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# **Locus of marking on the clause level in Southeast Asia**

## **Areal and genealogical patterns**

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# Goals

- Locus of marking (and word order): susceptible to areal spread, genealogically not very stable (cf. Nichols 1992)
- should enable to detect areal patterns and contact zones
- ...and thus be a contribution to areal typology of SEA languages
- could also give some hints about the (pre)history of SEA

# Definitions

## Locus

- previously known as *head/dependent marking* (Nichols 1986)
- morphosyntactic marking of syntactic relations can be located on the head of the construction, on the non-head (i.e. dependent), on both, or on neither

# Definitions

## Locus of marking on the clause level

- head marking: agreement on the predicate
- dependent marking: case marking on arguments
- double marking: both agreement and case marking
- no marking: neither case nor agreement marking

## “Marking”

- broad definition, includes any means of clausal dependent (i.e. argument or adjunct) marking and indexing, i.e. not only affixes, but also clitics, separate words, ablaut, tone changes, etc.

# Illustrations

## Head marking

(1) Konjo (Austronesian; Sulawesi; Friberg 1996: 140-1)

*na-peppe'-i Amir asung-ku*

**3A-hit-3P** A. dog-1SG

'Amir hit my dog.'

## Dependent marking

(2) Tagalog

*B<um>ili ang=babae ng=isda.*

<SA.PFV>buy **PROX**=woman **OBV**=fish

'The woman bought the fish.'

# Illustrations

## Double marking

(3) *Tukang Besi* (Austronesian; Sulawesi; Donohue 1999)

*No-ita-e*      *na=kene-no*      *te=ana.*  
**3A.R-see-3P**    **NOM=friend-3POSS**    **CORE=child**

'The child saw its friend.'

## No marking

(4) Thai (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom 2005: 118)

*Sathăapaník*    *sâaŋ*    *saphaan*    *nîi*  
architect      build    bridge    this

'The architect built this bridge.'

