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,

$$c\vartheta^1 \quad thi^1 \quad p\vartheta?^1 \quad t\vartheta?^1 \quad phl\vartheta?$$
$$I \quad\ see \quad tent \quad one \quad CL$$
'I see one tent.'

$$c\vartheta^1 \quad lu?^1 \quad ne^1 \quad she^2ka^2 \quad s\vartheta?^3 \quad be?^1$$
$$I \quad choose \quad obtain \quad shirt \quad three \quad CL$$
'I chose three shirts.'

Uncountable nouns include such lexical items as thi^2 'water', so^2 'oil', and me^2 'cooked rice'. When used with numbers these nouns must take the measures classifiers.

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[1]Mary 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. $pɔ^2$ — 'section of bamboo', with: wa^1 'bamboo', $me^2te^2blɔ^2$ 'preparation of glutinous rice cooked in a bamboo joint', $me^1ʔu^2$ 'fireworks'.

2. $puʔ^3$ — 'volume of books, with: $liʔ^1$ 'book', $liʔ^1cɔ^1ɲa^1$ 'newspaper', $khɔ^2peʔ^1$ 'exercise book'.

3. phu^2 — 'item, bunch of bananas', with: $lɔ^1da^2$ 'mattress', $sə^2kwiʔ^3$ 'banana', tha^1 'loom'.

4. $phuʔ^3$ — 'bunch of flowers, cluster of flowers', with: $phɔ^2ta^1shɣi^1$ 'roses'.

5. $tɔ^2$ — 'place', with: ma^2ta^1 'work', $phiʔ^3$ 'place'.

6. thu^2 — 'roll, curl, furl', with: $mɔʔ^1thu^2$ 'cigarette', $sə^1kwiʔ^3 la^1$ 'banana leaf', $ta^1kiʔ^3ɲaʔ^1$ 'cloth'.

7. cu^1 — 'set with: she^2ka^2 'shirt', $phlɔʔ^1khi^2$ 'trousers'.

8. $koʔ^1$ — 'heap, pile, stack' with: $lɔ^1bo^2$ 'straw', $sə^1mɨ^1$ 'firewood'.

9. kha^2 — 'item, thing, affair, matter' with: $nɔ^1blə ʔ^1$ 'ladle', $ta^1pɔʔ^3$ 'strainer', ta^1 'matter', ta^1ma^2 'work', $ta^1ɣe^1$ 'affair', $liʔ^1$ 'book, knowledge, subject', $nɔ^2mə^1$ 'tea (boiled)', $ɲa^1pho^2ʔiʔ^1$ 'pickled fish', $ta^1ʔɔʔ^1$ 'food', thi^2 'water', $lɔ^1da^2$ 'mattress', $pə^1thɔʔ^3 khli^2$ 'grains of bean (for planting)', $pɣa^1pu^2$ 'forest', $ta^1ka^1li^1$ 'voice', $khaʔ^3$ 'table', $ta^1ʔu^2$ 'prayer', ta^1sha^2 'disease'.

10. $klɔʔ^1$ — 'piece, fragment, pipe, tube' with: $khri^2$ 'wild yam (a head of)', se^1 'wood (a long section of cut timber)', $sə^1mɨ^1$ 'firewood', $siʔ^3naʔ^3$ 'pistol, firearm'.

11. $khuʔ^3$ — '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 : $p\vartheta\mathcal{P}^l na^l$ 'buffalo', $p\vartheta^2 d\vartheta\mathcal{P}^3$ 'porcupine', $phli\mathcal{P}^l$ 'flying lemur', $phli^2$ 'tapir', $ta^l ho^2$ 'barking deer', $ta^2 pha\mathcal{P}^3$ 'wild goat, antelope (Capricanus sumatrensis)', $ta^l pho^2 p\vartheta^2$ 'civet', $th\vartheta\mathcal{P}^3$ 'pig', $th\vartheta\mathcal{P}^3 sh\vartheta^2$ 'wild cat', $c\vartheta\mathcal{P}^3\mathcal{P}e^2$ 'short-tusked bull elephant', $k\vartheta^l se^l$ 'horse', $k\vartheta\mathcal{P}^l sh\vartheta^2$ 'elephant', $kh\vartheta^2$ 'bamboo rat', $kl\vartheta\mathcal{P}^l$ 'ox', nwa^2 'ass', $s\vartheta^l xi\mathcal{P}^l kh\vartheta^l$ 'rhinoceros', $shwi^l$ 'dog', $zi^l khe^2 pl\vartheta^2$ 'mongoose', $zo^2 h\vartheta^l$ 'pangolin', $c\vartheta^2 s\vartheta^2$ 'novice', $ta^l \gamma\vartheta^2$ 'statue', $ta^2 mi^l xa^l$ 'ghost', $d\vartheta\mathcal{P}^3 s\vartheta^l ka\mathcal{P}^3$ 'giant, ogre', $s\vartheta^2 kha^2$ 'Buddhist monk'.

