was also used to convey simple past (3–15 percent) and in conditional and temporal clauses, "where the form seems to function as a marker of irrealis modality rather than habitual aspect" (10–15 percent). It may well be that the tendency to use *did* for habitual meaning in some contemporary southwest dialects is a relatively recent development.

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10 Digging for Roots
Universals and Contact in Regional Varieties of English[1]

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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the relationship between vernacular and other kinds of universals and language or dialect contacts through a corpus-based comparative method. We focus on three nonstandard syntactic features that can be assumed to represent different levels of universality and language/dialect contact backgrounds and their distribution in two sets of regional or national varieties of English, which in turn can be positioned differently on the vernacular–standard continuum, and furthermore, have different sociohistorical backgrounds either as so-called 'L1 varieties' or as 'contact' or 'L2 varieties'. It is hoped that this kind of comparison will shed light on the question of whether there are 'vernacular universals' in the sense of Chambers (2004) and, if so, what kinds of varieties of English constitute their proper *locus*. Cross-linguistic comparisons will also be made wherever possible to ascertain the 'degree of universality' of the investigated features.

The three features are: (1) absence of plural marking with nouns of measurement, (2) nonstandard use of the definite article in certain kinds of contexts, and (3) wider use of the progressive form with stative verbs. We describe these features in detail in sections 3 to 5 and give an account of their distribution in the investigated varieties and globally. All three features represent nonstandard syntax, and they are found—with varying frequencies—in all of the varieties investigated here. They have a common denominator which functioned as the starting point for selecting them: they all occur in (at least one of) the Celtic-influenced varieties of English spoken in the British Isles and have structural parallels in one or the other of the Celtic languages. Thus, there is a basis for considering each of them contact-induced at least within their own regional settings. What adds a possible global and universal dimension to the question of their origins is the fact that these features are also found in several other varieties of English beyond the context of the British Isles. Thus, the question of origins cannot be solved without taking into account several possible sources of influence,