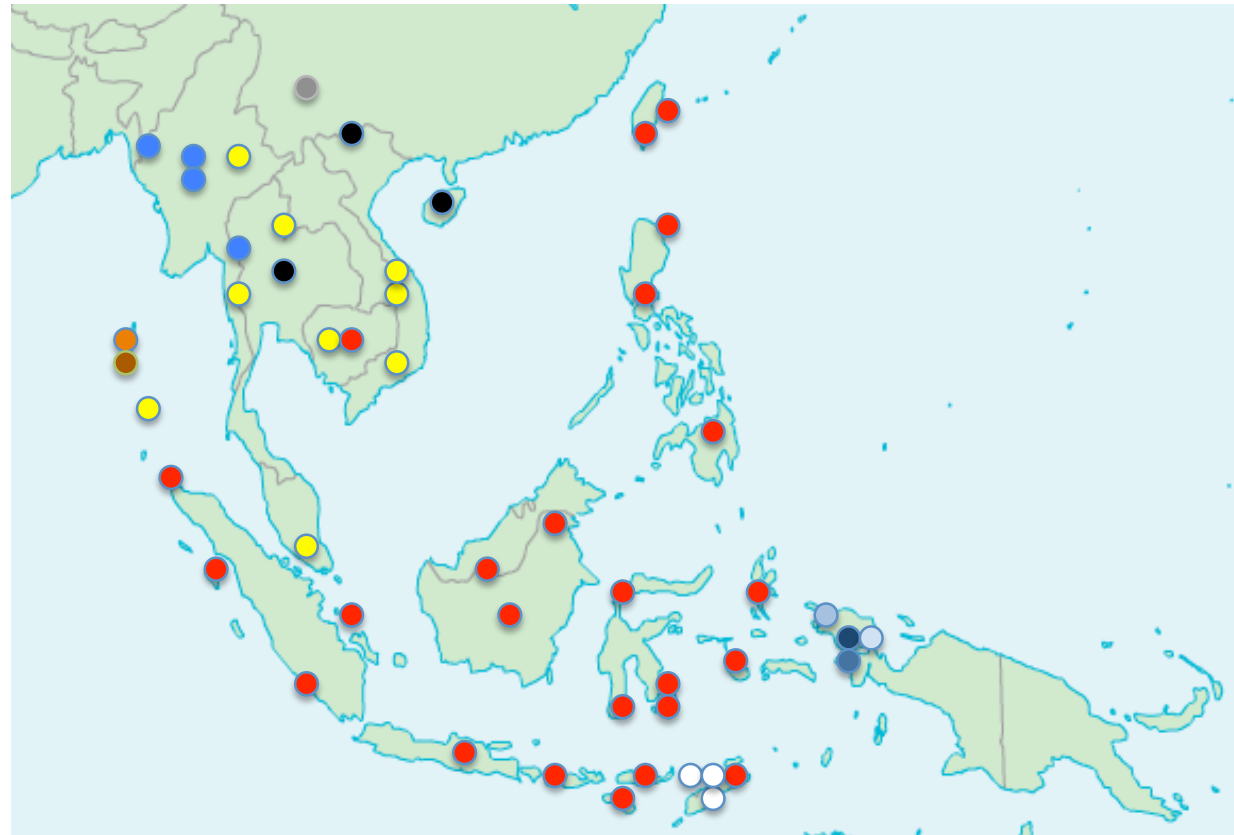
# Methodology

- sample: 50 languages, representing different areas and low-level genealogical units of SEA languages
- geography: SEA defined in a fairly broad sense, includes Myanmar (due to possible similarity to the rest), parts of southern China (where some of the mainland SEA language families have their origins), Taiwan (probable origin of Austronesian), and the Bird's Head of New Guinea (possible similarity to SEA, contacts)
- variables: head marking, dependent marking, word order, all on the clause level
- restriction in this study: only (semantically) prototypical transitive clauses considered

# Language sample

50 languages,  
12 families:

- Sino-Tibetan
- Austroasiatic
- Tai-Kadai
- Hmong-Mien
- Great Andamanese
- Ongan
- Austronesian
- Timor-Alor-Pantar
- West Bird's Head
- Maibrat
- Hatam
- West Bomberai

