saak2            "pestle"

seem1            "digging stick" (see also theen2)

s>>4             "a Thai fiddle"

to?2             "table"

wii4             "handheld fan" (see also baj1)

xatuu1           "door" (see also baan1)

x>>1bok2         "hoe" (see also theen2, kan4)

x>>n6maj6        "club"


Words for time all function as classifiers, and
rarely is there a common noun occuring in conjunction
with them.  This common noun when it occurs is either
we4laa4 "time" or jaam4 "period of time."  Time words
which function as classifiers include:

jaam4       "period of time"

b>2dew1     "now"

byt2        "a second"

nathii4     "minute"

moong4      "hour" (China=taa1)

wan4        "day"

?aa4tit1    "week"

dɯɯn1       "month"

pii1        "year"


3. Quantity classifiers

The general classifiers are referential in the
same way that the common nouns with which they are

associated are. They do not realize any functional information beyond being a sort of place holder, marking the space for the realization of the functions delineated above. Quantity classifiers are not referential and do not realize the same information as the common noun with which they are used. Instead they realize functional information about the quantity or measurement of the common noun involved.

Thus in the Nominal Group:

#1 mɛɛw4 sɔng1 too1
   cat    one   CLF
   One cat.

the words m  w4 and too1 both refer to the same animal. However in:

#2 nam6   sɔng1 xoot2
   water two    bottle
   Two bottles of water.

the words nam6 and xoot2 do not refer to the same thing. Instead the word xoot2 is there to realize the function of Measure. Quantity classifiers realize one of three different functions: Measure, Subdivision, or Proportion.


3.1 Quantity Classifiers realizing Measure

These classifiers may measure either distance, volume or weight. Separate verbs distinguish these three categories; wat1 "to measure distance," phɔng1 "to measure volume," cang5 "to weigh."

Traditional classifiers of linear measurement are:

x>>3        "length of the first joint of the thumb"

xyyp5       "handspan

s>>k2       "cubit" length of forearm from elbow to
        fingertip

waa4        "armspread"

ngan4       "100 square waa4" (area)

haj5        "4 ngan4" (area)

These are joined by modern ones:

sen4        "centimeter"

met1        "meter"

ki4lo4met1 "kilometer"

Classifiers measuring volume form an open class including any kind of container. The classifier to count many of these containers is kɛn2, but the container in its turn is used as a classifier when measuring such things as water or rice. In English most of these would be considered to be "noncountable" nouns. In Tai Lue the terms "countable" and "noncountable" are not definable in any grammatical way as no noun is directly countable without the use of a classifier, and all nouns can be counted by means of classifiers.

The traditional measures for selling rice are:

k>k2        "a cup" (varying in size from one to two
        cups)

thang1      "20 k>k2"

kas>>p5[6]    "sack"

    Other classifiers that measure volume include:

met1      "a raindrop"

jot1      "a drop" of water or medicine

kam1      "handful"

c>>n6     "spoon"

paak5     "large spoon"

s>>ng4    "pack" (e.g. cigarette pack)

h>>2      "wrap" any wrapped bundle, as with a leaf or
    paper"

kap2      "box" matchbox sized

k>ng2     "box"

hiit2     "wooden trunk"

thung1    "bag"

kɛw3      "glass"

xoot2     "bottle"

thooj3    "bowl"

caan1     "plate"

kaa1      "kettle"

m>>3      "cooking pot"

nam6xu?1  "bucket"

?aang2    "wash basin or tub"

?ung2     "large clay water jar"

bung1     "basket"

tuu3      "cupboard"

hɯɯn4     "house"

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[6]Note the unusual tone variation between Tai Lue and Thai.

These two classifiers measure weight:

xiit2    "100 grams"

kiiiloo4  "kilogram"

Certain other classifiers of Measure specify a particular number for things that occur or are typically counted in groups.

hapi "roll"

pan4 "roll"  These two words seem synonymous and are
    used only for paper or documents in a roll.


hʊʊ4 is used for a whole stalk (several hands) of ban-
    anas as it grows on the tree:

    kooj3    "banana."


kuu5 "pair" is used especially for:

    kɔɔk2    "shoes"

    xɛp2     "slippers"

    thuu2    "chopsticks."


looi "dozen" is used especially for such things as
    school supplies (but not for eggs as in English).
    Examples include:

    samuti    "notebook"

    pit2      "pencil"

    paak2kaai "pen."

moon4 "roll" is used for things rolled together such
as:

    sɔɔ3        "clothing"

    cɔɔk5       "string"

    kadaat2ʔanaa4maj4 "toilet paper."


muu2 "group" is the general word used for groups of all
kinds; human, animal, or inanimate.


puk1 "cluster" is used for fruits and flowers such as:

    d>>k2maj6   "flower"

    lam4jaj4    "longan"

    lin4cii2    "lichee"

    maak2moong5 "mango"

    ng>?1       "rambutan"

    maak2jom4   "star gooseberry."


s>>ng4 "clump" is used for grassy things such as:

    jaa3        "grass"

    maj6phaj2 "bamboo."


wii1 is used for a "hand" of bananas

    kooj3       "banana."


3.2 Quantity classifiers realizing Subdivision

    These classifiers specify the size or shape or
kind of some part of the common noun, whether that part

is obtained by breaking or cutting, or whether it is
some inherent sectioning of the thing.

t>>n2 "piece"

?an1 "piece"   These two classifiers refer to pieces of
things, and there is considerable overlap in their
use.   Three semantic factors help to determine the
choice of t>>n2 versus ?an1.  Larger pieces tend to
go with the former and smaller with the latter.
Pieces that are cut tend to go with the former as
opposed  to  pieces  resulting  from  breakage.
Purposive cutting is associated with t>>n2 where
more random cutting is associated with ?an1.  Thus a
bowl broken in two pieces might go either way, where
a shattered bowl would have many ?an1.  A piece of
meat bought from the butcher, even if small, would
probably be t>>n2, where meat chopped up for cooking
would probably have many ?an1.


dun3 "piece" is used specifically for pieces of fire-
wood cut to burning size:

   loo1        "firewood".


lii3 "section" is used for the natural sections of cer-
tain fruits such as:

   h>m1tem4       "garlic"

   maak2naaw4     "lime"

   sum3           "orange"

maak2?oo4       "pomelo"

thu?11en4       "durian" (the sections separated by fibrous material, containing several joong4, see below)

mang4xut1       "mangosteen".


joong4 "section" is a section of soft fruit surrounding a hard seed in certain fruits such as:

thu11en4    "durian"

maak2nun1 "jackfruit".


p>ng3 "joint" is used for natural sections of thing such as:

?>>j3       "sugar cane"

maj6phaj2 "bamboo".


x>>3 "joint" is used for all the same things as p>ng3, and also for the joints in the body such as knuckles, elbows, etc.


met1 "grain" or "bean" is used for the natural sections of these larger units:

xaw3       "grain" (including rice, corn, and other grains)

thoo2       "bean" (including all legumes and peas).

The normal classifier for a complete unit of grain is hoong4 "ear," and for a complete unit of bean is