

Numeral classifiers in Sgaw Karen

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The fact that Southeast Asia abounds with numeral classifiers is well known. Robert B. Jones in his “Classifier Constructions in Southeast Asia”, an essay honoring Mary R. Haas in 1970, suggested that the Tai group of languages is a possible source of influence in the spread of the use of classifiers in Southeast Asia and China. Numeral classifiers in languages of different families in Southeast Asia have been described at length since Haas (1942)¹ However, Karen happened to be overlooked, alluded to only by a few examples in Jones (1970). It is the purpose of this paper to present data on classifiers in the Mae Chaem dialect of Sgaw Karen. The writer of this article is also the compiler of a dictionary of this dialect of Sgaw Karen, viz. the *Thai-Sgaw Karen Dictionary*, two volumes, 1,277 pages, 1986. Data in this paper are taken exclusively from this dictionary.

Numeral classifiers (see Jones 1970, T’sou 1976, Allen 1977) are those morphemes which identify units, usually by reference to the shape of the object or objects concerned, when a number is present. All countable nouns are obligatorily associated with a classifier if a number is used in counting them --- for example,

cə ¹	thi ¹	pɔʔ ¹	təʔ ¹	phləʔ
I	see	tent	one	CL
	‘I see one tent.’			

cə ¹	luʔ ¹	ne ¹	she ² ka ²	səʔ ³	beʔ ¹
I	choose	obtain	shirt	three	CL
	‘I chose three shirts.’				

Uncountable nouns include such lexical items as *thi²* ‘water’, *so²* ‘oil’, and *me²* ‘cooked rice’. When used with numbers these nouns must take the measures classifiers.

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¹Mary R. Haas, “The Use of Numeral Classifiers in Thai”, 1942; Robbins Burling, “How to Choose a Burmese Numeral Classifier”, 1965; Hla Pe, “Burmese Classifiers,” 1967; Richard A. Benton, “Numeral and attributive classifiers in Trukese”, 1968; Asmah H. Omar, “Numeral Classifiers in Malay and Iban”, 1972; Nguy n Phu Phong, “Le Problème des classificateurs en Vietnamien”, 1975; Karen L. Adams, Alton L. Becker and Nancy Faires Conklin, “Savoring the Differences Among Classifiers,” 1975; Sujaritlak Wajanarat, “Classifiers in Mal (Thin)”, 1980 etc.

1. Types of classifiers

There are three types of numeral classifiers in Sgaw Karen: unit classifiers, noun-derived classifiers, and verb-derived classifiers.

1.1 Unit classifiers

Unit classifiers constitute a set of morphemes whose only function is to classify nouns. They cannot be used as a common noun. If they appear as a common noun (ex. *thu*² as a noun means ‘mountain’ and is used also as a classifier for cloth, cigarettes and banana), then it is the case of homonym. Unit classifiers in Sgaw Karen are simple unit classifiers. Twenty unit classifiers have been found:

1. *po*² ‘section of bamboo’, with: *wa*¹ ‘bamboo’, *me*²*te*²*bl*² ‘preparation of glutinous rice cooked in a bamboo joint’, *me*¹*hu*² ‘fireworks’.
2. *pu*³ ‘volume of books, with: *li*¹ ‘book’, *li*¹*c*¹*na*¹ ‘newspaper’, *kh*²*pe*¹ ‘exercise book’.
3. *phu*² ‘item, bunch of bananas’, with: *l*¹*da*² ‘mattress’, *s*²*kwi*³ ‘banana’, *tha*¹ ‘loom’.
4. *phu*³ ‘bunch of flowers, cluster of flowers’, with: *ph*²*ta*¹*sh**yi*¹ ‘roses’.
5. *to*² ‘place’, with: *ma*²*ta*¹ ‘work’, *phi*³ ‘place’.
6. *thu*² ‘roll, curl, furl’, with: *m*²*o*¹*thu*² ‘cigarette’, *s*²*kwi*³ *la*¹ ‘banana leaf’, *ta*¹*ki*³*na*¹ ‘cloth’.
7. *cu*¹ ‘set with: *she*²*ka*² ‘shirt’, *ph**l*²*o*¹*khi*² ‘trousers’.
8. *ko*¹ ‘heap, pile, stack’ with: *l*¹*bo*² ‘straw’, *s*²*mi*¹ ‘firewood’.
9. *kha*² ‘item, thing, affair, matter’ with: *n*²*o*¹*bl*²*o*¹ ‘ladle’, *ta*¹*p*²*o*³ ‘strainer’, *ta*¹ ‘matter’, *ta*¹*ma*² ‘work’, *ta*¹*ye*¹ ‘affair’, *li*¹ ‘book, knowledge, subject’, *n*²*o*²*m*²*o*¹ ‘tea (boiled)’, *na*¹*ph**o*²*yi*¹ ‘pickled fish’, *ta*¹*o*¹ ‘food’, *thi*² ‘water’, *l*¹*da*² ‘mattress’, *p*²*o*¹*th**o*³ *khli*² ‘grains of bean (for planting)’, *pya*¹*pu*² ‘forest’, *ta*¹*ka*¹*li*¹ ‘voice’, *kha*³ ‘table’, *ta*¹*hu*² ‘prayer’, *ta*¹*sha*² ‘disease’.
10. *kl*²*o*¹ ‘piece, fragment, pipe, tube’ with: *khri*² ‘wild yam (a head of)’, *se*¹ ‘wood (a long section of cut timber)’, *s*²*mi*¹ ‘firewood’, *si*³*na*³ ‘pistol, firearm’.
11. *khu*³ ‘piece’ with: *se*¹ ‘wood (a cylindrical section of cut timber used as a chair)’.