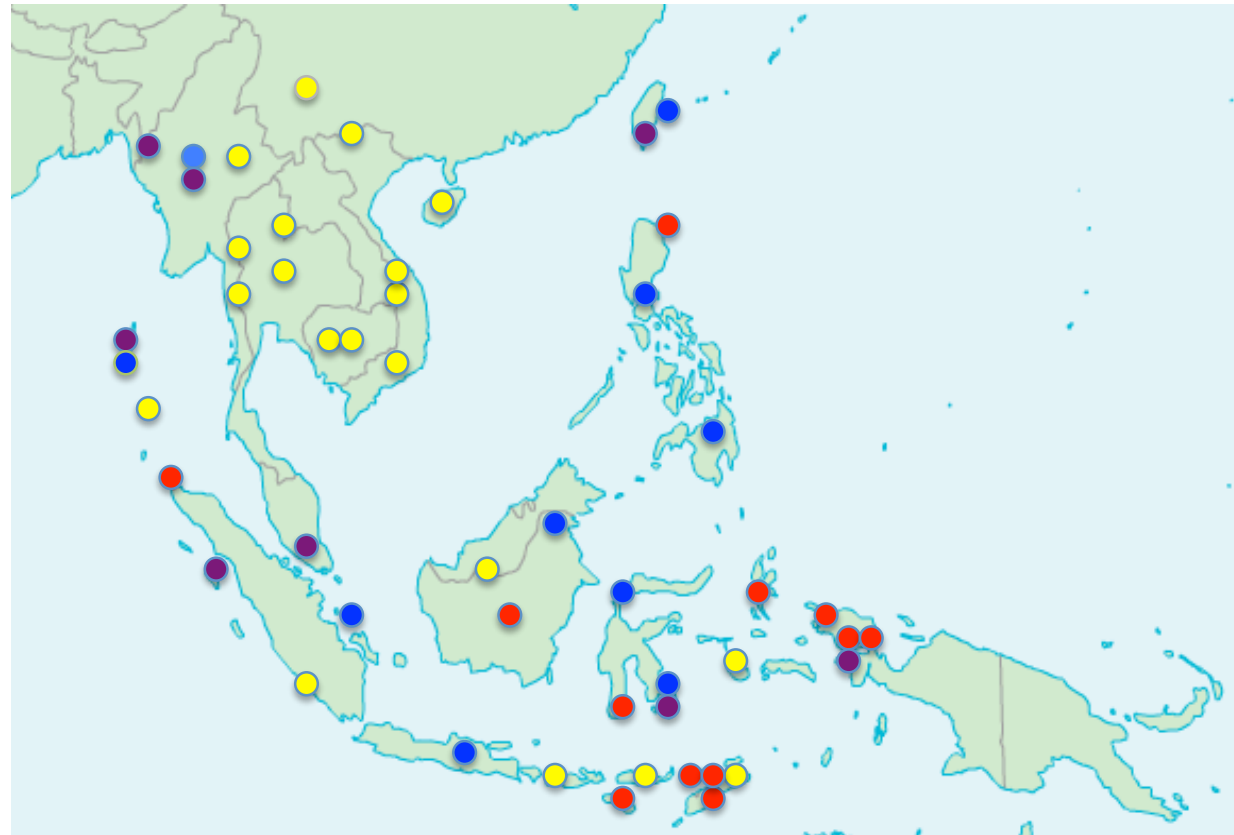




# Locus of marking in the clause

Values

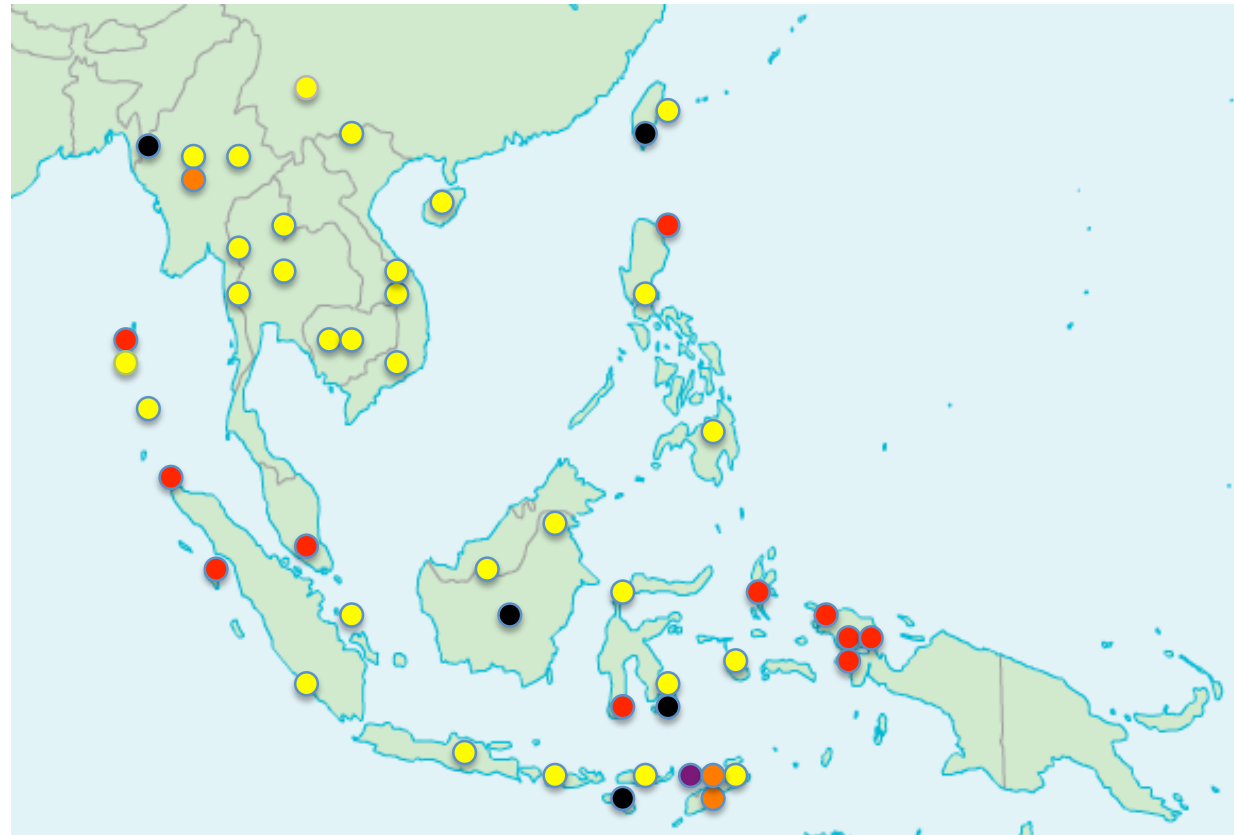
- head marking (red):  
esp. E Indonesia
- dep. marking (blue)  
esp. Philippines
- double m. (purple)
- no marking (yellow)  
majority