13. $m\vartheta^2$ 'mouthful' with: me^2 'cooked rice', $s\vartheta^l be\mathcal{P}^l$ 'a concoction to be chewed having betelnuts as the main ingredients'.

14. $sh\vartheta^2$ 'item' with: $ta^l d\vartheta\mathcal{P}^3 c\varepsilon\mathcal{P}^3$ 'examination questions', $k\vartheta^l na^2$ 'arithmetic problems'.

15. sho^2 'pair, item (especially with engine, machine, motor, things having movement, music instruments)' with: $c\gamma\vartheta^l$ 'cymbals', $kh\vartheta^l phi\mathcal{P}^3$ 'shoes', $na^l di\mathcal{P}^3$ 'earrings', tha^l 'loom', $c\varepsilon\mathcal{P}^3 sha\mathcal{P}^3 ta^l$ 'sewing machine', $k\vartheta^l ha^l$ 'water wheel', $k\vartheta^l ha^l ri\mathcal{P}^3$ 'bicycle', $kw\varepsilon\mathcal{P}^3 le^l lo^2$ 'telephone', $m\vartheta^l t\vartheta^l ka\mathcal{P}^3 le^l so^2$ 'bus', $na^l ri^l$ 'clock, wrist-watch', le^l 'ox-cart', $le^l di\mathcal{P}^3 ta^l$ 'tank', $le^l me^l \mathcal{P}u^2$ 'train', $le^l z\vartheta^l$ 'bicycle', $shi\mathcal{P}^l$ 'cradle, hammock', $sw\varepsilon^l cu^l$ 'balance, a pair of scales', $te^2 na^l$ 'lute', $th\vartheta^l l\vartheta\mathcal{P}^l$ 'fiddle', $s\vartheta^l xe^2$ 'harmonica'.

16. γe^l 'line' with: $pa^2 co\mathcal{P}^3 pho^2$ 'pupils, students', $si\mathcal{P}^3 pho^2$ 'soldiers'.

17. γa^2 'classifier for humans' with: pa^2 'man, human', $pa^2 sho^2 ke\mathcal{P}^3$ 'sick man, patient', $pho^2 sa\mathcal{P}^l ho^2$ 'child', $ph\vartheta\mathcal{P}^l mi^l$ 'woman', $ph\vartheta\mathcal{P}^l khwa^2$ 'man', $t\vartheta^l mla\mathcal{P}^l$ 'thief', $ya^2 sa^2$ 'policeman'.

18. zi^l 'thing, affair, business' with: $p\vartheta^2 l\vartheta\mathcal{P}^3 pl\vartheta^2$ 'story', $ta^l \gamma\vartheta^2 mu^2$ 'movies'.

19. $zu\mathcal{P}^l$ 'classifier for a sleep, a nap' with: mi^2 'a sleeping time'.

20. lo^l 'lump, block, chunk' with: bi^2 'a sheaf of rice', $ta^l \mathcal{P}\vartheta\mathcal{P}^l$ 'cloud', $ta^2 pa^l$ 'flesh, meat', $di^2 ci\mathcal{P}^l$ 'brick', $di\mathcal{P}^l$ 'fried eggs' (NB. boiled eggs have $phl\vartheta\mathcal{P}^l$ classifier; see supra), $k\vartheta^l thi^2 xe\mathcal{P}^l$ 'loaf of palm sugar', $sa^2 pja\mathcal{P}^l$ 'soap', $l\vartheta^l shi^l wa^2$ '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. pa²   as a noun means 'side', used as a classifier for one side of things which usually come in pairs. Used with: *pəʔ^lso¹* 'lung', *thɔ^β* 'pig(one half of)', *khɔ^l* 'foot', *khɔ^lphiβ* 'shoe', *khɔ^lphlɔ^l* 'sock', *ciβ* 'hand', *khɛβta^lbo²* 'pencil (one tip of)', *shɔ* 'chicken (one half of)', *ɣɔ²pa²* 'wall'.

