

**THE PHENOMENA OF *SPLIT-S* AND *FLUID-S* IN MINANGKABAUNESE:  
A Grammatical-Typological Study<sup>1</sup>****FENOMENA S-TERPILAH DAN S-ALIR DALAM BAHASA MINANGKABAU:  
Sebuah Kajian Gramatikal-Tipologis****Jufrizal****FBS Universitas Negeri Padang****Jalan Prof. Dr. Hamka Padang, 55351, Padang, Indonesia**Email: [juf\\_ely@yahoo.com](mailto:juf_ely@yahoo.com)**Abstract**

Minangkabaunese, a local language originally spoken by Minangkabaunese in West-Sumatera, has been typologically assigned as a nominative-accusative language (S = A, ≠ P) at syntactical level. Further typological studies on grammatical constructions, however, indicate that there are constructions which can be classified as the ergative-absolutive ones in this language. Thus, Minangkabaunese belongs to a neutral language, then. As a neutral language, it is assumed that this language has the constructions so called split-S and fluid-S. This paper, typologically discusses the grammatical properties of split-S and fluid-S in Minangkabaunese. The idea of this paper is derived and further developed based on a part of the research result conducted in 2013-2014. The data presented and discussed in this article were collected through a descriptive-qualitative research in the form the field research and library study. The analysis was based on the relevant theories of grammatical typology. The result of analysis tells that Minangkabaunese has the grammatical constructions which can be assigned as split-S and fluid-S. This typological discussion may add grammatical data and typological information into analyses on linguistic typology.

**Key word:** *Minangkabaunese, accusative, absolutive, split-S, fluid-S***Abstrak**

Bahasa Minangkabau, bahasa daerah yang dituturkan oleh suku bangsa Minangkabau di Sumatera Barat, telah dinyatakan sebagai bahasa bertipologi nominatif-akusatif (S = A, ≠ P) pada tataran sintaksis. Meskipun demikian, kajian tipologis lebih jauh atas konstruksi gramatikal menunjukkan bahwa ada konstruksi bahasa ini yang dapat disebut sebagai konstruksi ergatif-absolutif. Dengan demikian, bahasa Minangkabau termasuk bahasa netral. Sebagai bahasa netral, diduga bahwa bahasa ini mempunyai konstruksi yang disebut sebagai S-terpilah dan S-alir. Artikel ini membahas secara tipologis sifat-perilaku gramatikal S-terpilah dan S-alir dalam bahasa Minangkabau. Gagasan pokok tulisan ini diturunkan dan dikembangkan dari sebagian

<sup>1</sup> This is the revised form of my short-form paper originally entitled 'Split-S and Fluid-S in Minangkabaunese: A Preliminary Typological Study' presented at *Kongres Internasional Masyarakat Linguistik Indonesia (KIMLI)-2014*; Bandar Lampung, February 19 – 22, 2014.

hasil penelitian yang dilakukan pada tahun 2013-2014. Data yang disajikan dan yang dianalisis dalam artikel ini dikumpulkan melalui penelitian deskriptif-kualitatif dalam bentuk penelitian lapangan dan studi pustaka. Analisis data didasarkan pada teori tipologi gramatikal terkait. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa bahasa Minangkabau mempunyai konstruksi gramatikal yang dapat disebut sebagai S-terpilah dan S-alir. Telaah ini dapat menambah data dan informasi tipologis ke dalam kajian tipologi linguistik.

**Kata kunci:** *bahasa Minangkabau, akusatif, absolutif, S-terpilah, S-alir*

## **Introduction**

Language is the species-specific phenomena; it is naturally created and conventionally used by human beings in daily life communication. In addition to the species-specific quality of language (see Whaley, 1997:4), a second basic notion about language might be highlighted that has become foundational for modern linguistics: there is a basic unity that underlines the awesome diversity of the world's languages. In other words, it can be stated that whether it is Apache, Zulu, Hindi, Hebrew, Malay, others, there are certain core properties that languages have in common. These properties are often referred to as language universals which allow us to say that all languages are, in some sense, the same.

