MANDARIN CLASSIFIERS FROM A SEMANTIC POINT OF VIEW

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ABSTRACT

If we discuss classifiers in very general terms, probably all languages have classifiers. Under close examination of classifiers, it is discovered that there are two basic kinds of classifiers: mensural classifiers and sortal classifiers (Lyons:1977). The term 'classifier language' is normally restricted to languages with sortal classifiers: such languages are frequently found in Southeast Asia.

Mandarin is the official language of China, spoken regionally in the Northern part of China. The language is exceptionally rich in classifiers. Modern Mandarin dictionaries list about 150 standard classifiers. In addition there are many nouns which are borrowed to serve as temporary classifiers. The total number of classifiers is over 500 in spoken and written Mandarin, if we add in the temporary classifiers. The frequency of classifiers has been investigated (Xiong:1977), and it was found that there is one classifier for every 50 characters. In literary works, the frequency is even higher: about 30 characters for every classifier. However, most educated adults commonly confine themselves to a core set of a few dozen classifiers.

In Mandarin the use of a numeral requires the use of a classifier. Incorrect use of classifiers renders a sentence 'ungrammatical'. The constituents of the numeral classifier construction must occur in the order: Numeral-CL-Noun.

Mandarin classifiers include verbal classifiers and noun classifiers. This paper concentrates on noun classifiers.

Specialists find that sortal classifiers are sometimes determined on perceptual grounds and the object is assigned to a class with which it shares some physical characteristic. Such characteristics are frequently different shapes: long, round and flat, which are further divided into thick/thin, big/small, and flexible/rigid.

This thesis has tried to provide a full-scale analysis of Mandarin classifiers from a syntactical and a semantic point of view by a native speaker, and introduce an interesting, untouched aspect of classifiers, that has been treated in Chapter Five. The rhetorical function of classifiers has been neglected by scholars, and there is much to be said on this aspect in Mandarin classifiers. The use of classifiers is in part an art and not just a grammatical convention: people have varying degrees of skill in using them. We can invent as many classifiers as we need for rhetorical purposes and these temporary classifiers form an open-ended set. The rhetorical functions of Mandarin classifiers can also express different figures of speech, e.g., sketching, metaphor, simile, metonymy and irony. We can distinguish the classifier from other parts of speech by its sometimes remarkable rhetorical function.

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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION: USE OF CLASSIFIERS IN PRESENT DAY MANDARIN

In modern Chinese, a noun cannot be modified directly by a numeral or a demonstrative alone: an intervening classifier must be used. Its use is generally associated with the quantification or description of nouns and it usually occurs immediately adjacent to the numeral in a measure phrase or in conjunction with demonstratives. The resulting phrase has three morphemes: number (determiner), classifier and noun to be counted or described. Generally speaking, the following sequence is permissible for their combination: Q(uantifier) C(lassifier) N(oun).

(1) liǎng gōngjīn yóu
two kilogram oil
'two kilograms of oil'

(2) zhè gè rén
this Cl person
'this person'

Some nominal classifiers can be followed by adjectives. They are usually typical mensural classifiers like chǐ 'Chinese foot', cùn 'Chinese inch', jīn 'about a pound', liǎng '50 grams', gōngjīn 'kilogram', mǔ '0.0667 hectares'.

(3) liǎng gōngjīn zhòng

two kilogram weighty

'weighing two kilograms'

The nominal classifiers can be preceded by adjectives, too.

(4) lǎoshí yī bèizi

honest one lifetime

'be honest all one's life'

Chinese classifiers are found both in noun phrases and verbal groups. We must not assume that because nominal classifiers have the syntactic structure Q-Cl-N, the verbal classifiers has a parallel structure Q-Cl-V. In fact, verbal classifiers often follow verbs. Like noun classifiers, verbal classifiers emphasize the quantification and modification of verbal actions. For instance:

(5) tā dǎ le tàitài liǎng cì

he beat PAST wife two TIME

'It has been twice that he beat his wife.'

(6) wǒ xià le yī tiào

I scare PAST one jump

'gave me a scare'

In (5), the verbal classifier expresses the quantification of the verbal action. In (6), the verbal classifier is an exaggeration of the action. When I am nervous, I may shake a little bit, but I do not jump. Verbal classifiers are drawn from verbs, nouns or the subclass of temporal words associated with verbs.

(7)	kàn	yī	kàn	(verb)
	look	one	look	

'have a look'

(8)	kàn	liǎng	yǎn	(noun)
	look	two	eye	

'look twice'

(9)	lái	guò	yī	huí	(temporal word)
	come	PAST	one	time	

'have been here once'

A verb can serve as its own verbal classifier as in (7). Body parts such as yǎn 'eye', jiǎo 'foot', kǒu 'mouth', quán 'fist', and bāzhǎng 'hand' are usually used with classifiers, when they are nouns, but they can function as verbal classifiers and occur without classifiers as in (8). Chao (1968:313) calls them "cognate objects". Functionally, however, they are not objects; what was looked

at was not yī yǎn 'one eye', but somebody or something. The verbal classifier has a close relationship with the verb in the meaning, implying the instrument of the action. yǎ n 'eye' doesn't go with any verb except kàn 'look', jiǎ o 'foot' with tī 'kick', kǒu 'mouth' with yǎ o 'bite', quán 'fist' and bāzhǎ ng 'hand' with dǎ 'beat'. However, there is no *tīng yī ěr listen/one/ear 'give a listen' or *wén yī bí smell/one/nose 'take a smell'.

(10 a)	tī	tā	yī	jiǎo
	kick	he	one	foot

'give him one kick'

(10 b)	yòng	jiǎo	tī	tā
	[illegible]	foot	kick	he

'kick him with foot'

Or we can adopt Li and Thompson's saying (1981:354): "These forms (verbal classifiers) specify the extent or duration of an activity and function as adverbial phrases."

There is a special kind of verbal classifier which is associated especially with verb-object constructions, but differs from the verbal classifiers above in that the latter are not especially associated with objects and, in the case of intransitive

verbs, have no other objects at all (Chao:1968:593). The following examples are taken from Chao's A Grammar of Spoken Chinese:

(11)	shuō	huà	-->	shuō	liǎng	jù		huà
	say	word	-->	say	two	CL=sentence		word
				'say a few words'				

(12)	shià	chi	-->	shià	yī	pǎn	chí
	play	chess	-->	play	one	CL=game	chess
				'play a game of chess'			

In the verb-object constructions, the classifier is restricted to jù in (11) and pán in (12).