2. pu²   as a noun means 'hole',used as a classifier with: *bï²* 'rice (a bucket of)', *pe^lpɔ²* 'mosquito net'.

3. phlɔʔ¹   as a noun means 'round object', used as a classifier with: *pe^lkhle²* 'bell', *pə^lsi³* 'ring', *pəʔ^lsə²wa²* 'garlic (a clump of)', *pɔʔ^l* 'tent', *pɔʔ^l sɔ²kha²* 'monk's travelling tent', *pɔ²lə^βplə²* 'story, tale', *phɛ²* 'bead', *ta^ldə²* 'bag, satchel', *ta²shi^l* 'orange', *tə^β* 'bank (establishment for financial transaction)', *thi²lu²* 'gourd', *thə^l* 'sack', *tha²* 'song', *thu^β* 'wart', *co^β* 'school', *koʔ^l* 'cake', *ko^β* 'bottle', *kə^lcə^l* 'mountain', *kəʔ^lthi²* 'big water jar', *khi^l* 'taro root', *khə^ldə^βkhə²^l* 'pillow', *kwɛ^lsaʔ^lmo^β* 'guava fruit', *blə²^l* 'termite hill', *diʔ^l* '(boiled) egg', *də^β* 'house', *me^lpo^lphaβ* 'bomb, hand grenade', *mɛβ* 'sand', *no^l* 'pond', *nu^l* 'breast', *siβnaʔ^lsha^l* 'bullet', *siβta^l* 'box', *se^lsu²* 'mole', *səʔ^lpə²* 'pot', *sa^lmɔ²kleβ* '(a pod of) tamarind fruit', *sə²kwiβ* 'banana (one fruit)', *shɛʔ^l* 'a large woven basket for paddy', *swi^l* '(a drop of) blood', *zi^l* 'village', *liʔ^l pa²kəʔ^lɲɔ² mo^l pɣa^l* 'Karen alphabets', *liʔ^l pa²kəʔ^lɲɔ² shɛβphaβ* 'Karen tonal markers', *lɔ^lme^l* 'electric-light bulb', *lu^lkhe²sa^l* 'pumpkin', *lə^l* 'pebble', *ro²* 'garden', *we²* 'abscess, boil', *xɔʔ^l* 'prison', *ha^l* 'shooting stand on the tree', *hɔ^lkhɔ^lmɔ²* 'saline-alkaline land'.

4. tɛ¹   as a noun means 'sack', used as a classifier for things coming in a sack such as *bï²* 'unhusked rice', *ʔïβsa^l* 'salt'.

5. thi¹   as a noun means 'word', used as a classifier with: *ta^lkwɔ^l* 'language, word'.

6. thu¹   as a noun means 'tree', used as a classifier with all kind of trees such as *thɔ²* 'Toddy palm', *kəʔ^lcɛ²lə^l* 'longan', *sa^lmɔ²kleβ*

'tamarind', $sə^l$ $khɔʔ^3$ 'mango', $sə^2kwiʔ^3$ 'banana (plant)', $lɔ^2miʔ^lshɔʔ^l$ 'parasitic plant' $xɔʔ^3$ 'rubber' etc.

7. $caʔ^1$ as a noun means 'kind, sort, category', used as a classifier with: $pəʔ^lta^lthi^2$ 'ink', $phɔ^2$ 'flower', $phɔ^2ta^lshri^l$ 'rose', $phɔʔ^l$ 'sedge, medicinal bulbs', $ta^lthɔ^lbyɛʔ^l$ 'mould, mildew', $ta^lkiʔ^3ɲaʔ^l$ 'cloth', $ta^lʔɔʔ^l$ 'food', ta^2sa^l 'fruit', $koʔ^l$ 'sweetmeats, cake', $bɛ^2$ 'taste', $ɲa^l$ 'fish', $sa^2phjaʔ^l$ 'soap', se^l 'wood'.