# Head marking

## Values

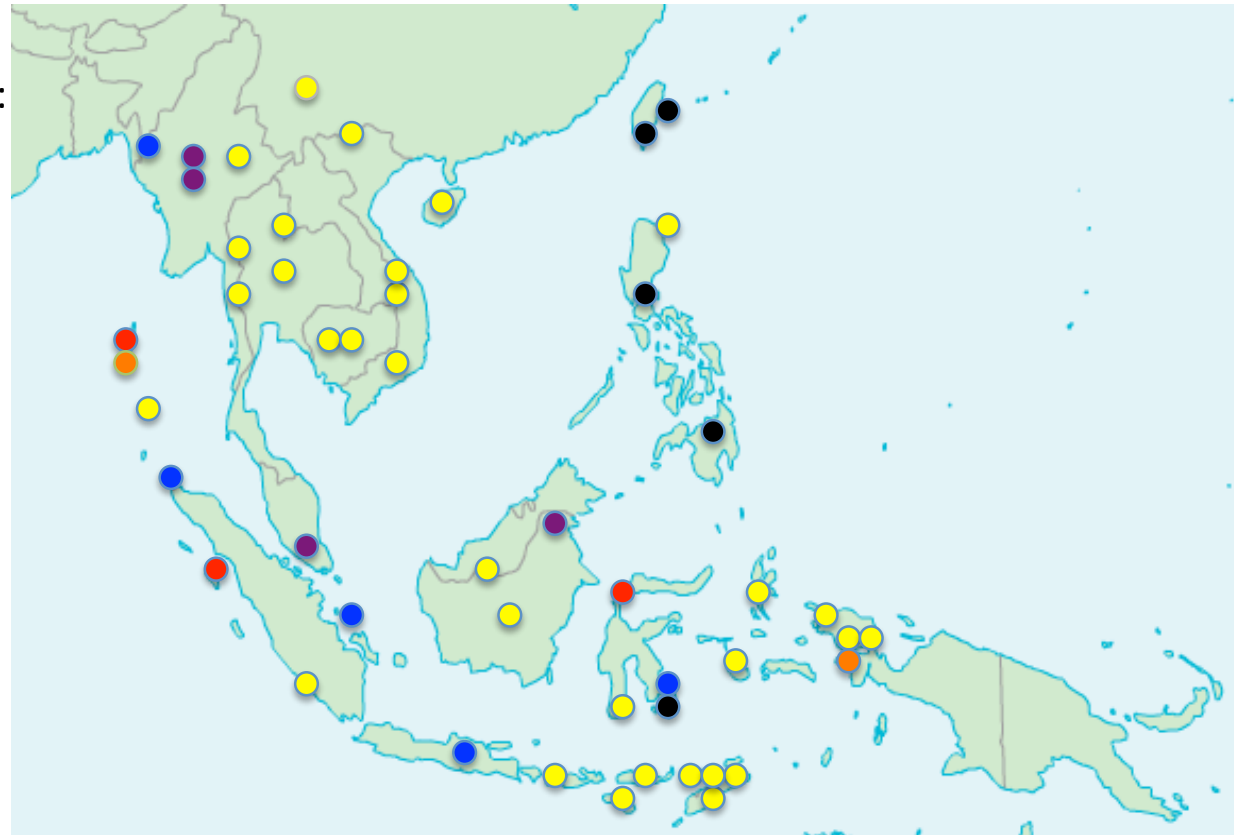
- no marking (yellow)
- max. one (orange)  
Burmese: S/A-PL  
TAP: pred. class etc.
- one (red): usually  
A (and S)
- max. two (purple)
- two (black)



