

relative clauses must be connected with the classifier noun within the classifier noun phrase.

Classifiers are of two distinct types: general classifiers and quantity classifiers. Tactically these are indistinguishable as they occupy the same position within the Noun Phrase and the Nominal Group. General classifiers are realizations of the same referent as that of the common noun with which they are associated. Quantity classifiers realize not only a referent but also functional information about the referent of the common noun.

2. General classifiers

General classifiers are what is generally thought of in discussions of classifiers. Every common noun within the language has a classifier attached to it. This information is contained within the lexicon and in almost all situations in which a referent is realized there must be expression of the classifier as well as the common noun. There are situations (such as time words, see below) in which only the classifier is needed and the common noun is rarely invoked. A dictionary of the Tai Lue language, to be useful to a non-native speaker of Tai Lue, must contain this information about each noun.

Lexical information about many of the general classifiers of Tai Lue is followed by a list, usually

not exhaustive, of common nouns that are associated with that classifier.

baan³ "frame" is used for windows and doors including words such as:

naa3p>ng2

tuu1p>ng2 These both mean "window" (which also uses ?an1 or bɛ?2 as classifiers)

xatuu1 "door" (which also uses ?an1 as a classifier)

baj1 "leaf." This is the common noun for "leaf" and is used as a classifier for various things that are either flat or round or both such as:

baj1maj6 "leaf"

baj1cəən4 "invitation card"

caan1 "plate"

cot2maaj1 "letter"

jaa3 "a blade of grass" (see also sin3)

kadaat2 "paper" (see also phen2)

mook2 "hat"

məən1 "pillow" (see also ken2)

phaaj4 "playing card"

³The longer examples cited in this paper come from Tai Lue texts, either from oral texts recorded by the author in Chiang Kham, or from printed sources listed in the Appendix. Single word examples are primarily from elicited data.

thung1 "bag" (This includes paper bags, plastic bags, and sacks except for the size in which rice is sold. For this see kas>>p5)

wii4 "handheld fan"

baw3 is used only for cigarettes:

baw3lii4 cigarette (China=salik1)⁴

be?2 "frame" is used only for windows:

naa3p>ng2

tuu1p>ng2 which both mean "window" (see also ?an1 or baan1)

bot2 "a lesson" is the common noun and also the classifier for school lessons. This is an example of a common phenomenon of the common noun and the classifier noun for a referent being identical.

b>>2 is the classifier for wells:

nam6b>>2 "well"

⁴For certain words differences are noted for the dialect of Tai Lue as spoken in Sipsongpanna, Yunnan, China.

b>>k2 "cylinder" is used for things of cylindrical shape such as:

faj4saaj1 "flashlight"

pyyn1 "gun" (China=naat5)

xaw3laam1 "sticky rice packed in a section of bamboo."

cɔng5 "a situation" is a classifier for problems, matters, and general situations of all kinds.

cum4 "stack" is used for a deck of cards:

cum4phaaj4 "a deck of cards."

daan3 "side" is a classifier for walls including:

faa1 "house walls"

hoo6 "fence"

kam1pəng4 "a city wall"

doong1 is a classifier for heavenly bodies: the sun, moon, and stars. All of these can also be classified with the word ken2. They include:

daaw1 "star"

dəən1 "moon"

tawan4 "sun"

dun3 is a classifier for split up pieces of firewood:

loo1 "firewood" (see also t>>n5 for larger
pieces of firewood).

d>>k2 "flower" is a classifier for flowers and other
things of similar shape such as:

d>>k2maj6 "flower"
het1 "mushroom"
luuk5kun1cæ1 "key"

fak2 "pod" is the classifier for legumes and other
things that grow in pods such as:

maxaam1 "tamarind"
thoo2din1 "peanut"
thoo2lææng1 "soybean"
thoo2saj2sææ3 "long green beans"

hoo1 "head" is the common noun for a head and the
classifier for certain growing things that are
spherical in shape:

hoo1 "head"
hoo1h>>m1 "onion"
hoo1pii1 "banana flower" the large edible
flower at the head of a stalk of bananas
h>>m1teem4 "garlic"
kalam2pii1 "cabbage"
man4?aluu4 "potato"

man4wɛɛk5 ⁵	"yam bean"
mɛk2xanɛt1	"pineapple"
phak2kaat2xaaw1	"lettuce"
phəək2	"taro."