The same morpheme sometimes serves as both a noun classifier and a verbal classifier. Take the body parts for example again:

(13a)	tī	wǒ	liǎng	jiǎo	
	kick	I	two	CL=foot	(Verbal classifier)
		'give me two kicks'			

(13b)	yī	jiǎo	ní
	one	CL=foot	mud (Noun classifier)

'mud all over the foot'

(14a)	yǎo	wǒ	yī	kóu	
	bite	I	one	CL=mouth	(Verbal classifier)
	'give me a bite'				

(14b)	yī	kǒu	fàn	
	one	CL=mouth	rice	(Noun classifier)
	'a mouthful of rice'			

There is a way to distinguish nominal classifiers from verbal classifiers: verbal classifiers, unlike nominal classifiers, must be dependent on verbs. Here is a minimal pair:

(15)	jīngōng	sān	zuò	chéng
	attack	three	seat	city
	'attack three cities'			

(16)	jīngōng	sān	cì	chéng
	attack	three	time	city
	'attack the city three times'			

The nominal classifier compound sān zuò chéng 'three/seat/city' can stand alone without the verb jīngōng 'attack'; the verbal classifier compound sān cì chéng 'three/time/city' must depend on the verb. The verbal classifier cì 'time' has a closer relationship with the verb 'attack', the nominal classifier zuò 'seat' with the noun 'city'.

Also the order of a nominal classifier compound Number/Classifier/Noun can be changed to Noun/Number/Classifier sometimes in making a list.

(17)	liǎng	píng	jiǔ	--->	jiǔ	liǎng	píng
	two	bottle	wine	--->	wine	two	bottle

'two bottles of wine'

(18)	sān	dá	pījiǔ	--->	pījiǔ	sǎn	dá
	three	dozen	beer	--->	beer	three	dozen

'three dozens of beer'

But the sequence of a verbal classifier compound cannot be changed.

(19)	*yī	cī	huī	-->	huī	yī	cī
	one	TIME	meeting	--->	meeting	one	TIME

(20)	*yī	huí	diānyìng	-->	diānyìng	yī	huí
	one	TIME	film	-->	film	one	TIME

Chinese has many more nominal classifiers than verbal classifiers, as the number of verbal classifiers is small and its usage is settled. This paper will concentrate on the nominal classifiers; the term classifier will be used exclusively in the sense of nominal classifier.

Classifiers must occur not only with numbers, but also with demonstratives or certain quantifiers such as zhěng 'whole', jǐ 'how many/a few', mǒu yī 'a certain' and měi 'every' before the noun (Li & Thompson 1981:104). For instance:

(21) zhěi gè píngguǒ
this Cl apple
'this apple'

(22) nèi kuài dàngāo
that Cl cake
'that cake'

(23) zhěng gè fángzi
whole Cl house
'the whole house'

(24) jǐ běn shū

how many/a few Cl book

'how many/a few books'

(25) móuyī gè rén

a certain Cl person

'a certain person'

(26) měi jiàn shì

every Cl thing

'every thing'

Classifiers are monosyllabic and can be reduplicated to have a rhetorical function. There are five types of reduplicated classifier phrases. We list them as follows:

1. Cl + Cl

The reduplication yields the meaning 'every'. For example: tiáo is a classifier referring to a long object like dàolù 'road'. When it is reduplicated, tiáo tiáo dào lù means 'every road'.

2. Number + Cl + Cl

The number is limited to 'one', expressing the meaning 'each'. For example: yī jiàn jiàn yīfú 'one/CL/CL/garment' means 'each garment'.

3. Number + Cl + Number + Cl

In many cases, the number is 'one'. The reduplication yields the meaning 'one by one'. Sometimes, other numbers larger than 'one' are permissible. We use this certain number as a unit to count 'one by one'.

(27) fàn zhǐnéng yī kǒu yī kǒu chī
meal only can one mouth one mouth eat
'eat the meal one mouthful at a time'

(28) tā zuò yīfú, liǎng jiàn liǎng jiàn zuò
she make clothes, two Cl two Cl make
'When she makes clothes, she makes them two by two.'

4. Number + Cl + Noun + Number + Cl + Noun

Every element in this classifier compound is reduplicated. As in the cases above, this structure means 'one by one'. It also has the function of emphasis.

(29) tā yī gè zì yī gè zì shuō

he one Cl word one Cl word say

'He said the words one by one.' (emphasizing the slowness)

5. Number + Cl + yòu + Number + Cl

The number is limited to 'one'. yòu 'again' is inserted between the phrase. The whole phrase plays the role of emphasis.

(30) bàng shēng yī biàn yòu yī biàn

watchman's=clapper sound one Cl again one Cl

cóng hēiyè qiāo dài tiānmíng

from dusk strike to dawn

'The sound of watchman's clapper strikes intermittently

from dusk to dawn'.

The five types of reduplication are descriptive and emphatic. They occur both in spoken Chinese and literary style.

Temporal words 'night, day, week, year, hour' form a fuzzy set in the study of classifiers, opinion being divided as to whether they should be treated as nouns or classifiers. Some people say they are nouns which never take classifiers. Other people think that they are classifiers without head nouns. I am inclined to follow

the second opinion. Since temporal words denote time, we consider 'time' as the head noun shared by the classifiers which express the specific time. The head noun, being understood through the classifier, is redundant; consequently we omit the head noun, and as a result, we have independent classifiers. Such classifiers have an adverbial function. However, the head noun 'time' can be optionally added, similar to English three hours time. For instance:

(31) tā zhù zài měiguó liǎng nián (shíjiān) le
he live in America two year (time) PERFECT
'He has lived in America for two years (time).'

In modern Mandarin, the sequence of a number and a classifier usually occurs before a noun, but there are special cases in which they can follow a noun as in (32) where the number is very complicated and in (33) where the usage is that of keeping accounts or making a list:

(32) xiāohào yuán cáiliào wǔshí dūn zhì liùshí dūn
consume raw materials fifty ton to sixty ton
'consume from fifty to sixty tons of raw materials'

(33) píngguǒ yī dài, ròu sān bàng
apple one bag, pork three pound
'one bag of apples, three pounds of pork'

Chapter 2
A BRIEF HISTORY OF MANDARIN CLASSIFIERS

2.1. Archaic Chinese

In Archaic Chinese, when people expressed quantity of "countable" or "measurable" things, no classifier was required. The order was simply NUMBER-NOUN or NOUN-NUMBER.