# Dependent marking

## Values

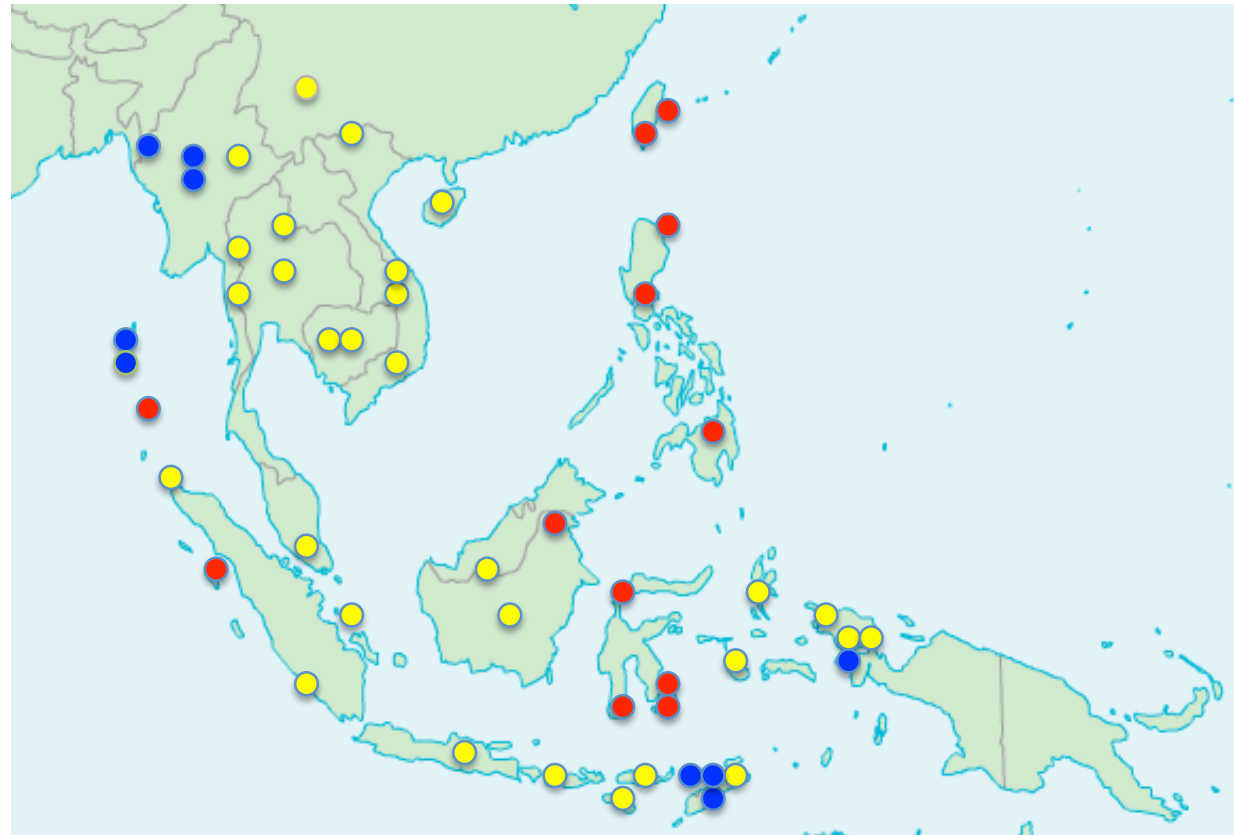
- no marking (yellow): majority
- some A (blue): only in P-voice
- some P (orange): DOM
- all P (red)
- some A & some P (purple): DAM and DOM, or depending on voice
- all A & all P (black): esp. Philippine-type