12. *di*² ‘body, used with all four-footed animals (including the flying lemurs) and ordained persons and supernatural beings : *pə*¹*na*¹ ‘buffalo’, *pə*²*də*³ ‘porcupine’, *phli*¹ ‘flying lemur’, *phli*² ‘tapir’, *ta*¹*ho*² ‘barking deer’, *ta*²*pha*³ ‘wild goat, antelope (Capricanus sumatrensis)’, *ta*¹*pho*²*pə*² ‘civet’, *thə*³ ‘pig’, *thə*³*shə*² ‘wild cat’, *cə*³*ʔe*² ‘short-tusked bull elephant’, *kə*¹*se*¹ ‘horse’, *kə*¹*shə*² ‘elephant’, *khə*² ‘bamboo rat’, *klə*¹ ‘ox’, *nwa*² ‘ass’, *sə*¹*xi*¹*khə*¹ ‘rhinoceros’, *shwi*¹ ‘dog’, *zi*¹*khe*²*plə*² ‘mongoose’, *zo*²*hə*¹ ‘pangolin’, *cə*²*sə*² ‘novice’, *ta*¹*ʔə*² ‘statue’, *ta*²*mɨ*¹*xə*¹ ‘ghost’, *də*³*sə*¹*ka*³ ‘giant, ogre’, *sə*²*kha*² ‘Buddhist monk’.
13. *mə*² ‘mouthful’ with: *me*² ‘cooked rice’, *sə*¹*be*¹ ‘a concoction to be chewed having betelnuts as the main ingredients’.
14. *shə*² ‘item’ with: *ta*¹*də*³*cə*³ ‘examination questions’, *kə*¹*na*² ‘arithmetic problems’.
15. *shə*² ‘pair, item (especially with engine, machine, motor, things having movement, music instruments)’ with: *cə*¹*ʔə*¹ ‘cymbals’, *khə*¹*phi*³ ‘shoes’, *na*¹*di*³ ‘earrings’, *tha*¹ ‘loom’, *cə*³*sha*³*ta*¹ ‘sewing machine’, *kə*¹*ha*¹ ‘water wheel’, *kə*¹*ha*¹*ri*³ ‘bicycle’, *kwə*³*le*¹*lə*² ‘telephone’, *mə*¹*tə*¹*ka*³ *le*¹ *so*² ‘bus’, *na*¹*ri*¹ ‘clock, wrist-watch’, *le*¹ ‘ox-cart’, *le*¹ *di*³*ta*¹ ‘tank’, *le*¹ *me*¹*ʔu*² ‘train’, *le*¹*zə*¹ ‘bicycle’, *shi*¹ ‘cradle, hammock’, *swə*¹*cu*¹ ‘balance, a pair of scales’, *te*²*na*¹ ‘lute’, *thə*¹*lə*¹ ‘fiddle’, *sə*¹*xə*² ‘harmonica’.
16. *ye*¹ ‘line’ with: *pa*²*cə*³*phə*² ‘pupils, students’, *si*³*phə*² ‘soldiers’.
17. *ya*² ‘classifier for humans’ with: *pa*² ‘man, human’, *pa*²*shə*²*ke*³ ‘sick man, patient’, *phə*²*sa*¹*hə*² ‘child’, *phə*¹*mɨ*¹ ‘woman’, *phə*¹*khwa*² ‘man’, *tə*¹*mɨ*¹ ‘thief’, *ya*²*sa*² ‘policeman’.
18. *zi*¹ ‘thing, affair, business’ with: *pə*²*lə*³*plə*² ‘story’, *ta*¹*ʔə*²*mu*² ‘movies’.
19. *zu*¹ ‘classifier for a sleep, a nap’ with: *mi*² ‘a sleeping time’.
20. *lə*¹ ‘lump, block, chunk’ with: *bɨ*² ‘a sheaf of rice’, *ta*¹*ʔə*¹ ‘cloud’, *ta*²*na*¹ ‘flesh, meat’, *di*²*ci*¹ ‘brick’, *di*¹ ‘fried eggs’ (NB. boiled eggs have *phlə*¹ classifier; see supra), *kə*¹*thi*²*xə*¹ ‘loaf of palm sugar’, *sa*²*pja*¹ ‘soap’, *lə*¹*shi*¹*wa*² ‘potash alum’.