hooj3 is the common noun and also the classifier for small streams and man made canals.

hoong4 is the classifier for an "ear" of any grain including rice or corn:

xaw3	"grain"
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huu4 is the classifier for noses:

dang1	"nose"
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jot1 "drop" is the general classifier for tears. It also functions as a quantity classifier for drops of water or medicine (see below).

kan4 "vehicle" is the classifier for all vehicles, motorized or nonmotorized:

lot1	"car"
lot1thiip2	"bicycle"
lot1xəəng5	"motorcycle"
l>>6	"oxcart."

⁵Compare Thai manA4 kɛɛwA2. Possibly there has been transposition of the consonants here.

kan4 "handle" is a homophone of the previous entry, used for many things that have long handles (but not knobs or ear-shaped handles such as a pot might have):

c>ng3	"three cornered fishing net"
c>>n6	"spoon" (see also ?an1)
c>>n6sang1	"fork" (see also ?an1)
kan4bet2	"fishing rod"
paak5	"large spoon"
s>>m3	"2-prong fork"
x>>1bok2	"hoe" (see also theen2)
x>>1saang1	"rake."

kap2 is a classifier for small boxes and containers:

kap>ng3	"tin can"
kap2	"matchbox" or other boxes of similar size.

kaw6 "plant"

k>>1 "plant" These two words seem to be synonymous and are classifiers for an open class of common nouns including all trees and bushes including:

k>>1maj6	"tree"
k>>1kooj3	"banana tree"
k>>1xaw3	"a rice plant"

kaa3 "a rice seedling"
jaa3 "grass"

ken1 is the classifier for counting large seeds such as those in a mango, jackfruit, or a corncob. For smaller seeds the classifier is met1 (see below). The common noun for these large seeds is:

k n1naj4 "large seed"

ken2 is the classifier for a large class of things most of which are round, both big and small, including many kinds of fruits and containers:

FRUITS: Note that there is no way to predict which common nouns will take hoo1 as classifier and which ken2.

kooj3 "banana"
lam4jaj4 "longan"
lin4cii2 "lichee"
maak2maj6 "fruit"
maak2moo4 "watermelon"
maak2moong5 "mango"
maak2sum3 "orange"
maak2t>ng3 "Sandoricum indicum"
maak2?oo4 "pomelo"
manaaw4 "lime"
mapaaw6 "coconut"

ngiw6 "kapok pod"
phik1 "pepper"

CONTAINERS:

bung1 "basket" (see also x>>n1)
hiit2 "large wooden trunk"
kathaang4d>>k2maj6 "flowerpot"
kew3 "glass"
k>ng1 "drum"
m>>3 "cooking pot" (and compounds with
m>>3)
nam6booj1 "woven well dipper"
nam6thung4 "woven well dipper"
nam6xu?1 "bucket" (see also x>>n1)
tuu3 "pigeon hole" (tuu3 also means
"cupboard." See lang1 for a cupboard as a
larger piece of furniture.)
thang1 "55 gallon drum"
thooj3 "bowl"
xok1 "mortar" (for pestle see ?an1)
xoot2 "bottle"
?aang2 "washtub"
?ung2 "large waterjar"

MISCELLANEOUS:

daaw1 "star" (see also doong1)
dæan1 "moon" (see also doong1)

kaa1lapaw4	"steamed bun"
keeng1man4	"lantern"
luuk5hep2	"hail"
m>>n1	"pillow"
taa1	"eye" (see also xaang3)
tawan4	"sun" (see also doong1)
xaj2	"egg"

ket2 is both the classifier and the common noun for fish scales.

kiip2 is both the classifier and the common noun for the petals of a flower.

k>ng2 is both the classifier and the common noun for boxes except for very small boxes such as matchboxes (see kap2).