As previously reported, Minangkabaunese, a local language originally spoken by Minangkabaunese in West-Sumatera, Indonesia, was typologically assigned as a nominative-accusative language (an accusative language for short) at syntactical level. It has been grammatically proved that the only argument of intransitive clause (S) is treated in the same way with the argument agent (A) of transitive clause, and the difference treatment is grammatically given for argument patient (P) ( $S = A, \neq P$ ) (see further Jufrizal, 2004; Jufrizal, 2012; Jufrizal et.al, 2012). Further typological studies on grammatical constructions of Minangkabaunese, however, give "challenging" data and information that this local language has clause constructions which can be assigned as ergative-like constructions as naturally found in ergative-absolutive (ergative for short) language (see Jufrizal 2012, Jufrizal et.al., 2012; Jufrizal et.al., 2013, 2014). Such data and grammatical information attract the linguists' attention to see the typological properties of the local language in more-careful ways.

That Minangkabaunese has both the accusative and ergative constructions is the grammatical phenomena of syntactic and semantic matters. Therefore, it should be assumed that the grammatical properties are not clearly separated from semantic ones. Languages with high accusative properties may lead the ergative constructions as the minority ones or as the marked constructions, and vice versa. Cross-linguistic studies, in other side, claim that there are some other languages with less accusative or ergative properties. In such languages, the accusative and ergative constructions are relatively used in balance; the accusative and ergative constructions are found easily. In relation to the idea, it may be assumed that Minangkabaunese belongs to a neutral language; a language which has typological properties to be assigned as accusative and/or ergative language, as well.

The basic-fundamental concepts of linguistic typology (typology for short) have been proposed by linguists, especially those who are commonly called typologists.

According to Song (2001:8), language universals are properties which must at least be true of the majority of the human languages. They also impose constraints or limits on possible variation within human languages. Linguistic typology, on the other hand, is concerned with classification of languages into different structural types, namely the individual structural properties, or correlations between them. Therefore, it may seem to the uninitiated something of a contradiction in terms to handle these apparently quite distinct areas of investigation together. Language universal research, in fact, thrives on linguistic typology. This is because in order to discover language universals, linguistic typologists first need typological classification on which to work. Thus, linguistic typology provides materials for establishing language universals.

Song (2001:2) theoretically describes that despite the differences among world's languages, there must be certain properties whereby the languages of human beings are all recognized as falling into the category of human languages. There must, therefore, be an underlying unity to the languages used by people in the world. In accordance with this, there are linguists who are concerned directly with discovering this unity by studying the rich structural variation found in the languages used by people in the world. These linguists are known as *linguistic typologists*, or *typologists* for short. Their investigation of cross-linguistic variation is referred to as *linguistic typology*, or *typology for short*.

Whaley (1997:7) mentions that typology in the context of linguistics is the classification of languages or components of languages based on shared formal characteristics. Accordingly, there are three significant propositions packed into the definition, namely (a) typology utilizes cross-linguistic comparison; (b) typology classifies languages or aspects of languages; and (c) typology examines formal features of languages. Whaley (1997) adds that it is also important to note that typology is not a theory of grammar, like Government and Binding Theory, Functional Grammar, Cognitive Grammar, Relational Grammar, or others which are designed to model how language works. Typology, in other side, has the goal of identifying cross-linguistic patterns and correlations between those patterns. For this reason, the methodology and results of typological research are in principle compatible with any grammatical theory (see also Mallinson and Blake, 1981; Comrie, 1989; Payne, 2002; Song, 2001; Jufrizal, 2012).

As it is stated by Comrie in Neymeyer (ed.) (1990:447), the overall aim of linguistic typology is to classify languages in terms of their structural properties, in other words to answer, in general but revealing terms, the question: "*what is the language X like?*". The enterprise of linguistic typology has two important presuppositions:

- (a) It is assumed that languages can be compared with one another in terms of their structures; and
- (b) Linguistic typology presupposes that there are differences among languages.

The first presupposition implies that there are universal properties of language, which can be used as the basis for comparison. The study of linguistic typology goes hand in hand with the study of language universals. The second presupposition implies that if there are no differences among languages, then all languages belong to the same type. In principle, any structural property of any language could be chosen as the basis of linguistic typology. However, in carrying out linguistic typology, the aim is to look for

significant properties, in particular those from which one can predict others (see also Croft, 1993; Song, 2001).

