

This study presents an analysis of the colloquial Singapore English (Singlish) particle *also*, arguing that it has grammaticalized into a polyfunctional focus particle encoding additive, scalar, and distributive meanings: a significant semantic expansion from its British English (BRE) source. Drawing on a multi-method data base - primarily naturalistic speech from the ICE-SIN and SUSSCSE corpora, supplemented by elicited examples and selected citations from earlier Singlish studies, this paper advances a unified formal analysis to account for the particle's threefold functionality. We argue that the additive, scalar, and distributive readings of *also* are not merely a list of context-sensitive ambiguities but are systematically derived from a single underlying lexical entry. Specifically:

- (i) the canonical **additive** reading arises when *also* combines with an existential presupposition over a set of similar alternatives;
- (ii) the **scalar** reading is generated when *also* is merged with a covert scalar operator (\emptyset -*even*), which introduces a universal presupposition that the prejacent is the least likely among its ordered alternatives; and
- (iii) the **distributive** reading arises when *also* is combined with a covert distributive operator, that applies a predicate to each atomic member of a plural individual or quantificational domain.

This tripartite derivation from a unified source provides an explanation for the data while its three-way functional range aligns systematically with patterns found in Chinese additive particles, notably Southern Min *toh*, as well as Mandarin *ye* (也) and *dou* (都). This consistent parallelism provides substantial evidence that substrate influence from Chinese languages is the primary driver of the particle's grammaticalization in Singlish, offering a clear case of **relexification** where English lexical material is systematically mapped onto Chinese grammatical frames.

The core of the analysis rests on three sets of corpus-attested examples, each illustrating a distinct function. First, the additive use appears frequently in sentence-final position: a pattern rare in BRE but common in Singlish - as in SUSSCSE "*Your house also have what,*" where *also* simply signals an additional proposition. Notably, Singlish *also* exhibits polarity insensitivity, freely occurring in negative contexts (e.g., "*They don't have time also*"), a trait that mirrors Mandarin *ye* and diverges sharply from the polarity-sensitive system of BRE (*also* vs. *either*). Second, the scalar function surfaces in two configurations: (i) overt *even...also* constructions, such as ICE-SIN "*Even change a bit also cannot,*" and (ii) more tellingly, in sentences where no overt scalar marker is present, e.g., "*Last time I can run 10 km, now 5 km also cannot.*" In the latter, *also* alone conveys an unexpected, low-likelihood reading. Third, the distributive function is obligatorily triggered by universal quantifiers, *wh*-phrases, and free-choice items, as in SUSSCSE "*everywhere also got terrorist attacks*" or elicited "*Anything also can.*" In these contexts, *also* forces a distributive reading over the domain of the quantifier, closely paralleling the behavior of Mandarin *dou*.

We thus argue for a single lexical entry for *also* – essentially a focus-sensitive additive presupposition trigger – interacts with different covert operators and alternative sets to yield the observed semantic variety. For the additive reading, *also* combines with a standard existential additive presupposition, requiring at least one true alternative to the prejacent. For the scalar reading, we posit the presence of a covert scalar operator, \emptyset -*even*, which merges with *also* in the syntax. This \emptyset -*even* is not merely an abstract placeholder; it is a syntactically active null counterpart of overt *even* that introduces a universal scalar presupposition: the prejacent must be less likely than all other contextually relevant alternatives. Thus, in "*5 km also cannot,*" \emptyset -*even* supplies the scalar ordering (running 5 km is less likely than running longer distances), while *also* contributes its additive component. This analysis explains why scalar readings arise even in the absence of overt *even* and why such readings are systematically available in Singlish but not in BRE. For the distributive reading, *also* combines with a covert distributive operator (Dist), which applies the predicate to each atomic individual within the plural subject or quantificational domain. The distributive reading arises only when the syntactic environment provides a plural domain that can be decomposed atomically, hence its restriction to universal quantifiers, *wh*-phrases, and FCIs.

The tripartite behavior of Singlish *also* exemplifies how a contact variety innovates by integrating the functional architecture of its dominant substrate languages, offering a model for understanding grammatical change in multilingual ecologies like Singapore.