1.2 Noun-derived classifiers

Noun-derived classifiers in Sgaw Karen are common nouns which are used in the position of classifiers. Noun-derived classifiers include simple unit classifiers, group classifiers, time classifiers and measurement classifiers. All in all there are 62 noun-derived classifiers.

Simple unit classifiers

1. pa^2 as a noun means 'side', used as a classifier for one side of things which usually come in pairs. Used with: $pəʔ^1so^1$ 'lung', $thəʔ^3$ 'pig(one half of)', $khə^1$ 'foot', $khə^1phi^3$ 'shoe', $khə^1phlə^1$ 'sock', ci^3 'hand', $khε^3ta^1bo^2$ 'pencil (one tip of)', $shə$ 'chicken (one half of)', $γə^2pa^2$ 'wall'.
2. pu^2 as a noun means 'hole', used as a classifier with: $bɿ^2$ 'rice (a bucket of)', $pe^1pə^2$ 'mosquito net'.
3. $phləʔ^1$ as a noun means 'round object', used as a classifier with: pe^1khle^2 'bell', $pə^1si^3$ 'ring', $pəʔ^1sə^2wa^2$ 'garlic (a clump of)', $pəʔ^1$ 'tent', $pəʔ^1sə^2kha^2$ 'monk's travelling tent', $pə^2ləʔ^3plə^2$ 'story, tale', $phε^2$ 'bead', $ta^1də^2$ 'bag, satchel', ta^2shi^1 'orange', $təʔ^3$ 'bank (establishment for financial transaction)', thi^2lu^2 'gourd', $thə^1$ 'sack', tha^2 'song', thu^3 'wart', co^3 'school', $koʔ^1$ 'cake', ko^3 'bottle', $kə^1cə^1$ 'mountain', $kəʔ^1thi^2$ 'big water jar', $khɿ^1$ 'taro root', $khə^1dəʔ^3khəʔ^1$ 'pillow', $kwε^1saʔ^1mo^3$ 'guava fruit', $bləʔ^1$ 'termite hill', $diʔ^1$ '(boiled) egg', $dəʔ^3$ 'house', $me^1po^1pha^3$ 'bomb, hand grenade', $mε^3$ 'sand', no^1 'pond', nu^1 'breast', $si^3naʔ^1sha^1$ 'bullet', si^3ta^1 'box', se^1su^2 'mole', $səʔ^1pə^2$ 'pot', $sa^1mə^2kle^3$ '(a pod of) tamarind fruit', $sə^2kwi^3$ 'banana (one fruit)', $shεʔ^1$ 'a large woven basket for paddy', swi^1 '(a drop of) blood', zi^1 'village', $liʔ^1pa^2kəʔ^1jə^2mo^1pya^1$ 'Karen alphabets', $liʔ^1pa^2kəʔ^1jə^2shε^3pha^3$ 'Karen tonal markers', $lə^1me^1$ 'electric-light bulb', $lu^1khe^2sa^1$ 'pumpkin', $lə^1$ 'pebble', ro^2 'garden', we^2 'abscess, boil', $xəʔ^1$ 'prison', ha^1 'shooting stand on the tree', $hə^1kho^1mə^2$ 'saline-alkaline land'.
4. $tε^1$ as a noun means 'sack', used as a classifier for things coming in a sack such as $bɿ^2$ 'unhusked rice', $ɿi^3sa^1$ 'salt'.
5. thi^1 as a noun means 'word', used as a classifier with: $ta^1kwə^1$ 'language, word'.
6. thu^1 as a noun means 'tree', used as a classifier with all kind of trees such as $thə^2$ 'Toddy palm', $kəʔ^1cε^2lə^1$ 'longan', $sa^1mə^2kle^3$

‘tamarind’, *sə¹ khɔʔ³* ‘mango’, *sə² kwiʔ³* ‘banana (plant)’, *lɔ² miʔ¹ shɔʔ¹* ‘parasitic plant’ *xɔʔ³* ‘rubber’ etc.