Based on relevant theories constructed and proposed by typologists, Artawa (2004:149 – 152) mentions that the terms ergativity and accusativity are commonly found in typological linguistics literature. Ergativity and/or ergativity may be recognized at three distinct levels: morphology, syntax, and discourse. Based on the studies on linguistic typology and various data cross-linguistically, it is theoretically formulated that a language is said to show ergative morphological characteristics if the patient complement of a transitive verb (P) is marked in the same manner as the subject of an intransitive verb (S), and differently from the agent complement of the transitive verb (A) ( $S = P, \neq A$ ). If the agent complement of a transitive verb (A) is marked in the same manner as the subject of intransitive verb (S), and differently from the patient complement of a transitive verb (P), a language is said to show accusative characteristics ( $S = A, \neq P$ ). English is one language which has an accusative system of marking, while languages in Caucasian languages such as Avar and languages in Mayan family are the examples of ergative languages in morphological level (see also Dixon, 1994; Comrie, 1989).

Furthermore, Artawa (2004) further mentions that a language is said to show ergative syntax if it has syntactic rules that treat P and S alike, and differently from A (formulated as  $S = P, \neq A$ ); and it is said to show accusative syntax if it has syntactic rules that treat A and S alike, and differently from P (formulated as  $S = A, \neq P$ ). It is also common for many languages which have an ergative morphology do not have ergative syntax; instead, syntactic rules seem to operate on an accusative principle (see further Anderson, 1976; Dixon, 1994). It appears as well that there are no languages that are fully ergative, at either the syntactic or morphological level. In addition to morphological and syntactic ergativity and/or accusativity, it may be also found in discourse level. Bahasa Indonesia (Verhaar in Artawa, 2004), for instance, shows the ergativity system at discourse level or in informal style.

The dichotomy of accusative and ergative system is the name given for the morphological and/or syntactic systems to show how the grammatical system works in human languages cross-linguistically. However, the dichotomy is not an absolute category, but it is a kind of linguistic tendency (see Mallinson and Blake, 1981; Artawa, 2005; Jufriзал, 2012). As mentioned above, no languages that are fully ergative or accusative at both morphological and syntactic levels. Furthermore, Dixon (1994:70) states that many languages mix nominative-accusative (accusative system) and ergative-absolutive (ergative system) of intra-clausal marking. This is the typological system which is called split one. In addition to the system of  $S = A, \neq P$  (accusative languages) and  $S = P, \neq A$  (ergative languages), some languages pursue a middle course, marking some S like A, and some like P. Such languages fall into two kinds, 'split-S' and 'fluid-S'.

Dixon (1994:70 – 71), in more specific ideas, explains that the typological phenomena of the split system in a simple-theoretical description. According to him, languages that distinguish between  $S_a$  and  $S_p$ , as subtypes of S, are of two kinds. The first kind is like ergative and accusative languages in having syntactically based marking of core constituents. Each verb is assigned a set syntactic frame, with case marking of cross-referencing always being done in the same way, irrespective of the semantics of a particular instance of use. This system is simply called 'split-S'. The second kind

employs syntactically based marking for transitive verbs, but employs semantically based marking just for intransitive verbs – an intransitive subject can be marked as Sa (i.e. like A) or as Sp (like P) depending on the semantics of a particular instance of use. It is simply called a ‘fluid-S’ system. The split system can be formulated as Sa = A, Sp = P (for split-S) and Sa = P, Sp = A (for fluid-S).

It seems that the system of split-S and fluid-S concerns with both grammatical and semantic properties at morphological and syntactic levels. At glance, these concepts are ideally easy and practically applicable for human languages. However, they are not simple for natural data, both in grammatical and discourse level because there are so many controversial and complicated data and linguistic information involved. Therefore, the analyses and discussion on the split system in linguistic typology are not an easy job. Moreover, the grammatical systems of languages in Malay-family, such as Minangkabaunese practically include semantic and pragmatic functions. This paper does not discuss the all phenomena of split-S and fluid-S in Minangkabaunese, but it particularly limits the analysis and discussion on *the split system at syntactic level only*.