# Word order

## Values

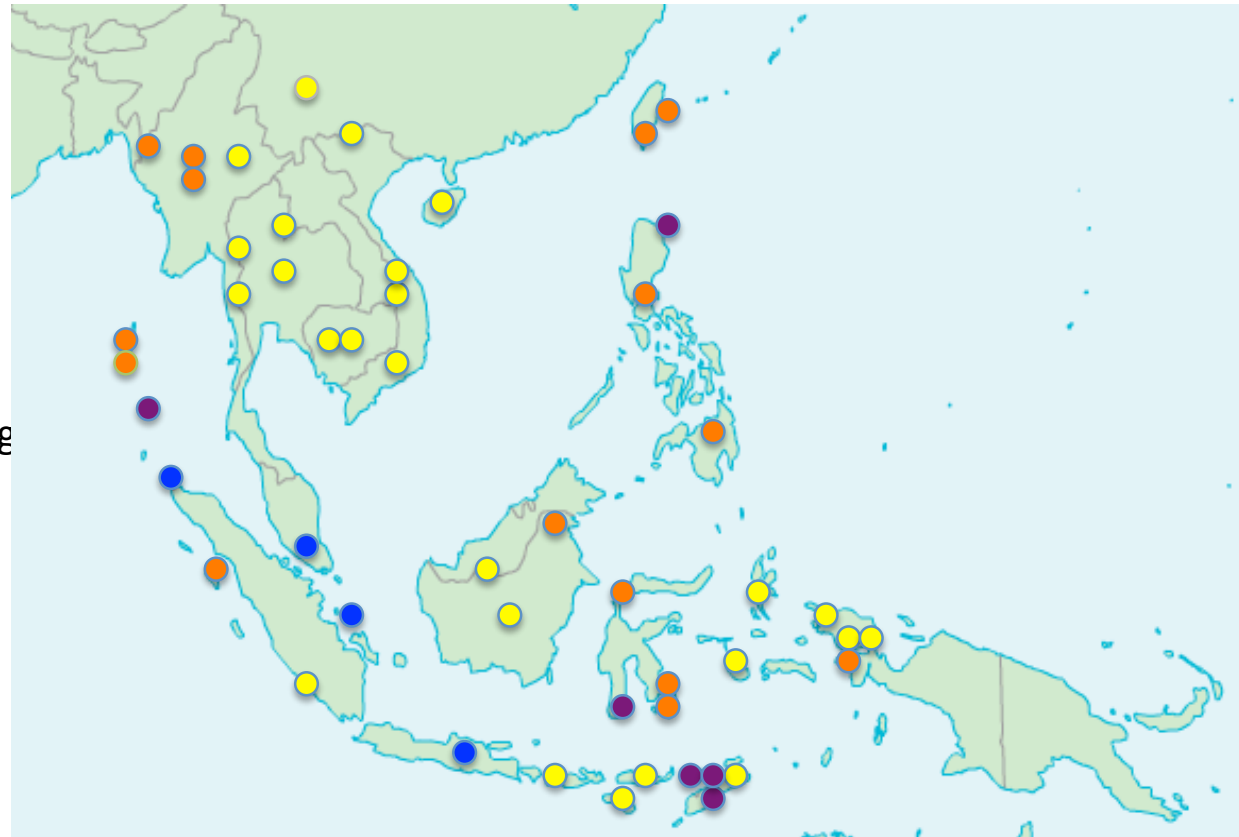
- V-initial (red):  
Taiwan-Sulawesi,  
Nias, Nicobarese
- V-medial (yellow):  
majority;  
also E Indonesia  
and Bird's Head
- V-final (blue)  
ST (exc. Karen),  
Timor-Alor-Pantar  
Iha (W Bomberai)