7. *caʔ¹* as a noun means ‘kind, sort, category’, used as a classifier with: *pəʔ¹ ta¹ thi²* ‘ink’, *phɔ²* ‘flower’, *phɔ² ta¹ shri¹* ‘rose’, *phɔʔ¹* ‘sedge, medicinal bulbs’, *ta¹ thɔ¹ byɛʔ¹* ‘mould, mildew’, *ta¹ kiʔ³ naʔ¹* ‘cloth’, *ta¹ ʔɔʔ¹* ‘food’, *ta² sa¹* ‘fruit’, *koʔ¹* ‘sweetmeats, cake’, *bɛ²* ‘taste’, *na¹* ‘fish’, *sa² phjaʔ¹* ‘soap’, *se¹* ‘wood’.
8. *kiʔ³* as a noun means ‘piece, one quarter of’, used as a classifier with: *pəʔ¹ sə² wa²* ‘(about half a clove of garlic’, *ta² na¹* ‘meat’, *na¹ pho²* ‘fish’, *koʔ¹* ‘sweetmeats, cake’.
9. *kə² dɔʔ¹* as a noun means ‘bunch, cluster’, used as a classifier with: *pəʔ¹ sa² wa²* ‘a bunch of several cloves of) garlic, *kwɔ¹ xɔʔ³* ‘torch’, *li¹* ‘cotton thread’, *lɔ² bo²* ‘straw’, *səʔ¹ mi¹* ‘firewood’.
10. *kəʔ¹ thə²* as a noun means ‘storey’, used as a classifier with: *dəʔ³* ‘house’.
11. *kə¹ kru¹* as a noun means ‘small bunch of plant’, used a classifier with: *kə¹ hɔ²* ‘a kind of tropical fruit’, *sɛʔ³ sa¹* ‘(a bunch of) betelnuts’.
12. *koʔ³* as a noun means ‘bottle’, used as a classifier with: *thi²* ‘water’, *so²* ‘oil’.
13. *kho¹* as a noun means ‘head’, used as a classifier with: *sə² kwiʔ³* ‘(a grove of), banana’, *no² bo²* ‘(a tussock of) Cyperaceal’, *wa¹* ‘(a clump of) bamboo’.
14. *khi¹* as a noun means ‘spool, reel’, used as a classifier with: *pli²* ‘rope’, *li¹* ‘cotton thread’.
15. *khle¹* as a noun means ‘a stem-part of flowers such as that of coconut, a cluster of fruit such as that of Toddy palm’, used as a classifier with: *thɔ² sa¹* ‘Toddy palm’, *kə¹ hɔ¹* ‘a kind of tropical fruit’, *bɛ²* (ears of) paddy’, *sɛʔ³ sa¹* ‘betelnuts’, *xɔ² sa¹* ‘coconut’.
16. *khlə²* as a noun means ‘the outside of’, used as a classifier with: *hɔ¹ kho¹* ‘land’.
17. *beʔ¹* as a noun means ‘skin, bark, rind’, used as a classifier with: *pɛ² trɔ²* ‘(a pane of) door’, *pəʔ¹ ʔuʔ³* ‘termite’, *phe² xɛ²* ‘a sieve’, *phlɔ²* ‘wasp’, *təʔ¹ khwɛ²* ‘fishhook’, *ta¹ də²* ‘basket’, *ta¹ kiʔ³ naʔ¹* ‘(a sheet of) cloth’, *ta¹ beʔ¹* ‘(a sheet of) skin’, *ta¹ kho¹ phlɔ¹* ‘a woven food cover’, *ta¹ ɣɔ²* ‘picture’, *thaʔ³* ‘needle’, *thaʔ³ pla²* ‘chisel’, *thaʔ³ tə¹* ‘tweezers’, *tho¹* ‘bird’, *tho¹ phyaʔ¹* ‘peacock’,