The facts showing Minangkabaunese as a neutral language imply that this language may have the typological phenomena so called *split-S* and *fluid-S*. The phenomena of split-S and fluid-S are naturally found in most Malay-family languages, as the languages which have properties of accusative and ergative languages. The discussion of split-S and fluid-S is not only grammatical properties, but also semantic ones. In accordance with this, it is highly necessary to explore and describe whether Minangkabaunese has split-S and/or fluid-S, and to explain its nature. This paper, which is further derived and developed from a part or research results of *Hibah Kompetensi* conducted in 2013-2014, discusses *the grammatical properties of split-S and fluid-S in Minangkabaunese*. This typological discussion may add grammatical data and typological information into analyses on linguistic typology.

## Methods

As it has been previously mentioned, the data, in the form of basic clause contractions in Minangkabaunese, and other relevant grammatical information presented and discussed in this article were derived from the data collected through a descriptive-qualitative research in the forms of field research and library study. This research was conducted in 2013-2014 formally funded by LP2M Dirjen Dikti of Indonesia under the scheme of *Hibah Kompetensi*. As a field research, the researchers collected the spoken data in fourteen main towns in West Sumatera where the native speakers of Minangkabaunese habitually live. The additional data were collected through library study by means of reading related documents in which the relevant data are available. The instruments of research were questionnaire, field notes, and interview guideline. The data were collected through distributing questionnaire, participant observation, depth interview, and note taking. Then, the data were argumentatively analyzed based on related theories of linguistic typology, especially the grammatical typology. The main related theories used are those proposed Comrie (1989), Dixon (1994), and Song (2001). In addition, other related theories on linguistic typology quoted from others are also used in this study in order that the nature and

grammatical properties of split-S and fluid-S in Minangkabaunese could be typologically described.

## Result and Discussion

The split system as a sub-type of accusative and ergative system in grammatical typology falls into two kinds, ‘split-S’ and ‘fluid-S’. The discussion on these two split systems, in fact, is relatively complex because they involve grammatical and semantic properties, and in some cases they need pragmatic functions. The focus in analysis is on the verbal clause constructions as they have grammatical-semantic properties in their predicates. The verb categories involved are those of intransitive and transitive with certain verbs containing the grammatical-semantic properties. The typological analyses on the split system of verbal clause constructions in neutral languages become the challenging topics of discussion in grammatical typology.

In the case of Minangkabaunese, it can be stated that the grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic properties systematically interact in different degrees in inter-clausal constructions. Therefore, the typological studies on Minangkabaunese are not only concerned with grammatical features, but also related to semantic and pragmatic categories. Such typological properties may bring about specific characteristics of the split system which are comparable to other related phenomena in other languages.

Firstly, it is necessary to pay serious attention to the intransitive verbs in order to see the nature of ‘split-S’ and ‘fluid-S’ in Minangkabaunese. Based on previous studies on grammatical typology, intransitive verbs in Minangkabaunese may appear by morphological markers (prefix *maN-* and *ba-*) or without prefix (*zero verb*) (see Jufrizal, 2012; Jufrizal et.al., 2012; Jufrizal et.al., 2013, 2014). The followings are some examples.

- |     |                   |                  |
|-----|-------------------|------------------|
| (1) | <i>ma-nari</i>    | ‘to dance’       |
|     | <i>ma-nangih</i>  | ‘to cry’         |
|     | <i>ma-lamun</i>   | ‘to day-dream’   |
|     | <i>ma-ratok</i>   | ‘cry out’        |
|     | <i>man-dasah</i>  | ‘wheeze’         |
|     | <i>mang-angah</i> | ‘to open mouth’  |
| (2) | <i>ba-ranang</i>  | ‘to swim’        |
|     | <i>ba-sikek</i>   | ‘to comb’        |
|     | <i>ba-lari</i>    | ‘to run’         |
|     | <i>ba-ubah</i>    | ‘to change’      |
|     | <i>ba-tajun</i>   | ‘to fall down’   |
|     | <i>ba-baliak</i>  | ‘return’         |
| (3) | <i>pai</i>        | ‘to go’          |
|     | <i>mandi</i>      | ‘to take a bath’ |
|     | <i>duduak</i>     | ‘to sit’         |
|     | <i>lalok</i>      | ‘to sleep’       |
|     | <i>pindah</i>     | ‘to move’        |
|     | <i>pulang</i>     | ‘to go home’     |

Intransitive verbs in Minangkabaunese with prefix nasal (*maN-*) or *ba-* have grammatical-semantic properties as subject as agent (Sa) (and for active-voice marker), while those with *zero marker* (without affix) may be assigned as subject as patient (Sp). Such grammatical features are subject to semantic and pragmatic properties of in which the category of verbs are essential for having the description of the split system of this local language. Let's see the following examples!