k>>n3 "lump" is the classifier for things most of which are small and round. Note the close similarity of appearance and features of these objects to those that have ken2 as their classifier:

din1	"dirt"
din1kii2	"brick"
faa3	"cloud"
hin1	"rock"
kəə1	"salt" (a lump of rock salt)

nam6xeng1 "ice"
sabuu2 "soap"
xaw3num4pang1 "bread" (a loaf)
xii3 "feces" (see also pan3)

kun4 "person" is the common noun for "person" and the classifier for all people (China=kaw6).

lam4 "craft" is the classifier for boats:

həʔ4 "boat"

lang1 "structure" is a classifier for buildings and larger cupboards:

haang3 "store"

həʔn4 "house"

hoong4heen4 "school"

saa1laa4 "building" often with a roof but no walls. Usually having religious or public function.

tuu3 "cupboard" (see also kən2).

leen1 is both the common noun and the classifier for coins.

lim3 is a classifier for things most of which are long and thin and inflexible. Many of them also have a pointed end. Note the overlap of this field with

the field of nouns associated with kan4, in that some of these also have handles. Possibly the pointed end overrides the handle as the salient feature.

c>k2	"chalk"
daap2	"sword"
h>>k2	"spear"
lek2cam6	"nail"
lek2cii6	"drill bit"
maj6phaj2	"bamboo"
paak2kaa1	"pen"
pit2	"pencil"
pyyn1	"arrow"
saw1	"housepost"
siw2	"chisel"
teen4	"candle"
t>>5	"pipe" as in a section of water piping
xew3	"tooth" (see also sii3)
xim1	"needle"
?>>j3	"sugarcane."

lim5 is the classifier for books (China=nooj2). From the tone it is obvious that lim5 is a loan from Thai in Tai Lue as spoken in Thailand:

nang1syy1 "book."

met1 "grain" is the general classifier for small things such as grains of sand and small seeds. met1 also functions as a quantity classifier (see below) for drops of liquid, and for beans and grain.

met1naj4 "seed" small seeds of orange, lime, rambutan etc.

saaj4 "sand"

mæ5 is the classifier for a harrow:

fæ1 "harrow"

niw6 is both the common noun and the classifier for fingers and toes.

pan3 "mold" is a classifier for xii3 "feces" (see also k>>n3).

pen3 "board" is a classifier for all kinds of boards and planks:

kadaan1 "board"

pen3 "plank" for house siding.

poong4 is a classifier for garlands of flowers:

malaj4d>>k2maj6 "garland"

phaak2 "side"

xaang3 "side" These two words seem to be synonymous and are used to count things such as body parts that typically appear in pairs:

huu1	"ear"
myy4	"hand"
piik2	"wing"
taa1	"eye" (see also k n2)
tiin1	"foot"
xaa1	"leg"
xen1	"arm"

phen2 "sheet" is a classifier for flat rectangular things such as:

kabəng3	"tile"
kadaat2	"paper" (see also baj1)
sang1xasii1	"tin sheet for roofing"

phyyn1 is the classifier for many things made of cloth or string. Note however that certain things made of cloth (such as pillow) go with other classifiers:

hee1	"cast net"
phaa3	"cloth"
phaa3cet1too1	"towel"
phaa3hoo1	"men's sarong"
phaa3ləəng1	"monk's robe"
phaa3maan5	"curtain"

phaa3s	2	"mattress"
saat2		"mat"
saa3		"shirt"
sin3		"women's sarong"
tew2		"trousers"
?oon4		"seine net"

saaj1 is the classifier for certain things of extended length such as paths and rivers. All of these can also use the classifier sin3:

nam6m	5	"river"
xun1taang4		"path."