(1)

bái	zhū	jiǔ
white	pig	nine

jiǔ	bái	zhū
nine	white	pig

The emergence of Mandarin classifiers dates well after the beginning of recorded history, in the Shang Dynasty (1400 B.C.), one and a half millennia before the Christian era. From the oracle bone records of the Shang Dynasty, we can see that classifiers were extremely rare in the beginning: there were fewer than ten in normal usage. They involved measurements of length, weight, volume, collectivity, containment and currency. For example, shēng 'litre', yǒu 'an ancient small-mouthed wine vessel', péng 'two strings of shells, each containing five pieces that served as currency', and shéng 'group of four horses pulling a chariot' (Huang 1964). Such words may be called mensural classifiers.

After a thousand years, by the Zhou Dynasty (1066 B.C. - 221 B.C.), the number of classifiers had reached forty . However, because of the increase, more than one classifier could be used for the same noun in the same context (Huang 1964). For example, classifiers shéng and liǎng were for vehicles. On the other hand, different nouns had developed different classifiers. In the Shang era, vehicles and horses shared the classifier bing. In the Zhou era, the classifier liǎng was used for vehicles, whereas pī was used for horses. It was in this period that individual classifiers made their first appearance. Individual classifiers may refer exclusively to a single item, or they may define sets. According to Yau Shun-Chiu's hypothesis (1988), before the existence of the classifiers, when the number of characters expressing the numeral was relatively long in the quantifying nominal phrase, as for example "men 13081 men", the speaker might consider it necessary to recall the nominal base. It would be for the sake of this mnemonic recall that classifiers first came into being (Yau 1988:268). This means that the earliest classifier was formed by copying the noun with which it was associated, for example by repeating the noun yù which means "jade", people replaced yù by fēng to avoid this repetition (Huang:1964).

(2) yù yī yù --> yù yī fēng

jade one jade --> jade one classifier

Here the meaning shift is slight, but it marks a significant move in the development of classifier systems in Archaic Chinese.

In Shang-Zhou inscriptions, the sequence of Num + Cl was postnominal. The distributional order is "enumerated noun/numeral/classifier". For example, yáng liǎng tóu sheep/two/head "two sheep". Dobson (1974) generalizes the form of distribution as the following:

Classifiers	Nouns
liǎng, chéng	Coaches, chariots
rén, fū	Humans
bór	Nobles
pī	Horses
gè	Arrows, poles
jí	Enemies, grades in rank
tóu	Cattle, sheep
suǒ	Buildings, houses
méi	Coins, curios
kǒu	"Heads" of population
pī	Bolts of cloth, cavalrymen
pí	Furs, carcasses
jù	Mats
tōng	Books
sōu	Boats, ships

líng	Carpets, mats

In the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.) classifiers showed a tendency to move before the noun, but only some ten sentences can be found with this new distribution: "numeral/classifier/enumerated noun" (Huang:1961), e.g., yī piáo yǐn 'one wooden=dipper drink'. Dobson also lists the classifiers with this distribution.

Classifiers	Nouns
jiè	Officials, servants
pī	Horses
shù	Trees
duèn	Meals

Verbal classifiers occur after the Han period. "Their purpose is to provide for the enumeration of the number of occurrences of an action, or for the singling out of a single instance" (Dobson:1974). The distribution is "verb/numeral/classifier". The earliest verbal classifiers guò, fān, kǒu have the meaning 'a time or turn'.

2.2. Middle Chinese

It was in the Dynasty of Wei, Jin, Nan, and Bei (220 A.D. - 581 A.D.) that the usage of classifiers began to flourish. Although the sequence of Num + Cl

preceding the noun originated in the Han Dynasty, the postnominal position was still prominent. The classifier had independent status and free position, either preceding the noun or following the noun. So it was possible to say mǎ pī 'horse Cl' or pī mǎ 'Cl horse'. In the Dynasty of Wei, Jin, Nan and Bei, the preposed classifier became the dominant pattern. This implies that the classifier was weakened from a full word into a functional morpheme, depending on the noun. From then on, the classifier developed into a functional grammatical element. Individual classifiers proliferated (Liu:1962). The classifier system developed to its mature stage, and subsequent centuries have seen further maturing of the classificatory system.

2.3. Modern Chinese

In sum, Chinese classifiers went through three long, slow stages: (1) emergence, (2) development, and (3) maturity (Huang:1964). We see the first stage in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties: classifiers were rare, no more than forty, and simple numbers were used to count quantities. The Han Dynasty is transitional between the first and second stage: classifiers increased; people used either numbers or classifiers to count quantities. The Nan Bei period is the true developmental stage: here the majority of classifiers emerged. Classifiers were normally required when counting quantities, but occasionally people still used a number without a classifier. In the final, mature stage, the number of classifiers

reached its peak, and the use of classifiers in collocation with numerals and deictics is compulsory. There are no more instances of counting quantities without classifiers.

2.4. Traditional Classifier Patterns

The structure of classifiers has gone through four steps:

1.	Nx	+	Num	+	Nx (where x = same)
	rén		wǔ		rén
	man		five		man
2.	N	+	Num	+	Cl
	rén		wǔ		fū
	man		five		Cl=male adult
3.	N	+	Num	+	Cl
	rén		wǔ		gè
	man		five		Cl=individual
4.	Num	+	Cl	+	N
	wǔ		gè		rén
	five		Cl		man

In the first stage, the classifier position was filled by a noun, an exact copy of the preceding noun base. In the second stage, the classifier came into being when the duplicated noun was transformed into a measure word. Psychologically, a new term is preferred to the repetition. The Num + Cl in a postnominal position was independent of the noun: a word or a phrase could be inserted between them. The combination of Num + Cl without a noun could function as a subject or an object. The classifier can also be used without a numeral. Especially when the number is yī 'one', it can be omitted. For example:

(3)	cǐ	bèi	yī	péng	-->	cǐ	bèi	péng
	bestow	shell	one	Cl	-->	bestow	shell	CL

(Cl=two strings of shells)

For a long time, pattern 3 and pattern 4 were used interchangeably. Pattern 3 was more common in earliest times and pattern 4 more common in modern Chinese.

Both developmentally and historically, therefore, we find the following trends.

1. Mensural classifiers appear before individual classifiers or sortal classifiers. This fact lends support to Greenberg's hypothesis that classifiers developed from the expression of quantity (1972) and Erbaugh's proposal: "Historically,

individual classifiers may originate from currency through trade, where those and other items are being counted, inventoried and disputed" (Erbaugh:1984:42). Currency was necessarily often used individually or collectively in exchange of commodities. It is quite reasonable that individual classifiers stem from currency.

2. Noun classifiers occur before verb classifiers.

3. Nouns exist before classifiers.

Classifiers derive most commonly from nouns. There is no doubt about the relationship between the noun and the classifier. The earliest echo classifier is a noun. When the echo classifiers separated from the noun, the new kind of sortal classifier emerged. In fact, some of the earliest classifiers are pictographic characters of the nouns. For example, the classifier "丰" fēng is similiar to the noun "玉" yù "jade" in shape. Not surprisingly, some classifiers are homophonous with nouns.

