

# Split S in the Indonesian area: Forms, Semantics, Geography

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Split S (SS) systems are found in languages where an intransitive argument S is encoded through case marking, verbal agreement, or both, in the same way as a transitive agent (A), or a transitive patient (P). This paper presents some of the results of a survey of SS systems found in languages of the Indonesian area, covering the larger part of Indonesia, including the Republic of East Timor but excluding the Papuan mainland and the Borneo continent. For the survey, a sample of 39 (28 Austronesian, 11 non-Austronesian) languages was selected on the basis of areal as well as genetic considerations. The sample contains 16 languages with a SS system, and 23 languages without one. Four case studies of languages with SS systems are presented in the paper. Since Acehnese is the best-known Indonesian language with SS, it is taken as a starting point, and then compared with the non-Austronesian languages Klon (Alor island) and Tobelo (N Halmahera), as well as with the Austronesian language Kedang (Flores). For each language, the structural patterns as well as the semantic factors involved in SS are described. The overall conclusion is that a structural or semantic feature that uniquely defines SS in the Indonesian area appears not to exist. In the final section of the paper, the geographical distribution of SS in Indonesia is examined. Although in absolute numbers, most of the languages with SS are located in Eastern Indonesia, this unequal distribution is shown to be statistically insignificant -- it is simply a result of the fact that the number of languages in Eastern Indonesia is four times higher than in Western Indonesia.