tho¹ ta² ‘goose’, *tho¹ ta²ʔi¹ʔ¹* ‘vulture’, *tho¹ de¹ʔ¹* ‘duck’, *tho¹ lwi¹* ‘dove’, *tho²* ‘raft’, *tho¹ʔ²* ‘flag’, *ca¹ʔ³kho¹ʔ³* ‘(a sheet of) paper’, *co¹ʔ³ka¹ʔ¹pe²* ‘butterfly’, *co¹ʔ³bi¹ʔ¹* ‘grasshopper’, *ko¹ʔ³* ‘glass (for drinking water)’, *ko¹ʔ¹* ‘sweetmeats cake which come in crêpe-shape’, *ka¹ʔ³ʔ² ta¹ʔ¹su²* ‘wild spider (*Malopaeus albstriatus*)’, *ka¹pho¹ʔ¹xa¹ʔ³* ‘gadfly’, *ka¹m²ʔ²* ‘spleen’, *ka²la²wa¹ʔ¹* ‘a fan’, *ki²* ‘mushroom’, *kre²* ‘(a pane of) door’, *kli¹ʔ³b²shwe¹* ‘scorpion’, *khə¹phə¹ thu¹ʔ³ lo²* ‘towel’, *khə¹phə¹ ʔ²ʔ¹lu¹ʔ¹thi²* ‘bathing cloth’, *khi¹* ‘tick’, *kha¹ʔ³* ‘chair’, *kha¹ʔ¹do¹ʔ¹* ‘footed tray’, *khə²pə¹ʔ¹* ‘(a sheet of) paper’, *khli²* ‘boat’, *khli¹ʔ³* ‘turtle’, *khlo¹* ‘mat’, *khwi¹* ‘tree lizard’, *b²* ‘spade’, *bla²* ‘bat’, *deshi¹khə²* ‘brick’, *də²mi¹mε¹ʔ¹* ‘umbrella’, *ja¹ʔ¹* ‘blanket’, *xε¹ʔ¹* ‘knife’, *yu¹ʔ¹xi²* ‘a rib’, *mε²* ‘a tooth’, *mε¹ʔ¹ ka¹ʔ¹la²* ‘looking-glass’, *mi¹ni²* ‘calendar’, *mo²* ‘gong’, *no¹tə²* ‘spoon’, *no¹khwe²* ‘broom’, *lə²khə²* ‘bowl’, *lə²khə² pha¹ʔ³le¹* ‘basin, tray’, *lə²mo¹ pya¹* ‘Blattaria, cockroach’, *si¹swa²* ‘comb’, *si¹ʔ³mo¹lə²bya¹ʔ³* ‘aphides’, *se¹lwa¹ʔ¹* ‘(wooden) board, plank’, *sə²bi¹ʔ¹* ‘plate, dish’, *sə¹bli¹ʔ¹ la¹* ‘Paper betel leaf’, *su¹* ‘head louse’, *she²ka²* ‘shirt’, *shə²* ‘(a whole) chicken’, *swe²* ‘dip-net for fishing’, *shwe¹* ‘crab’.

18. bo²

as a noun means ‘a long thin object’, used as a classifier for fish, reptiles, and long objects. Used with: *pi¹ʔ³lo¹wə²* ‘skink’, *pə¹tho¹ʔ³sa¹* ‘a pod of bean’, *phε²* ‘necklace’, *phɛ²do¹ʔ¹* ‘boa constrictor, python’, *pli²* ‘rope’, *phle¹* ‘tree lizard, chameleon’, *ti²tu²* ‘eel’, *tə¹khu¹ʔ³* ‘iguana’, *tə¹ʔ¹ kwe²* ‘rainbow’, *thi²klo¹ʔ³* ‘river’, *thε¹bo²* ‘plough’, *tha¹ʔ³pə¹li¹ʔ¹* ‘drill, gimlet’, *tha¹ʔ³pho²* ‘wire’, *tha¹ʔ³ka¹le¹ʔ¹* ‘earthworm’, *ka¹ʔ¹ne²xə¹ʔ³* ‘candle’, *ka¹lə²* ‘dragon’, *kre¹ʔ³* ‘crocodile’, *kle¹ʔ³* ‘trail’, *kle¹ʔ³mi¹* ‘road’, *khε¹ʔ³ta¹bo²se¹* ‘pencil’, *kho¹su²* ‘head hair’, *khwi¹* ‘tree lizard’, *khwi¹ʔ¹ze²* ‘ground lizard (*Liolepis belliana*)’, *ba¹mi¹* ‘Chinese noodle’, *də²le¹* ‘house lizard’, *mε²pε¹* ‘paddle’, *mε²su²* ‘pole (punt) a boat’, *no¹ti¹* ‘javelin’ *no¹ thu¹ʔ³ mε² ʔa¹ʔ¹ bo²* ‘toothbrush’, *na¹pho²* ‘fish’, *na¹mi¹* ‘whale’, *na¹so²* ‘candle’, *yi¹* ‘snake’, *si¹ʔ³wə¹de¹* ‘millipede’, *sə¹li²* ‘water leech’, *su¹ʔ³* ‘land leech’, *zə¹ki¹ʔ¹ru¹ʔ¹* ‘belt’, *wa¹* ‘(a pole of) bamboo’.