Chapter 3
RECENT VIEWS OF CLASSIFIERS

Numeral classification is a wide-spread phenomenon in Southeast Asia. Descriptions of classificatory systems involving numerals have been published over the last two or three decades for a number of Southeast Asian languages. Different concerns lead different sets of authors to offer different suggestions for the classifier system. Greenberg (1972, 1974) claims that classifiers add no information or have no meaning other than 'unit' in a numeral phrase. He defines classifiers as items "which are shown to be redundant when translation into a non-numeral classifier language is carried out" (1974:84). In Greenberg's scheme, classifiers add no meaning to the number phrase. However, such characterization is attacked by many linguists. Erbaugh's discussion of Chinese numeral classification, of which 16% of the shifts were meaningful, refutes the claim of Greenberg that the classifier adds only the meaning of 'unit'. Keith Allan (1977) defines classifiers according to three criteria: 1) they occur as morphemes in surface structures under specifiable conditions 2) they have meaning 3) they classify nouns according to the inherent characteristics of the entities to which they refer. He disagrees with Greenberg's view by saying that if classifiers were meaningless, the use of different classifiers with the same noun would have no semantic effect, but in fact it does, and different classifiers are used with the same

noun to focus on different characteristics of the referent (1977:290). Greenberg focusses on the function of classifiers as individualizers. On the other hand, Allan and Erbaugh are mostly concerned with the fact that classifiers predicate something about the nouns they classify. I think we should combine these two points of view: one function of classifiers having to do with predicating something about the referent, and the other function with indicating quantity. Considering only one aspect of the function of classifiers can lead to mis-characterization. Dr. Killingley's book on Cantonese classifiers in 1983 seems to be an important recent work on the topic. In Chapter 2 she asks the question "do classifiers have meaning ?" According to her opinion, the answer is both yes and no. We should consider the possibility that not all classifiers have the same degree of semantic marking. One suggestion she makes is that 'meaning' is fed to the classifier from its surrounding syntax in the NP.

Another controversial issue is the definition of classifiers. In China there are two schools represented by Chen Wang Dao and Li Jin Xi. In a grammar book Hanyu Yufa Jiaocai (1959), Li Jin Xi defines classifiers as a unit of quantity. In other words, classifiers are mensural classifiers. Chen Wang Dao (1973) questions the correctness of this definition, because some classifiers do not quantify nouns. For example: the classifier zuò, referring to an immovable construction, can go with a large bridge 6000 metres long as well as a small bridge several metres long. We use the classifier jiān for a conference hall in the White House and a small

booth. Their quantity is so different that the classifiers can hardly qualify as measures. So classifiers include those which 'qualify' the noun, as in the examples above, and those which 'quantify' it, as in all languages. Chen Wang Da calls the former shape classifiers and the latter mensural classifiers. The mensural quantification is more definite than the shape quantification.

In recent years, some scholars are no longer satisfied with the syntactical and semantical roles of classifiers; they have gone beyond the normal functions of classifier and touched upon the rhetorical function of classifiers. Killingley (1986) points out "Insufficient attention has been given in the past to the social and psychological aspects of classifier usage in languages, and to the different ways in which classifiers can be deviantly used in languages in order to achieve special effects." The deviant classifier usage expresses different attitudes on the speaker's part, e.g., playfulness, disapprobation, sarcasm and hostility. Killingley (1986:322) gives the following example: daw is used normally in an unmarked sense with a wide-ranging variety of non-human animate nouns, e.g., nouns referring to bees, pigs, and tigers; daw is also used in a marked sense with certain human nouns referring to people to whom one is not usually favourably disposed, e.g., nouns referring to thieves and prostitutes. The Chinese scholar Jin Tian Fei (1985) briefly talks about the rhetorical function of Mandarin classifiers. He points out that reduplication of the classifier has the meaning of 'every', as well as exaggeration. For example, jīn jīn jǐjiào catty/catty/calculating 'haggle over

every ounce' describes somebody who is preoccupied with his personal gains and losses. According to his view, a classifier can make an image much more concrete. For example: yí lù gēshēng one/road/sound of song 'a road full of song', yí qiāng rè xuè one/cavity/warm/blood 'full of righteous ardour'. 'Sound of song' and 'warm blood' are here somewhat abstract; after they combine with the concrete classifiers 'road' and 'cavity', they become concretized. The rhetorical function of Mandarin classifiers is one of the important characteristics that distinguish classifiers from other parts of speech. We should be aware of the normal usage of classifiers and also of the rhetorical usage; then we can say that we understand the Mandarin classifier system in depth.

According to the common phenomenon that different classifiers may be used with the same noun with a corresponding difference in meaning, many linguists, e.g., J. Peter Denny (1976b) and Karen L. Adams (1973), point out the relationship between a classifier and a noun. The noun as a symbol is imprecise and its physical referents can have different enough characteristics that different classifiers are appropriate for them. It is also possible for the same referent to be the topic of conversation, but for a speaker to use a different classifier because he/she is interested in different qualities of the object in question. It may be a writer's or speaker's desire to present an image vividly and to help the reader or listener see the world in specific ways (Adams 1986:242-243).

The classifier languages function to place the referent in two systems of classes. These two systems are independent of each other in the sense that the situation being talked about and the speaker's intentions about the information to be conveyed determine the choice of classifier and of noun - the classifier need not be tied to the noun within the linguistic structure itself. Constraints on the cooccurrence of classifiers and nouns are pragmatic ones arising from the nature of the physical and social world in which they are used (Denny:1976:123).

Like semantics, in which a word has a sememe and different meanings of the word are allosemes, a noun refers to a property which is a fundamental concept at the underlying level, but a classifier may refer to an individual or a set of individuals which constitute a meaning at the surface level. The former is permanent and not directly observable, being stored in the subconscious. The latter is momentary and directly observable to one who speaks the language. For example, I go to a store to buy cigarettes. The word 'cigarette' must have a fairly general meaning. How can the shop assistant not choose something else like candy or a chop rather than cigarettes from the shelf ? Different aspects of the noun are specified through the use of various classificatory elements. For example:

(1)	yī	gēn	xiāngyān
	one	stick	cigarette

'one cigarette'

(2) yī bāo xiāngyān

one pack cigarette

'a pack of cigarettes'

(3) yī tiáo xiāngyān

one carton cigarette

'a carton of cigarettes'

(4) yī xiāng xiāngyān

one box cigarette

'a box of cigarettes'

The choice among classifiers is a matter that must be treated not only as a part of the grammar of the language but also as a part of pragmatics.