8. $kiʔ^3$ as a noun means 'piece, one quarter of', used as a classifier with: $pəʔ^lsə^2wa^2$ '(about half a clove of garlic', $ta^2ɲa^l$ 'meat', $ɲa^lpho^2$ 'fish', $koʔ^l$ 'sweetmeats, cake'.

9. $kə^2dɔʔ^1$ as a noun means 'bunch, cluster', used as a classifier with: $pəʔ^l$ sa^2wa^2 'a bunch of several cloves of) garlic, $kwɔ^lxɔʔ^3$ 'torch', li^l 'cotton thread', $lɔ^2bo^2$ 'straw', $səʔ^lmi^l$ 'firewood'.

10. $kəʔ^1thə^2$ as a noun means 'storey', used as a classifier with: $də^3$ 'house'.

11. $kə^1kru^1$ as a noun means 'small bunch of plant', used a classifier with: $kə^lhɔ^2$ 'a kind of tropical fruit', $sɛʔ^3sa^l$ '(a bunch of) betelnuts'.

12. $koʔ^3$ as a noun means 'bottle', used as a classifier with: thi^2 'water', so^2 'oil'.

13. kho^1 as a noun means 'head', used as a classifier with: $sə^2kwiʔ^3$ '(a grove of), banana', no^2bo^2 '(a tussock of) Cyperaceal', wa^l '(a clump of) bamboo'.

14. khi^1 as a noun means 'spool, reel', used as a classifier with: pli^2 'rope', li^l 'cotton thread'.

15. $khle^1$ 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: $thɔ^2sa^l$ 'Toddy palm', $kə^lhɔ^l$ 'a kind of tropical fruit', bi^2 (ears of) paddy', $sɛʔ^3sa^l$ 'betelnuts', $xɔ^2sa^l$ 'coconut'.

16. $khlə^2$ as a noun means 'the outside of', used as a classifier with: $hɔ^lkho^l$ 'land'.

17. $beʔ^1$ as a noun means 'skin, bark, rind', used as a classifier with: $pɛ^2trɔ^2$ '(a pane of) door', $pə^lʔuʔ^3$ 'termite', phe^2xi^2 'a sieve', $phlə^2$ 'wasp', $təʔ^l$ $khwɛ^2$ 'fishhook', $ta^ldə^2$ 'basket', $ta^lkiʔ^3ɲaʔ^l$ '(a sheet of) cloth', $ta^lbeʔ^l$ '(a sheet of) skin', $ta^lkho^lphlɔ^l$ 'a woven food cover', $ta^lyɔ^2$ 'picture', $thaʔ^3$ 'needle', $thaʔ^3$ pla^2 'chisel', $thaʔ^3$ $tə^l$ 'tweezers', tho^l 'bird', tho^l $phya^l$ 'peacock',