19. de²

as a noun means ‘claw (of a crab), a bunch of flowers’, used as a classifier with: *xə²sa¹ shy¹ʔ³* ‘blossom (spadix) of the coconut tree’, and *shwe¹ de²* ‘crab’s claw’.

20. də²

as a noun means ‘box, case, wrapper’. Used as a classifier with: *bo¹tho¹ʔ³* ‘firecrackers’, *mo¹ʔ¹thu²* ‘(a case of) cigarettes’, *wi²tha²yu¹ʔ³* ‘radio’.

21. *mi*² as a noun means 'name'. Used as a classifier meaning 'kind, sort, category, specimen'. Used with: *ta*²*sa*¹ 'fruits', *bo*¹*so*² *lo*¹*tho*¹ '(several transfiguration of) tiger'.
22. *mi*¹ as a noun means 'liana, vine, climbers'. Used as a classifier with: *se*¹*xi*¹ 'vine', *lu*¹*khe*² 'pumpkin vine', *lu*¹*sa*¹ 'white (wax) gourd'.
23. *si*¹ as a noun means 'comb'. Used as a classifier meaning 'a hand of'. Used with: *sa*²*kwi*³ 'bananas'.
24. *sa*¹*be*³ as a noun means 'arrangement'. Used as a classifier meaning 'a unit of things which one has arranged'. Used with: *sa*¹*kwi*³ *la*¹ 'banana leaves', *no*²*mə*¹ *ʔi*¹ 'fermented tea-leaves (around 30 leaves)', *sa*¹*bli*¹ *la*¹ 'Piper betel leaves (around 8-9 leaves)'.
25. *shu*³ as a noun means 'room'. Used as a classifier with: *da*³ *shu*³ 'a room in a house'.
26. *swa*² as a noun means 'a ladder-step'. Used as a classifier with: *xo*² 'ladder'.

Group classifiers

1. *pu*¹ as a noun means 'heap, pile'. Used as a classifier with: *pa*² '(a group of) men', *ta*²*na*¹ 'meat', *bi*² 'paddy', *sa*¹*mi*¹ 'firewood', *si*³ 'alcoholic drink', *me*² 'sand'.
2. *kə*¹*phi*² as a noun means 'group'. Used as a classifier with: *pa*² '(a group of) men'.
3. *kla*³ as a noun means 'group'. Used as a classifier with: *pa*² '(a group of) men', *ta*¹*m**la*¹ *pho*² 'bandits'.
4. *ʔu*³ as a noun means 'group'. Used as a classifier with: *pa*² '(a group of) men', *pa*¹*na*¹ *mi*² '(a herd of) wild buffalos', *ta*¹ 'things', *tho*¹ '(a flock of) birds', *ja*²*sa*² '(a group of) policemen', *sha*¹ '(a constellation of) stars', *shwi*¹ *si*³ *no*¹ '(a crowd of) foxes', *mo*¹ *li*³ '(a throng of) monkeys', *la*²*kh*² '(a set of) dishes'.
5. *du*¹ as a noun means 'a brood of, a litter of'. Used as a classifier with: *tho*³ '(a litter of little) pigs', *sho*² '(a brood of) chickens'.

Action classifiers

1. *blo*² as a noun means 'one time'. Used as a classifier with several action verbs such as *phle*² 'beat', *di*³ 'fight', *le*² 'go'.

2. co^1 as a noun means 'a little while'. Used as a classifier with verbs such as *khɔʔ³* 'wait', *toʔ³cə²* 'help'.
3. co^2 as a noun means 'a generation'. Used as a classifier with verbs such as *ʔoʔ¹* 'live'.
4. na^1ri^1 as a noun means 'one hour'. Used as a classifier after numerals.
5. ni^1 as a noun means 'year'. Used as a classifier after numerals.
6. ni^2 as a noun means 'day'. Used as a classifier after numerals.
7. $nwiʔ³$ as a noun means 'week'. Used as a classifier after numerals.
8. so^1 as a noun means 'night'. Used as a classifier after numerals.