Several nouns can also occur with a particular classifier. In this case, the classifier is polysemous. For example, the functional classifier bǎ 'grasp' refers to things with handles.

(5) yī bǎ dāo

one CL=grasp knife

'a knife'

The same morpheme bǎ is also a mensural classifier:

(6) yī bǎ mǐ

one CL=grasp rice

'a handful of rice'

One feature of classifiers that is often noted is their ability to appear as "noun substitutes". The noun-head can be deleted, if it is already referred to in an immediately preceding context. e.g.,

(7) liǎng zhī lǎohǔ pǎo de kuài

two CL tiger run EXTENT fast

'Two tigers run fast.'

yī zhī méi yǒu yǎnjīng

one CL not have eye

'One of them does not have eyes.'

(8) nǐ kàndào jǐ gè rén le ?

you see how many CL people PERFECT

'How many people have you seen ?'

liǎng gè

two CL

'Two'

Both the noun rén 'people' and the classifier gè appear in the question, but only the classifier in the reply. Once the noun has established the property 'people' it is not needed again.

A classifier can occur with the neutral noun dōngxī 'something' which shows nothing at all about the shape of the object: the speaker sees it for the first time and its name is unknown to him. However, the shape of the object is described by the classifier. The number can be omitted when it is yī 'one'.

(9) tā rǔfáng shàng zhǎng le kuài

her breast on grow PAST CL=square

yīng dōngxī

hard thing

'A hard thing comes out on her breast.'

(10) yǒu zhī yòu yuán yòu biǎn de

have CL=round both round and flat

dōngxī zāi tiānshàng fēi guō

thing in sky fly PAST

'There is a round and flat thing which flies through the air.'

If grammatical number (single, plural) is marked at all in a classifier construction, it is usually marked on or by the numeral or the classifier, not on the noun. e.g.,

(11) yī zhī gēzi --> liǎng zhī

one CL pigeon --> two CL

gēzi --> yī duì gēzi

pigeon --> one pair pigeon

In recent years, some linguists have observed that a variety of languages, as typologically and geographically diverse as Mandarin and Jaceltec, share strikingly similar systems of noun classification. Is this similarity accidental, or does it reflect certain underlying forces, such as the categorial operation of human minds? In fact, classifier languages have the richest sources of data concerning the structure of conceptual categories. Lakoff (1988) has contributed substantially to this discussion: he develops his notion of "idealized cognitive models", in terms of which we organize the world. The following comment was made by Prideaux (1988:280):

"Lakoff argues strongly for the existence of radial categories, those having basic or central members plus others which are linked to the central members by a principle of chaining. In addition to the Dyirbal category containing fire, women, and dangerous things found in the title of the book, Lakoff offers several other examples, a particularly interesting one of which is the Japanese classifier hon. This form is typically used for long thin objects such as sticks, canes, pencils, etc. But it can also be used to classify hits in baseball (by association from its use for classifying bats), telephone calls (made over long, thin wires), radio and TV programs (like telephone calls, but without the wires), movies (which come on reels of long, thin film), and many more. Chaining is an important characteristic of radial categories since it provides a motivation for extending a category from central to non-central members".

Classifiers represent a device existing in various linguistic modalities, serving to label an object. The label one chooses is determined by one's perception of the object, or, vice versa, one's perception of an object is also influenced by its label. These features can be attributed to the fact that the underlying meaning of the head-noun can be actualized through the surface meaning of the classifier.

Chapter 4
DESCRIPTION OF MANDARIN CLASSIFIERS

Mandarin classifiers may be divided according to two main semantic functions: mensural classifiers and shape classifiers. A mensural classifier is exact and extrinsic to the head noun. Constructions of this type are familiar to speakers of English: '3 pounds of pork'. A shape classifier, on the other hand, requires the presence of some salient perceived or imputed characteristic of the associated noun. For example: yī tiáu hé 'one/CL(=flexible and long)/river'. We can discuss the classifier tiáu in English, but we cannot translate it, for there is no syntactic or semantic equivalent in English. Mensural classifiers appeared earlier than shape classifiers. Classifiers may first be quantitative units used with a wide variety of nouns for 'how much' of something divisible. Secondly, they are also identifiers, stressing the nature as well as the units of a noun. Mensural classifiers individuate noun referents according to quantity; shape classifiers individuate noun referents according to the shape.

4.1. Mensural Classifiers

Mensural classifiers are found in almost every language. The quantity indicated by mensural classifiers is either precise or imprecise. Standard classifiers are precise; containment classifiers and some group classifiers are imprecise.

4.1.1. Standard Classifiers

The earliest classifiers are mensural classifiers, more definitely, standard classifiers. They are measures proper and state exact amounts of length, weight and volume. The following are typical standard classifiers:

chǐ	(Chinese) foot
cùn	(Chinese) inch
lǐ	about a third of a mile
mǐ	meter
gōnglǐ	kilometer
mǎ	yard
jīn	about a pound
gōngjīn	kilogram
bàng	pound
kuài	dollar
máu	10 cents
fēn	cent

Standard classifiers have standard units. They can have single concrete number like the other classifiers as well as double concrete number the other classifiers do not have: Number 1/CL 1/Number 2/CL 2, where CL 2 is the next

smaller denomination than CL 1. The single concrete number shí wǔ fēn 'fifteen cents' can be expressed by double concrete number yī máu wǔ fēn one/CL=10 cents/five/CL=cent/ 'fifty cents'.

4.1.2. Containment classifiers

With the development of civilisation and variety of life, the definite mensural classifiers are not adequate for all usage: sometimes there is no need to refer to an exact quantity, and sometimes the instrument for measurement is not at hand. As a result classifiers for indefinite measurement came into use: containment classifiers for example. Unlike other mensural classifiers, containment classifiers refer less intimately to the noun denoting the article contained and more to the containers themselves (Killingley:1983:41). Yī wǎn fàn 'one bowl of rice', although referring ultimately to a collection of grains of rice, does so through the medium of their containment in a container, making the rice one degree more removed than in the cases of other mensural classification. Containment classifiers are extrinsic without inherent relationship with the noun classified.

(1) yī hú shuí

one kettle water

'a kettle of water'

(2) liǎng bēi kāfēi

two cup coffee

'two cups of coffee'

Although we say the container classifier can not give us a precise measurement, it has a container as its measuring standard. However, there are classifiers which rarely measure the amount of things. Body parts or enclosed areas can be used as such classifiers. Unlike other classifiers they may not be preceded by numerals greater than one, with a special meaning 'all over'.