tho^1 *ta*^{2} 'goose', *tho*^{1} *ta*^{2}*ʔi*$^{?1}$ 'vulture', *tho*^{1} *de*$^{?1}$ 'duck', *tho*^{1} *lwi*^{1} 'dove', *tho*^{2} 'raft', *thoɲ*^{2} 'flag', *caʔ*$^\beta$*khoʔ*$^\beta$ '(a sheet of) paper', *coʔ*$^\beta$*kəʔ*^{1}*pe*^{2} 'butterfly', *coʔ*$^\beta$*biʔ*^{1} 'grasshopper', *koʔ*$^\beta$ 'glass (for drinking water)', *koʔ*^{1} 'sweetmeats cake which come in crêpe-shape', *kəʔpɔ*^{2} *taʔ*^{1}*su*^{2} 'wild spider (Malopaeus albstriatus)', *kəʔ*^{1}*phɔʔ*^{1}*xaʔ*$^\beta$ 'gadfly', *kəʔ*^{1}*mɔ*^{2} 'spleen', *ka*^{2}*la*^{2}*waʔ*^{1} 'a fan', *kiʔ*^{2} 'mushroom', *krε*^{2} '(a pane of) door', *kliʔ*$^\beta$*bɔ*^{2}*shwε*^{1} 'scorpion', *khəʔ*^{1}*phəʔ*^{1} *thuʔ*$^\beta$ *lo*^{2} 'towel', *khəʔ*^{1}*phəʔ*^{1} *ʔɔʔ*^{1}*luʔ*^{1}*thi*^{2} 'bathing cloth', *khi*^{1} 'tick', *khaʔ*$^\beta$ 'chair', *khaʔ*^{1}*dɔʔ*^{1} 'footed tray', *khɔ*^{2}*pəʔ*^{1} '(a sheet of) paper', *khli*^{2} 'boat', *khliʔ*$^\beta$ 'turtle', *khlɔ*^{1} 'mat', *khwi*^{1} 'tree lizard', *bɔ*^{2} 'spade', *bla*^{2} 'bat', *deshi*^{1}*khɔ*^{2} 'brick', *dəʔ*^{1}*mi*^{1}*mεʔl* 'umbrella', *jaʔ*^{1} 'blanket', *xεʔ*^{1} 'knife', *yuʔ*^{1}*xi*^{1} 'a rib', *mε*^{2} 'a tooth', *mεʔ*^{1} *kəʔ*^{1}*la*^{2} 'looking-glass', *mi*^{1}*ni*^{2} 'calendar', *mo*^{2} 'gong', *no*^{1}*tə*^{2} 'spoon', *nɔ*^{1}*khwε*^{2} 'broom', *lə*^{1}*khɔ*^{2} 'bowl', *lə*^{2}*khɔ*^{2} *phaʔ*$^\beta$*le*^{1} 'basin, tray', *lɔ*^{2}*mo*^{1} *pɤa*^{1} 'Blattaria, cockroach', *si*^{1}*swa*^{2} 'comb', *siʔ*$^\beta$*mo*^{1}*lə*^{2}*bɤaʔ*$^\beta$ 'aphides', *se*^{1}*lwaʔ*^{1} '(wooden) board, plank', *sə*^{2}*biʔ*^{1} 'plate, dish', *səʔ*^{1}*bliʔ*^{1} *la*^{1} 'Paper betel leaf', *su*^{1} 'head louse', *she*^{2}*ka*^{2} 'shirt', *shɔ*^{2} '(a whole) chicken', *swe*^{2} 'dip-net for fishing', *shwε*^{1} 'crab'.

18. bo²   as a noun means 'a long thin object', used as a classifier for fish, reptiles, and long objects. Used with: *piʔ*$^\beta$*lo*^{1}*wɔ*^{2} 'skink', *pəʔ*^{1}*thɔʔ*$^\beta$*sa*^{1} 'a pod of bean', *phε*^{2} 'necklace', *phiʔ*^{2}*doʔ*^{1} 'boa constrictor, python', *pli*^{2} 'rope', *phlε*^{1} 'tree lizard, chameleon', *ti*^{2}*tu*^{2} 'eel', *təʔ*^{1}*khuʔ*$^\beta$ 'iguana', *təʔ*^{1} *kwε*^{2} 'rainbow', *thi*^{2}*kloʔ*$^\beta$ 'river', *thε*^{1}*bo*^{2} 'plough', *thaʔ*$^\beta$*pəʔ*^{1}*liʔ*^{1} 'drill, gimlet', *thaʔ*$^\beta$*pho*^{2} 'wire', *thaʔ*$^\beta$*kəʔ*^{1}*lεʔ*^{1} 'earthworm', *kəʔ*^{1}*nε*^{2}*xoʔ*$^\beta$ 'candle', *kəʔ*^{1}*lɔ*^{2} 'dragon', *kreʔ*$^\beta$ 'crocodile', *klεʔ*$^\beta$ 'trail', *klεʔ*$^\beta$*mi*^{1} 'road', *khεʔ*$^\beta$*ta*^{1} *bo*^{2}*se*^{1} 'pencil', *kho*^{1}*su*^{2} 'head hair', *khwi*^{1} 'tree lizard', *khwiʔ*^{1}*zε*^{2} 'ground lizard (Liolepis belliana)', *ba*^{1}*mi*^{1} 'Chinese noodle', *dɔ*^{2}*le*^{1} 'house lizard', *mε*^{2}*pe*^{1} 'paddle', *mε*^{2}*su*^{2} 'pole (punt) a boat', *nɔ*^{1}*ti*^{1} 'javelin', *nɔ*^{1} *thuʔ*$^\beta$ *mε*^{2} *ʔaʔ*^{1} *bo*^{2} 'toothbrush', *ɲa*^{1}*pho*^{2} 'fish', *ɲa*^{1}*mi*^{1} 'whale', *ɲa*^{1}*so*^{2} 'candle', *ɤi*^{1} 'snake', *siʔ*$^\beta$*wɔ*^{1}*de*^{1} 'millipede', *səʔ*^{1}*li*^{2} 'water leech', *suʔ*$^\beta$ 'land leech', *zɔ*^{1}*kiʔ*^{1}*ruʔ*^{1} 'belt', *wa*^{1} '(a pole of) bamboo'.