- (4) *Dari cako, inyo ma- nangih taruih.*  
since just now, PRO-3SG INTR-cry always  
'Since then, she has always cried'
- (5) *Kutiko itu juo, urang tu ma- ningadah ka langik.*  
when that too man ART INTR-gaze upward to sky  
'At that time, the man gazed upward to the sky'
- (6) *Sajak tadi, inyo ma- ngaluah lamah.*  
since then, PRO-3SG INTR-moan slowly  
'Since then, he moaned slowly'
- (7) *Dek ari ujan, kami ba- taduah.*  
due to rain, PRO-1PL INTR take shelter  
'Due to raining, we took shelter'
- (8) *Kalau baitu, ambo ba- baliak dulu.*  
if so PRO-1SG INTR-return firstly  
'If so, I will firstly be back'
- (9) *Anak-anak ketek ba- tajun sarantak di banda.*  
children small INTR-fall down together in small river  
'The small children fell down together in the small river'
- (10) *Dek angin kancang, rumah tu rabah.*  
due to wind fast, house ART fall down  
'Due to fast wind, the house fell down'
- (11) *Anak ayam- nyo anyuik.*  
small chicken-POS-3SG drift  
'His small chicken drifted'
- (12) *Rumah lamo kami alah runtuh.*  
house old POS-1PL past break down  
'Our old house broke down'

Examples (4) – (12) above are the those of intransitive clauses in Minangkabaunese . In (4)and (7), for instance, S(ubject) argument *inyo* 'she' and *kami* 'we' are similar with A(gent) argument; the intransitive verbs are morphologically marked by *ma-* and *ba-* (*ma-nangih* 'cry' and *ba-taduah* 'take shelter'. The intransitive verb *ma-nangih* and *ba-*



*taduah* semantically need the agent as the S argument. The semantic properties of the verbs are similar to transitive verbs of transitive clauses in which they are S and agent, as well. Such verbs are intransitive in grammatical-constructions, but the grammatical subjects are agents. Therefore, these examples indicate that  $S_a = A$ .

Meanwhile, (10) and (11) of the data are the examples of intransitive clauses in Minangkabaunese with verb without morphological marker (zero verb), *rabah* 'fall down' and *anyuik* 'drift'. In these constructions, the grammatical-semantic properties of S is similar with P(atient). The grammatical subjects in these data are not the agent in previous data. In the examples, the verb *rabah* and *anyuik* cannot take an agent as the grammatical as the verbs are not in the semantic capacities of action verbs. In this case, the semantic categories and properties of verbs determine the role of the grammatical subjects, whether they are agent of patient. Based on these grammatical-semantic properties, therefore, it can be typologically assigned that  $S_p = P$ .

The facts indicating that many languages in the world mix the nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive types have been claimed by typologists. Among the others, Dixon (1994) and Song (2001), for instance, strongly argues that such grammatical phenomena may occur in all typologies of language, although they are commonly found in neutral languages. In addition, Dryer (in Shopen (ed.), 2007:261) states that the distinction between nonverbal and verbal intransitive clauses and between stative and nonstative clauses both involve a split among intransitive clauses, but the terms 'split intransitivity' and 'split-S' are commonly applied to splits where intransitive clauses divide into two types depending on whether the single argument (the S) exhibits grammatical properties similar to those of the A in intransitive clause or to those of the P. Based on the data in Minangkabaunese, presented above, indicate that grammatical properties of the split-S are mostly influenced by the semantic roles brought by the verbs of the clauses.

In Minangkabaunese, those types of clause constructions are common and productive. It can be argued that the argument S of intransitive clause in Minangkabaunese may have grammatical-semantic properties as A ( $S_a = A$ ), or as P ( $S_p = P$ ). Such grammatical-semantic properties imply that S in Minangkabaunese is not always grammatically treated as A or as P. These grammatical properties give grammatical information that the local language belongs to accusative language with 'split-S' and it may argued as well that it is a neutral language, a language which is in 'between' accusative and ergative language at syntactic level (see Jufrizal, 2012; Jufrizal et.al., 2012; Jufrizal et.al., 2013, 2014).