(3) yī shēn ní

one body mud

'mud all over the body'

(4) yī bí huēi

one nose dust

'dust all over the nose'

(5) yī liǎn hàn

one face sweat

'sweat all over the face'

(6) yī dù qì

one stomach anger

'anger all over the stomach'

(7) yī shǒu yóu

one hand oil

'oil all over the hand'

(8) yī dì shuěi

one floor water

'a floorful of water'

The above all concern surfaces: the following is an example presenting an entire interiority:

(9) yī wū yān

one house smoke

'a houseful of smoke'

The body parts are unique objects, so they never occur as distributive reduplicates. These classifiers of container and body parts are temporary classifiers. They are open classes and borrowed from nouns and are very easily identified with homophonous nouns.

4.1.3. Group classifiers

Mensural words can also indicate a group or collection of individuals. Group mensural classifiers may be either precise or imprecise, too. For instance:

Precise:

(10) yī duì gēzi
one pair pigeon
'a pair of pigeons'

(11) sān shuāng xié
three pair shoe
'three pairs of shoes'

(12) yī dā jīdàn
one dozen egg

'one dozen eggs'

Imprecise

(13) yī qún mǎ

one herd horse

'a herd of horses'

(14) liǎng pái shù

two row tree

'two rows of trees'

(15) zhěng chuàn zhūzi

whole string pearl

'the whole string of pearls'

(16) zhè duī lājī

this pile garbage

'this pile of garbage'

4.2. Shape Classifiers

It is important to note that every classifier language has shape classifiers. Shape is a more important quality than color or smell, more easily observable, and less changeable. According to Adams' investigation (1973:5): "The three most frequently used plant parts, i.e. stalk (tree), fruit, and leaf correspond directly to the three basic shapes of long, round and flat. These shapes are by far the strongest metaphors which occur in the numeral classifier construction. Since these three basic shapes originate with the plants, it is obvious that the plants are the source of this metaphor. We feel that long and round are perhaps prior to flatness since in many cases flatness appears as length extended in two directions. One might well view long and round as obvious sexual metaphors." Since human perceptions are generally similar, Mandarin is no exception and utilizes shape as a major factor in classification. Shape classifiers categorize entities according to some physical criterion of the associated noun. The shape classifiers have no relation with quantity. They do not establish the unit to be counted but give additional information about it. Their measurement is indefinite. As we have said before we can use the classifier zuò both for a large bridge 6000 metres long as well as for a small bridge several metres long. Quantitatively, they are so different that the classifier can hardly qualify as a measure.

Shape classifiers denote some salient characteristic of the associated noun: characteristics such as shape, size, rigidity and thickness (Allan 1977: 301). There are three basic shapes: one-dimensional, long objects; two-dimensional, flat ones; three-dimensional, round ones. The basic shapes can be combined in various ways and with various secondary parameters to form large numbers of classes. These secondary parameters include 1) rigid or flexible 2) small or large 3) thick or thin. The one-dimensional subcategory often combines with the category of consistency such that "rope-like" is composed of "one-dimensional" and "flexible", e.g., river, snake, fish and dragon; "stick-like" is composed of "one-dimensional" and "rigid", e.g., bone, finger, log and branch. Similarly, the two-dimensional subcategory is further divided into two groups: thick ones like stone, soap, plank and thin ones like leaves, keys, bread, newspaper, paper and blankets. Three-dimensional classifiers quickly subdivide into more or less spherical, fruit-shaped objects, as opposed to tiny, hard or grain-like ones. The three-dimensional classifiers are usually fruits, eggs, animals or seeds. Examples are listed below:

zhī (round and big):

jīdàn 'egg', yǎnjīn 'eye', bēizi 'cup', wǎn 'bowl'

lì (round, tiny and hard):

mǐ 'rice', zǐdàn 'bullet', kòuzǐ 'button', cándòu 'broad bean'

tiáu (long and flexible):

shé 'snake', hé 'river', yú 'fish', lóng 'dragon', chóng 'worm'

gēn (long and rigid):

huǒchái 'match', gùnzi 'stick', gútóu 'bone', yān 'cigarette', tóufà 'hair'

kuài (flat and thick):

ménbǎn 'door plank', féizào 'soap', shǒubiǎo 'wristwatch', tián 'field', shítóu 'stone'

piàn (flat and thin):

miànbāo 'bread', yào 'tablet', shùyè 'leaf', yàoshi 'key', xiānggān 'smoked bean curd'

A noun need not be classed by any apparent intrinsic feature; it may be classed on the basis of shape, a prototypical perceived one. In Mandarin "ball, eye and fruit" are all included in one class based on their roundness. But this class does not include "banana", because it is not round like oranges, apples, etc.. Another example is "snake". Prototypical animals are three-dimensional, but the non-prototypical snake is one-dimensional because of its long and flexible shape.

There are no secondary qualities like color, taste, smell, sound, which are important in the semantics. "Counting requires some distance from the entities to be grouped because it requires that inclusion in the counted group be based on some obvious similarity or set of similarities among the items. Perhaps this fact makes the other senses less useful because the impressions gained from them are more time based and transitory. Also the visual impression requires less intimacy with or closeness to the object concerned." (Adams:1973:8)

We have suggested two main semantic functions for Mandarin classifiers. Shape classifiers are the description of the counted noun by referring to its shape, and consequently do not directly establish the unit to be counted e,g., yī tiáo hé = a river that is long and flexible. Mensural classifiers establish a unit for counting either precisely, that is a standard mensural classifier, or imprecisely, that is a temporary mensural classifier. Temporary classifiers are mostly borrowed from nouns. Nouns may be disyllabic, but classifiers are monosyllabic. When a noun is used as a classifier, the noun will change from disyllabic to monosyllabic. For instance:

píngzi	--->	yī	píng	píjiǔ
bottle	--->	one	bottle (CL)	beer
			'one bottle of beer'	

zhuōzi	-->	yī	zhuō	fàncài

table ---> one table (CL) dish

'one table of dishes'

"Mensural classifiers appear to be more meaningful than shape classifiers when viewed in isolation" (Killingley:1983:8). The meaning of a mensural classifier is independent of the counted noun; the meaning of a shape classifier relates directly to the associated noun. A shape classifier can also be neutralized by the general classifier gè, while a mensural classifier can not. A mensural classifier concerns itself with estimating things by some sort of measurement. A shape classifier is a word for the shape of a specific object. Their difference lies in qualifying the noun or quantifying the noun.

