

*On the historical absence of tense in Austronesian*

*Many Austronesian languages express aspect and mood in their morphologies in ways that are formally and semantically sufficiently similar to warrant their reconstruction in Proto Austronesian. Mood and aspect are generally morphologically expressed in Philippine and Formosan languages although morphological aspect tends to disappear in various West Indonesian languages. On the other hand, tense is often missing in Austronesian languages, and where it is not, it is due to secondary developments. This is neatly demonstrated in the South East Barito languages of South Borneo and Madagascar. These languages have maintained the Proto Austronesian modal suffixes but have lost its aspectual distinctions. While Malagasy has a well-developed tense system, which is marked in verbs, locative adverbs and even prepositions, this system must be the result of Bantu influence.*

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