# Word order vs. dependent marking

## Values

- V-medial & no case (yellow)
- V-medial & case (blue):  
case marking not consistent: only in P-voice or depending on other factors
- V-edge & case (orange)
- V-edge & no case (purple): rare



# Preliminary results: tendencies

- Myanmar (without the eastern hill areas):
  - differential case marking
  - some agreement
  - Verb-final word order
- Mainland SEA (including the eastern hill areas and parts of southern China):
  - no case marking
  - no agreement
  - Verb-medial word order
  - highly homogenous

# Preliminary results: tendencies

- Philippines and neighboring areas (Taiwan, N Borneo, Sulawesi)
  - case marking common
  - some agreement (bound pronouns)
  - Verb-initial word order
- Western Indonesian archipelago: picture less clear:
  - similar to Mainland SEA, but more complex
  - some dependent-marking (P voice)
  - head-marking present in a minority of the languages too
- Eastern Indonesia, Bird's Head of New Guinea
  - no case marking
  - agreement prominent
  - Verb-medial word order

# Observations and explanations

- Myanmar: pattern similar to that of many other Tibeto-Burman languages further west and north (the Andamanese languages follow the same pattern)
- Fairly sharp boundary between that pattern and the MSEA pattern: eastern hill areas (including Karenic) follow the MSEA pattern; in reality the difference between the two areas might be smaller
- Low level of complexity and homogeneity of MSEA due to language contact
- The Philippine pattern reflects the origin and spread of AN
- Borneo resembles a transitional zone: the NE looks like the Philippines, the SW like the western Indonesian archipelago



# Observations and explanations

- Western Indonesian archipelago
  - on the one hand fairly simple systems (Malay, Javanese): simplification of previously more complex AN patterns due to language contact
  - on the other hand some small languages that are more complex
  - Aslian more complex than both neighboring AN and related (SEA) Austroasiatic languages. Hypothesis: result of lacking contact led to increased complexity
  - head-marking of Nias and Acehnese: hypothesis: traces of the pre-AN languages; evidence for AA influence in Acehnese (cf. Sidwell 2006): does not explain the head marking pattern; V-initial in Nias: older AN pattern (but also in Nicobarese); Nias: increased complexity due to isolation

# Observations and explanations

- Eastern Indonesia and the Bird's Head of New Guinea differ from both the Philippines and (the rest of) New Guinea, but differs less from MSEA
  - 'linguistic area' according to Klamer et al. (2008)
  - Hypothesis: reflects a pre-AN pattern (cf. Donohue 2005)
  - When the AN languages moved in the area, they adopted the patterns
  - Timor-Alor-Pantar might reflect a mainland New Guinea pattern (closer contacts in the past)

# Conclusion

- Results support some previous hypotheses
- They must be corroborated by further studies, which...
  - focus on language-internal variation to a higher degree
  - take into account further predicate and argument types
  - consider further morphological variables
  - consider wordhood properties: e.g. how isolating is MSEA really?