In addition to the grammatical properties where  $S_a = A$ , and  $S_p = P$ , detailed and further analyses on clause constructions of Minangkabaunese lead us to have other grammatical properties. The grammatical properties tell that not all intransitive verbs in zero marker (verbs without affixes) are  $S_p = P$ . Some zero-intransitive verbs may take  $S_a = A$  and some others may take  $S_p = P$  as its sole argument. Let's have close attention on the followings!

- (13a) *Anak ayam putih tu anyuik.*  
 small chicken white ART drift  
 'The small white chicken drifted'



(13b) *Batang rambutan gadang tu alah rabah.*  
tree rambutan big ART PERF fall down  
'The big rambutan tree has just falled down'

(14a) *Baliau diam sajo sajak cako.*  
PRO-3SG keep silent only since just now  
'He has just keep silent since then'

(14b) *Anak-nyo baru sajo lalok.*  
child-POS-3SG new just sleep  
'Her child has just slept'

In (13a) and (13b), the sole argument of intransitive clauses with zero verb are S = P; the subject *anak ayam putih* 'the small white chicken' and *batang rambutan gadang* 'the big rambutan tree' are patients (P). To determine the argument S in the clauses as patient needs the semantic exploration toward the verbs used. The grammatical properties of the clauses cannot be assigned without the analyses of verb categories semantically. Meanwhile, in (14a) and (14b), the sole arguments of intransitive-zero verbs, *baliau* 'he' and *anak-nyo* 'her child' are not automatically as Sa or as Sp. The argument *baliau* or *anak-nyo* is agent (S=A or Sa) if they semantically control the action *diam* 'keep silent' or *lalok* 'sleep'. In other side, If they do not control the actions, they are semantically patient (S=P or Sp). In the level of communicative uses, it may be stated also that the semantic status of S as A or P is influenced by pragmatic function, as well.

The followings are the additional examples of clauses in Minangkabaunese in which the argument S may be assigned as agent or patient depending on the semantic-pragmatic properties of verb in a intransitive clause. The typological and grammatical-semantic explanation can be similarly addressed to them.

(15a) *Gigi-nyo tangga duo buah.*  
tooth-POS3SG fall out two piece  
'He fell out two teech'

(15b) *Onda urang tu rusak di jalan.*  
motorcycle POS-man-ART break down on street  
'The man's motorcycle broke down on the street'

(16a) *Inyo tagak sajo dari tadi sinan.*  
PRO3SG stand only since then there  
'He has just stood since then there'

(16b) *Kutiko masuk alaman, mamak batuak ketek.*  
when enter yard uncle get cough small  
'When entering the yard, uncle got small cough'

It is essential to pay attention to the grammatical-semantic facts that in some languages the S argument of intransitive verbs is expressed in two or more

morphologically distinct ways. In the study of grammatical typology, such languages are sometimes said to exhibit split intransitivity. In the intransitive clause, the sole argument S may play the semantic role as A or P as the result of semantic properties of verb and pragmatic interpretation in communicative events. It seems that the grammatical constructions are not merely the matters of grammatical; semantic-pragmatic ones are involved in multiple grammatical-semantic system. In many languages, such typological cases are clearly marked by grammatical features, but in some other languages they are not. In Minangkabaunese, in fact, some of the constructions are morphologically marked and others are determined by pragmatic functions.

Based on the data found, there are some intransitive-zero verbs in Minangkabaunese which take Sa or Sp as the sole argument depending on semantic roles had. The facts tell that there are some intransitive verbs in Minangkabaunese having the same bases which may be morphologically marked as A (Sa = A) or as P (Sp = P). Therefore, in addition to the grammatical facts that Minangkabaunese has 'split-S', this local language shows also the properties of 'fluid-S'. The 'fluid-S' is the specific classification of 'split-S' which enables it to be Sa or Sp depending on semantic-role distinctions.

The typological studies on fluid-S lead typologists to pay serious attention to the interface between syntax and semantics. The interface between syntactical and semantic features languages with grammatical makers is obvious. Certain morphological markers and phonological ones, as well are found to determine the fluid-S system. In Minangkabaunese, however, the morphological and phonological markers are not always found; the markers are zero. It may have certain problem to highlight the certain points. As the result, further semantic and pragmatic features should be brought into analyses.