sabap2 is the classifier for newspapers:

nang1syy1phim4		"newspaper."
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sii3 is a classifier for counting things that appear in a series or a row such as:

duuk2xii3xaang3		"rib"
kap2faj4		"match" (possibly because there are many of them in a box)
lek2		"bar" as in window bars
sii3hoo6		"fence post"
sii3lot1		"spoke"
sii3saang1		"tine of a fork"
xan3xadaj1		"step" (see also xan3)
xew3		"tooth" (see also lim3)

sin3 "strip" is the classifier for a wide variety of long narrow things as follows:

bamii2	"egg noodle"
cəək5	"rope"
hɔŋg5hee1mɔng4	"ditch" for draining rice paddy
jaa3	"a blade of grass" (see also baj1)
maj1jip2	"thread"
nam6m 5	"river" (see also saaj1)
ngun6	"glass noodle"
phum1	"head hair"
saaj1faj4	"electric wire"
saaj1haang4	"belt"
saaj1h t5	"belt"
saj3	"intestine"
t>>k2	"bamboo strip" finely split for tying
thanun1	"road"
waaj1	"wicker"
xun1	"body hair, feather"
xun1taang4	"path" (see also saaj1)

s>>ng4 "envelope" is both the common noun and the classifier for envelopes. It also functions as a quantity classifier (see below) for clumps of things such as grass and bamboo.

tii5 "place" is a classifier for places of all sorts.

It can be used with specific common nouns such as "city," "house," "river." More commonly it is used without any common noun or with itself as its own common noun.

too1 "body" is the classifier for all kinds of animals and also for children and certain other things such as:

hung6kin1nam6	"rainbow"
la?>>n2	"child" (see also kun4)
phii1	"spirit"
set2	"animal"
taw2pat2maj6	"wood plane"
tuk2kataa1	"doll"

t>>n5 is the classifier for a piece of a tree trunk that has been sawn into lengths but not yet split into firewood.

thaa5 "pose" is the classifier for pictures:

huup5	"picture"
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then2 "blade" is the classifier for many things that have a sharp edge. Note that there are exceptions such as sword and chisel that go with lim3.

Possibly they are perceived as having a point instead of an edge.

maj6sem3	"scissors" (see also ?an1)
miit5	"knife"
muj4	"axe"
phaa6	"machete"
seem1	"digging stick" (see also ?an1)
xew1	"sickle"
x>>1bok2	"hoe" (see also ?an1, kan4)
xwaan1	"axe."

theng5 "bar" is the classifier for bars of gold or silver:

th>>ng4	"gold"
ng n4	"silver."

wen3 "lump" is a classifier for lumps of boiled down cane or palm sugar:

nam6taan1	"sugar."
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w>ng4 is the classifier for bracelets:

xaa2maj4	"bracelet."
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wung4 "ring" is the classifier for round things such as:

jaang4lot1	"tyre"
phaj5	"a game of cards"

wεɛn1	"a finger ring"
wung4lot1	"the wheel of a car"
wung4l>>6	"the wheel of an oxcart."

xan3 "step" is the common noun and the classifier for steps on a ladder or staircase.

x>>1 is the classifier for fishhooks:

bet2	"fishhook."
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x>>n1 is a classifier for several things such as:

bung1	"basket" (see also k n2)
myy4	"hand" (see also phaak2)
nam6khu?1	"bucket" (see also k n2).

xum4 "edge" is the common noun and the classifier for counting edges of a blade (as opposed to then2 which is used for counting things with blades).

?an1 is a classifier for a wide variety of things including many body parts. Many of the things here are very small but not all. ?an1 is also a quantity classifier (see below) for broken pieces of things.

BODY PARTS

duuk2	"bone"
haang1	"tail"
hoo1caj1	"heart"

lep1	"fingernail, claw"
lin6	"tongue"
paak2	"mouth"
sop2	"mouth"
tap2	"liver"
xaw1	"horn"
OTHER	
c>n6	"spoon" (see also kan4)
c>ng3	"paper umbrella"
d>>k2maj6	"flower" (see also d>>k2)
faj4saaj1	"flashlight" (see also b>>k2)
haak5	"root"
hum5	"umbrella"
jaang1lop1	"rubber eraser"
kaang2	"crossbow"
king2	"stick"
kəən1	"ladder"
k>>n1saw3	"cooking spider"
loo3	"shovel"
l>>t2hoo1teen4	"incandescent bulb"
l>>t2jaaw4	"flourescent bulb"
maak2t>>3	"takraw ball"
maj6faaj4həə4	"paddle"
maj6s m3	"scissors" (see also then2)
məə5kun1ceə1	"lock"
naa3p>>ng2	"window"
tuu1p>>ng2	"window" (see also baan1, be?2)