Expressing (in)definiteness across Austronesian
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Beginning in the Philippines, I offer a critical view of recent analyses that discount the referential properties of Tagalog case markers and argue that the referential properties of case markers make a key contribution to the interpretation of arguments in Tagalog and more widely in the Philippine zone. I then examine languages south of the Philippines that have lost case-marking determiners and propose a typology of strategies that compensate for this loss. I show that syntactically conservative languages maintain the general mapping of definite undergoers to the nominative/absolutive argument with and without reinforcement by semantically bleached determiners and relative markers. I also discuss a rarer pattern by which a third singular genitive becomes a general marker of possession and then a marker of identifiability via "associative anaphora". Finally, I turn eastwards to discuss head-marking strategies, as found in Muna, where a historically distributive/pluractional verbal morpheme has come to signal the presence of an indefinite object. The typological goal, to which this is but an initial approach, is to link particular types of historical grammaticalizations to particular types of readings in modern languages.