In more operational ideas, Dixon (1994) mentions that it is the fact that some verbs refer to activities that are always likely to be controlled and these are always likely to be marked as Sa; other verbs refer to activities or states that are likely never to be controlled and these are always likely to shown as Sp. Dixon, in other side, adds that there will be many verbs in a middle region, there will be many verbs in a middle region, referring to activities where there can be control or lack of control, and these may accordingly be marked either as Sa or So. For a fully fluid-S language, every intransitive verb has the *potentiality* of taking either marking; it is just that some verbs are more likely than others to exercise this choice. These grammatical-semantic properties of intransitive clauses potentially work in Minangkabaunese. However, the relevant data indicate that the potentiality of taking either marking is not relatively high; no complete morphological markers involved in this construction. The semantic and pragmatic features are in high loading, instead.

The fluid-S system in Minangkabaunese, which involves the grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic properties, can be also found in many world languages. Based on cross-linguistic studies in grammatical typology, Payne (2002:147 – 148) states that some languages can treat the for examples, the concept expressed in English as *to fall* can either be conceived as something the subject *does* or as something that the subject *undergoes*. In some languages, this distinction is grammaticalized in the way the subject argument is expressed. In Chickasaw, a Muskogean language of the southeastern United States, the subject of some verbs can be expressed in any of three

ways, depending on the semantics. For example, the root *chokma* 'good' can be enfelcted for A when the subject acts volitionally (as in 17a), for P when goodness is a property exhibited by the subject (as in 17b), and for a dative participant when goodness is a feeling experienced by the subject (as in 17c).

(17a) *Chokma-li.* (volitional)  
Good -1SG-A  
'I act good'

(17b) *Sa-chokma.* (non-volitional)  
1SG-P-good  
'I am good'

(17c) *An-chokma.* (experiential)  
1SG-D-good  
'I feel good'

As in Minangkabunese, a few languages have been shown to exhibit split intransitivity (*spit-S* and *fluid-S*) based on discourse pragmatics (Payne, 2002). For example, in Yaguna, intransitive verbs of locomotion can take Sa or Sp subjects depending on the discourse context, as in the following data:

(18a) *Muuy sii- myaa- si- nii.*  
there run-COMPL-out-PRO3  
'There he rushed out'

(18b) *Sa- sii- myaa- siy.*  
3-A-run-COMPL-out  
'He rushed out'

In example (18) the subject is expressed as an enclitic- *nii*. This is the form that is used for P arguments of transitive verbs. In (18a), the subject is expressed with a prefix *sa-*. This the form used for A arguments of transitive verbs. It is clear that this distinction is not based on semantics since the S Arguments of both clauses are understood to be equally agentive, volitional, etc. An empirical study of narrative text shows that Sp subjects occur at scene changes and episodic climaxes (18a), whereas Sa subjects occur elsewhere (18b). Therefore, that *fluid-S* in Minangkabaunese is not only determined by grammatical properties of the verbs, but also determined by semantic and pragmatic properties are found in many other languages, as well. It seems that the grammatical properties and features are in interface with semantic and pragmatic ones in some cases. Among the others, they are interface in *split-S* and *fluid-S* system, such in Minangkabaunese.

## Conclusion

Based on typological studies, particularly grammatical typology, on transitive and intransitive clause in Minangkabunese, it is reasonable to assign that this local

language can be simply assigned as an accusative language. However, further analyses on various data collected linguistically inform that this local language has clause constructions which can be categorized as ergative-like constructions. In addition, Minangkabau has the grammatical properties of 'split-S' and 'fluid-S' that can be observed grammatically and semantically. The fact also tells that Minangkabau cannot be strictly assigned as accusative or ergative language; it is one of neutral language, even though it tends to be more accusative than ergative one. Similar with other Malay-language family, the grammar of Minangkabau is not purely constructed by morphological and syntactic levels, but it involves the semantic and pragmatic roles, as well. The typological studies on grammatical constructions in Minangkabau need grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic consideration and judgment in order to have valid results of analyses. Consequently, typological studies on Minangkabau need to include the phenomena of semantic-pragmatic roles which influence the grammatical properties, then.

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