Measurement classifiers

For standardized measures of weights and space, both lineal and square, the Sgaw Karen people have their own, at least among older people. These may become obsolescent, as English and Metric measures are on the way to replace them.

1. $baʔ¹$ (T.) as a noun means 'Baht' both for monetary and weight. Used as a classifier after numerals.
2. $bləʔ¹$ ($ləʔ³$ $ciʔ³$) as a noun means 'one scoop up with one hand'. Used as a classifier after numerals.
3. $hɔ¹$ ($ləʔ³$ $ciʔ³$) as a noun means 'one scoop up with both hands'. Used as a classifier after numerals.
4. $cɣɔ²$ ($ləʔ³$ $ciʔ³$) as a noun means 'one scoop up with one clenched fist'. Used as a classifier after numerals.
5. $tha²$ as a noun means 'a span, a Karen unit of linear measure equal to the fully extended hand (between the thumb and the middle finger)'. Used as a classifier after numerals.
6. $si^1tɛ^1$ as a noun means 'a span, a Karen unit of linear measure equal to the fully extended hand (between the thumb and the index finger)'. Used as a classifier after numerals.
7. tha^1 as a noun means 'a pail'. Used as a classifier after numerals.
8. $thə²$ as a noun means 'a dozen'. Used as a classifier after numerals.

9. $c\epsilon^3$ as a noun means ‘a little bit of’. Used as a classifier after numerals.
10. $k\epsilon^1 ph\epsilon^1$ as a noun means ‘a measure equal in length to a joint of the middle finger’. Used as a classifier after numerals.
11. $k\epsilon^1$ as a noun means ‘a handful of’. Used as a classifier after numerals.
12. $k\epsilon^1 pha^3 do^1$ as a noun means ‘a handful of (using both hands)’. Used as a classifier after numerals.
13. $khri^2$ as a noun means ‘a Karen measurement for height equal to one fist (with the flat thumb)’. Used as a classifier after numerals, usually used to measure the height of pigs, piles of wood etc.
14. phi^1 as a noun means ‘a Karen measurement for height equal to one fist (with a little bit elevating of the thumb)’. Used as a classifier after numerals, usually used to measure the height of pigs, piles of wood etc.
15. $c\epsilon^3$ as a noun means ‘a Karen measurement for height equal to one fist (with a fully elevated thumb)’. Used as a classifier after numerals, usually used to measure the height of pigs, piles of wood etc.
16. $kh\epsilon^2 ci^3$ as a noun means ‘a Karen measurement for length equal to one hand’, Used as a classifier after numerals.
17. $khli^2$ as a noun means ‘a Karen linear measure equal to two extended arms’, Used as a classifier after numerals.
18. pla^2 as a noun means ‘a Karen linear measure equal to the span between the elbow to the tip of the extended middle finger’, Used as a classifier after numerals.
19. $t\epsilon^2$ as a noun means ‘a Karen linear measure equal to the span between the elbow to the clenched fist’, Used as a classifier after numerals.
20. shi^2 as a noun means ‘a unit of ten’, Used as a classifier after numerals.
21. $k\epsilon^1 phi^2$ as a noun means ‘a group of about ten people’, Used as a classifier after numerals. Usually used with $ya^2 sa^2$ ‘policemen’, $si^3 pho^2$ ‘soldiers’.

22. kəʔja² as a noun means ‘a group of about one hundred people’, Used as a classifier after numerals. Usually used with ya²sa² ‘policemen’, si^ʔpho² ‘soldiers’.
23. kəʔtho² as a noun means ‘a group of about one thousand people’, Used as a classifier after numerals. Usually used with ya²sa² ‘policemen’, si^ʔpho² ‘soldiers’.