4.3. Functional and Instrumental Classifiers

In addition, some classifications are made on the basis of function: they include classifiers for things with handles and instruments we rely on. A functional classifier bǎ 'take hold' is used with N's referring to things generally meant to be used as instruments. These things include many weapons, domestic equipment and some musical instruments. The referents may indeed be held or may be used for holding something (Killingley:1982:10): dāu 'knife', fǔzī 'axe', shànzī 'fan'. The instrumental classifier dāu 'knife' is used with zhǐ 'paper' to denote a quire and with ròu 'meat', because we cut paper and meat with a knife; bǐ 'pen' is the classifier for zhàng 'account' and zì 'character' since account and characters are written by a pen.

4.4. General Classifier

Mandarin, like most classifier languages, also has a general classifier gè for objects; gè is used in an unmarked sense with a great many nouns referring to all kinds of animate and inanimate mental and physical objects. A learner of Mandarin is readily advised to use gè when in doubt and call gè an all-purpose classifier. It indicates nothing at all about the shape of the object and nothing at all about its function, but it is specifically used only for single individual objects and never for amounts.

4.5. Classifiers for Single Referent

Finally, I would like to briefly mention the classifiers which have only a single common referent. The total number of these classifiers is small. Their appearance has a particular historical reason: all of the objects referred to by classifiers are highly valued and belong to the upper class. For example, horses were imperial animals, while hats displayed official rank.

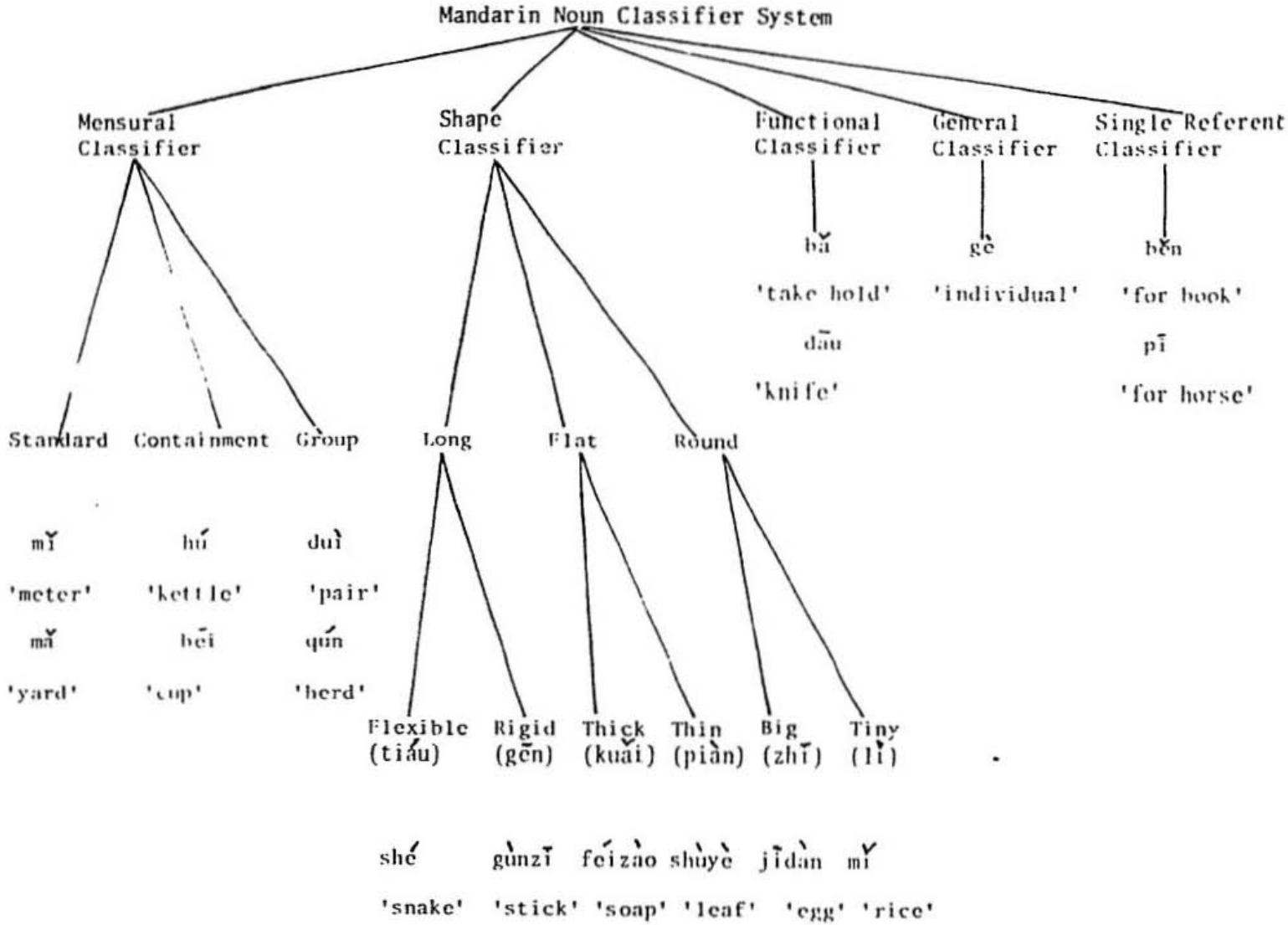
Classifiers	Nouns
bēn	books
ding	hats
jù	speech

pī	horses
wèi	honored people

4.6. Conclusion

The main purpose of this section has been to show the classifier system from a semantic point of view. Each part is roughly defined and grouped into handy, but not necessarily precise, categories. It is not always possible to find an explanation for the relationship between the noun and the classifier. Some classification has fossilized conventions that restrict innovation. It is often difficult to say why a noun takes one classifier rather than another. Why a head of pig and not a head of dog ? There are historical reasons, but none available to the average speaker, who just accepts such things as facts. It is also the custom with certain nouns to select certain classifiers. It is well-known that Mandarin is different from the other Chinese dialects only in the spoken form, and they are almost the same in the written form. However, there exists a slight difference in choosing a classifier. For example, for the noun dāo 'knife', Mandarin uses the classifier bǎ , which is used with N's referring to things meant for some purpose; Cantonese chooses the classifier zhāng, which refers to things with a flat surface. For the cow, Mandarin selects the classifier tóu 'head', while Shanghai dialect uses zhī , which generally refers to a big round shape.

The analysis of the Mandarin classifier system given above is presented in visual form in the following diagram.