19. de²   as a noun means 'claw (of a crab), a bunch of flowers', used as a classifier with: *xɔ*^{2}*sa*^{1} *shɤɔʔ*$^\beta$ 'blossom (spadix) of the coconut tree', and *shwε*^{1} *de*^{2} 'crab's claw'.

20. də²   as a noun means 'box, case, wrapper'. Used as a classifier with: *bɔ*^{1}*thoʔ*$^\beta$ 'firecrackers', *mɔʔ*^{1}*thu*^{2} '(a case of) cigarettes', *wit*^{2}*tha*^{2} *yuʔ*$^\beta$ 'radio'.

21. mi^2 as a noun means 'name'. Used as a classifier meaning 'kind, sort, category, specimen'. Used with: ta^2sa^1 'fruits', $bɔ^1soʔ^2\ lo^1thɔ^1$ '(several transfiguration of) tiger'.

22. mi^1 as a noun means 'liana, vine, climbers'. Used as a classifier with: se^1xi^1 'vine', lu^1khe^2 'pumpkin vine', lu^1sa^1 'white (wax) gourd'.

23. si^1 as a noun means 'comb'. Used as a classifier meaning 'a hand of'. Used with: $sə^2kwiʔ^3$ 'bananas'.

24. $sə^1bɛʔ^3$ as a noun means 'arrangement'. Used as a classifier meaning 'a unit of things which one has arranged'. Used with: $sə^1kwiʔ^3\ la^1$ 'banana leaves', $nɔ^2mə^1ʔiʔ^1$ 'fermented tea-leaves (around 30 leaves)', $sə^1bliʔ^1\ la^1$ 'Piper betel leaves (around 8-9 leaves)'.

25. $shuʔ^3$ as a noun means 'room'. Used as a classifier with: $də?^3\ shuʔ^3$ 'a room in a house'.

26. swa^2 as a noun means 'a ladder-step'. Used as a classifier with: $xɔ^2$ 'ladder'.

Group classifiers

1. $puʔ^1$ as a noun means 'heap, pile'. Used as a classifier with: pa^2 '(a group of) men', $ta^2ɲa^1$ 'meat', $bɨ^2$ 'paddy', $sə^1mi^1$ 'firewood', $siʔ^3$ 'alcoholic drink', $mɛʔ^2$ 'sand'.

2. $kə^1phi^2$ as a noun means 'group'. Used as a classifier with: pa^2 '(a group of) men'.

3. $klaʔ^3$ as a noun means 'group'. Used as a classifier with: pa^2 '(a group of) men', $tə^1mlaʔ^1\ pho^2$ 'bandits'.

4. $ʔuʔ^3$ as a noun means 'group'. Used as a classifier with: pa^2 '(a group of) men', $pə?^1na^1\ mi^2$ '(a herd of) wild buffalos', ta^1 'things', tho^1 '(a flock of) birds', ja^2sa^2 '(a group of) policemen', sha^1 '(a constellation of) stars', $shwi^1\ siʔ^3ɲo^1$ '(a crowd of) foxes', $mɔ^1liʔ^3$ '(a throng of) monkeys', $lə^2khɔ^2$ '(a set of) dishes'.

5. $duʔ^1$ as a noun means 'a brood of, a litter of'. Used as a classifier with: $thɔʔ^3$ '(a litter of little) pigs', $shɔ^2$ '(a brood of) chickens'.

Action classifiers

1. $blɔ^2$ as a noun means 'one time'. Used as a classifier with several action verbs such as $phle^2$ 'beat', $diʔ^3$ 'fight', le^2 'go'.

2. co^1 as a noun means 'a little while'. Used as a classifier with verbs such as *khɔʔ^3* 'wait', *toʔ^{3}cə^2* 'help'.

3. co^2 as a noun means 'a generation'. Used as a classifier with verbs such as *ʔoʔ^1* 'live'.

4. na^{1}ri^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. nwiʔ^3 as a noun means 'week'. Used as a classifier after numerals.