1.3 Verb-derived classifiers

Verb-derived classifiers are classifiers which are also verbs. They are less numerous than noun-derived classifiers. All in all the following items are found:

1. shyə² as a verb means ‘to carry (hold) in both arms’. Used as a classifier after numerals. Used with: bo^ʔ ‘bamboo-shoots’, sə¹mi¹ ‘firewood’.
2. bo^ʔ as a verb means ‘to wrap’. Used as a classifier after numerals. Used with: ko^ʔ ‘(a wrapped-up package of) sweetmeats’, mo^ʔthu² ‘(a carton) of cigarettes’, sha²kho^ʔ ‘(a wrapped-up package of) paper’.
3. klo¹ as a verb means ‘to coil, to roll, to curl up’. Used as a classifier after numerals. Used with: pli² ‘rope’.
4. ki^ʔ as a verb means ‘to cut into sections’. Used as a classifier after numerals. Used with: ta²ja² ‘meat’, ko^ʔ ‘sweetmeats, cake’.
5. khli^ʔ as a verb means ‘to fold’. Used as a classifier after numerals. Used with: ta¹ki^ʔja^ʔ ‘cloth’, ja^ʔ ‘blanket’.

2. Classifier constructions

Sgaw Karen constructions are of the “Southeast Asian”² type, that is to say, they follow the order noun + numeral + classifier. This noun-phrase pattern can be extended by the addition of demonstratives and adjectivals, so that the full noun-phrase order is : (N.)Noun + (Adj)Adjectival + (Num)Numeral + (CL)Classifier + (Dem)Demonstrative.

²Jones (1970) divides the languages of Southeast Asia and South China into two large groups distinguished by the structure of noun phrases involving classifiers. The difference is based on the position in the phrase of the head noun. One group employs the pattern numeral + noun (e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese); Jones terms this the “Chinese” type. The other group employs the pattern noun + numeral + classifier (e.g., Thai, Burmese); this he calls the “Southeast Asian” type.

Examples:

N	Adj	Num	CL	Dem
na ¹ ri ¹	ye ²	khi ²	sho ²	ne ¹
watch	good	two	CL	that
“those two good watches”				

she ² ka ²	yo ²	sə ³	be ¹	ʔi ²
shirt	red	three	CL	this
“these three red shirts”				

However if we divide this big noun-phrase into two smaller ones, i.e. 1). numeral noun phrase, and 2). demonstrative noun phrase we will have these constructions:

numeral noun phrase

N	Adj	Num	CL
sha ¹	pha ³ do ³	tə ¹	phlə ¹
star	big	one	CL
“one big star”			

do ²	cu ¹	khi ²	be ¹
knife	pointed	wo	CL
“two pointed knives”			

In this type of noun phrase the CL is obligatory. To delete the CL from the numeral noun-phrase is impossible; i.e. will obtain an ungrammatical phrase in Sgaw Karen.

demonstrative noun phrase

N	(CL)	Dem	Adj
tɛ ¹	(phlə ¹)	ʔi ²	phyi ²
sack	(CL)	this	light
“this light (≠ heavy) sack.”			

ko ¹	(be ¹)	ʔi ²	bɛ ² ye ²
cake	(CL)	this	tasty
“this tasty cake.”			

We can see that with the demonstrative noun phrase, the CL is not obligatory. We have numerous examples of demonstrative noun phrase without CL.

3. Discussion

1. Classifiers are well established in Sgaw Karen. In this study, we find that the use of CL is consistent for every speaker. However, cases where one noun

can take either of two CIs have been also found. For example, that 'loom' can have as CL either *sho*² 'CL for moving machine' or *phu*² 'CL signifying the shape of a comb or a bunch of bananas, which the loom (with its many strings) resembles. Another example *kwε*²*le*¹*lo*² 'telephone' can have as CL either *sho*² 'CL for moving machine' or *də*² 'CL signifying the shape of a box'. *sa*¹*mə*²*kle*³ 'tamarind fruit' can have as CL either *phlə*¹ 'CL for round object and as such is CL for most fruits' or 'CL for long objects'. Anyone who sees tamarind pods will know that it is difficult to designate its shape as either round or long.

2. Classifiers in Sgaw Karen signify first and foremost the shape of the objects they classify.

3. Classifiers in Sgaw Karen categorize the objects according to their taxonomy in nature i.e., according to whether the thing referred to is a machine, a four-footed animal, a fowl, a reptile, an insect, etc. And this Karen categorization corresponds well with scientific categorization. Exceptions are, however, found. For example *khli*³ 'turtle', which is four-footed, does not have as CL *di*² 'CL for four-footed animal', but instead has *be*¹ 'classifier used for many small animals and fowls and insects'. And ironically enough both *sə*²*kha*² 'Buddhist monk' and *cə*²*sə*² 'Buddhist novice', which in Thai and Burmese require highly elevated CL, have as CL *di*² 'CL for four-footed animals and ogreish beings'.

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