8. sɔ^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. baʔ^1 (T.)   as a noun means 'Baht' both for monetary and weight. Used as a classifier after numerals.

2. bləʔ^1 (ləʔ^3 ciʔ^3)   as a noun means 'one scoop up with one hand'. Used as a classifier after numerals.

3. hɔ^1 (ləʔ^3 ciʔ^3)   as a noun means 'one scoop up with both hands'. Used as a classifier after numerals.

4. cɣɔ^2 (ləʔ^3 ciʔ^3)   as a noun means 'one scoop up with one clenched fist'. Used as a classifier after numerals.

5. tha^2 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^{1}tɛ^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. thə^2 as a noun means 'a dozen'. Used as a classifier after numerals.

9. $cɛʔ^3$ — as a noun means 'a little bit of'. Used as a classifier after numerals.

10. $kə^1phɔʔ^1$ — as a noun means 'a measure equal in length to a joint of the middle finger'. Used as a classifier after numerals.

11. $kɛ^1$ — as a noun means 'a handful of'. Used as a classifier after numerals.

12. $kɛ^1$ $phaʔ^3doʔ^1$ — 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. $phiʔ^1$ — 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. $cɔʔ^3$ — 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. $khɔ^2ciʔ^3$ — 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. $tə^2$ — 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. $kəʔ^1phi^2$ — as a noun means 'a group of about ten people', Used as a classifier after numerals. Usually used with ya^2sa^2 'policemen', $siʔ^3pho^2$ 'soldiers'.

22. kə?ja^2 as a noun means 'a group of about one hundred people',
                                 Used as a classifier after numerals. Usually used with ya^2sa^2
                                 'policemen', $si?^3pho^2$ 'soldiers'.

23. kə?tho^2 as a noun means 'a group of about one thousand people,
                                 Used as a classifier after numerals. Usually used with ya^2sa^2
                                 'policemen', $si?^3pho^2$ '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. shyə^2 as a verb means 'to carry (hold) in both arms'. Used as a
                                 classifier after numerals. Used with: $bɔ?^1$ 'bamboo-shoots',
                                 $sə^1mi^1$ 'firewood'.

2. bo?^{1} as a verb means 'to wrap'. Used as a classifier after
                                 numerals. Used with: $ko?^1$ '(a wrapped-up package of)
                                 sweetmeats', $mɔ?^1thu^2$ '(a carton) of cigarettes', $sha^2kho?^3$
                                 '(a wrapped-up package of) paper'.

3. klɔ^1 as a verb means 'to coil, to roll, to curl up'. Used as a
                                 classifier after numerals. Used with: pli^2 'rope'.

4. ki?^{3} as a verb means 'to cut into sections'. Used as a classifier
                                 after numerals. Used with: ta^2na^2 'meat', $ko?^1$ 'sweetmeats,
                                 cake'.

5. khli?^{3} as a verb means 'to fold'. Used as a classifier after
                                 numerals. Used with: $ta^1ki?^3na?^1$ 'cloth', $ja?^1$ '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.

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  [2]Jones (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	ɣe^2	khi^2	sho^2	ne^1
watch	good	two	CL	that

"those two good watches"

N	Adj	Num	CL	Dem
she^{2}ka^2	ɣɔ^2	sə?^{3}	be?^{1}	?i^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"

N	Adj	Num	CL
dɔ^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})	?i^2	phɣi^2
sack	(CL)	this	light

"this light (≠ heavy) sack."

N	(CL)	Dem	Adj
ko?^{1}	(be?^{1})	?i^2	bɛ^2 ɣe^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 Cls 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 $kw\varepsilon^2 le^1 lo^2$ 'telephone' can have as CL either sho^2 'CL for moving machine' or $d\partial^2$ 'CL signifying the shape of a box'. $sa^1 m\partial^2 kle\text{?}^3$ 'tamarind fruit' can have as CL either $phl\partial\text{?}^1$ '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 catergorize 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 $khli\text{?}^3$ 'turtle', which is four-footed, does not have as CL di^2 'CL for four-footed animal', but instead has $be\text{?}^1$ 'classifier used for many small animals and fowls and insects'. And ironically enough both $s\partial^2 kha^2$ 'Buddhist monk' and $c\partial^2 s\partial^2$ '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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