Mandarin Noun Classifier System
Mensural Classifier
Shape Classifier
Functional Classifier
General Classifier
Single Referent Classifier
bǎ
'take hold'
dāu
'knife'
gè
'individual'
běn
'for book'
pī
'for horse'
Standard
Containment
Group
Long
Flat
Round
mǐ
'meter'
mǎ
'yard'
hú
'kettle'
bēi
'cup'
duì
'pair'
qún
'herd'
Flexible (tiáu)
Rigid (gēn)
Thick (kuài)
Thin (piàn)
Big (zhī)
Tiny (lì)
shé
'snake'
gùnzī
'stick'
féizào
'soap'
shùyè
'leaf'
jīdàn
'egg'
mǐ
'rice'

Chapter 5
RHETORICAL FUNCTION OF CLASSIFIERS

Studies of classifiers have concentrated on the grammatical role of classifiers and on their semantic interpretations. The rhetorical function of classifiers has rarely been described. However, in recent years, some scholars have begun to take an interest in this area. Siew-Yue Killingley (1986) in her paper on "Normal and Deviant Classifier Usage In Cantonese" points out the deviant classifier usage of wèi. I call the deviant usage "irony". The Chinese scholar Jin Tian Fei briefly talked about the rhetorical function of classifiers in 1985. He gives the following example: "Liu's wife thinks that it'll soon be New Year, but there is not a grain of rice in the earthen jar, not a pinch of salt in the pot, not a drop of oil in the bottle. So she asks her husband to sell the spun cotton yarn and with the money to buy one decalitre of rice, two pounds of salt and one bottle of oil." Obviously, the second group of classifiers "decalitre, pound and bottle" is used to enumerate the nouns. For the first group of classifiers "grain, pinch and drop", their main role is not measurement. Just three classifiers can present a picture of a penniless family; the normal classifiers can advance the language to a highly artistical level. Analysing Mandarin classifiers reveals that the classifier is dynamic and can be rhetorically used to achieve literary effect. Figurative description has been made into a fine art by the Chinese.

The classifiers used for playing a rhetorical function are all temporary and borrowed from nouns, adjectives and verbs. They are different from the other classifiers and weak in calculating an exact quantity. The role played by the rhetorical classifiers is to heighten emotional colouring and literary flavour, and to describe the object vividly and vigorously. This rhetorical function usually appears in literary works, offers full scope to the imagination and may leave a deep impression on the reader's mind. Mandarin classifiers possess various rhetorical functions: they may be used to stimulate associations, to illustrate, to raise laughter, to ornament. More important, they may have an esthetic function.

5.1. Sketching

In the world there exist various kinds of objects. We can distinguish one from another because we know their properties. To sketch them is just to describe their characteristics as things really are without any exaggeration or comparison. This gives us a fundamental representation of experience; and people can achieve a lifelike feeling for the described object. For instance:

(1) yī fāng shǒupà

one CL=square handkerchief

'a handkerchief which is square'

(2) yī wān xīn yuè

one CL new moon (CL=curved)

'a new moon which is curved'

(3) yī wān lǜ shuǐ

one CL green water (CL=bend)

'a bend of green water'

(4) yī pán wénxiāng

one CL mosquito-repellent incense (CL=coil)

'a mosquito-repellent incense which is coiled'

We should not confuse the sketching classifiers with the shape classifiers, although they all refer to physical characteristics of objects. Shape classifiers are standard and regular; sketching classifiers are temporary and borrowed from nouns, adjectives and verbs. The former is a closed class, while the latter is an open class. We discuss the physical characteristics of sketching classifiers from the rhetorical and artistic point of view, but the physical characteristics of shape classifiers in a neutral level. Here is a minimal pair:

(5) yī fāng shǒupà

one sketching CL handkerchief

'a handkerchief'

(6) yī kuài shǒupà

one shape CL handkerchief

'a handkerchief'

In yī fang shǒupà, the classifier is emphasized. The handkerchief must be spread out and shows us a square shape before our eyes. So you can not say yī fang shǒupà in a pocket. In yī kuài shǒupà, we pay attention more to the noun than to the classifier. Although the shape classifier kuài means 'square', too, the noun modified by the classifier does not need to be spread out and to show a square shape. So we can say yī kuài shǒupà in a pocket.

5.2. Simile

A simile is, more or less, a comparison of two things which resemble one another in some way. A simile images the described object and strikes the imagination. In Chinese, the rhetorical function of the simile may be realized by a classifier. The classifier introduces an object which is used as a reference for the described object in a comparison. The function of the classifier is to make a mental connection with the original meaning before the element is used as a classifier; this associates the described object with the object displayed by the classifier. The simile function of classifiers can illustrate the object vividly.

(7) yī shàn chuānghù

one CL=fan window

'a window'

(8) yī lún hóngrì gún jīnqiú

one CL=wheel red sun roll golden ball

'The red sun is rolling like a golden ball when it rises.'

(a famous saying from Emperor Qian Long)

(9) yī sī fēng

one CL wind (CL=a threadlike thing)

'a breath of wind'

When the window is turned around the axle, it is exactly like a fan we wave in the hand. When the east is red, the sun rises; the sun is as round as a wheel. 'Wind' is compared to a threadlike thing: thin, light, faint and temporary.

5.3. Metonymy

A metonymy is a figure of speech in which one thing is represented by another, not because of a resemblance, but because the one thing is so associated

with the other that the mind will readily think of the one when the other is mentioned. In this case, the whole of a thing is represented by one of its parts which is the most characteristic. This characteristic part is represented by the classifier to refer to the whole thing. The description lays emphasis on a single feature, and thereby achieves a rhetorical function.

(10) liǎng tóu shīzi
two CL=head lion
'two lions'

(11) yī bǎi wěi dà liyū
one hundred CL=tail big carp
'one hundred big carps'

(12) sān kǒu rén
three CL=mouth people
'three people'

(13) shí fēng luòtuò
ten CL=peak camel
'ten camels'

For a lion, we do not choose such other parts as a claw, but a head as its classifier, because the lion's head is very big and its mane stands out. The ferocious character of the lion is reflected by its head, which is why the head is used as a classifier for a lion. When a fish swims in the water, its tail swings constantly. So it is vivid to depict fish according to their tails. We count people or pigs by 'mouth' because 'mouth' is the organ for eating and maintaining life. So it is suitable for the body to be represented by the mouth. A camel's back towers like a mountain's peak: fēng 'peak' can be used as a classifier only for the camel, since the other animals do not have the characteristic. The back of the camel is its most striking feature. So we use this part to represent a camel and thus produce a metonymic function. Examples (10) - (13) have, however, varying degrees of metaphorical force: (10), for example, is quite ordinary, and should probably be considered a dead metonymy. Examples (11) and (12) are restricted to certain expressive usages, in place of the normal classifiers tiáo=long flexible in (11), and gè=general in (12). The classifier in (13), by contrast, would never be heard in everyday usage; the normal classifier would be tóu 'head'.

A simile is different from a metonymy. In the simile, we compare things which are similar between two objects; the relationship between the classifier and the modified noun is a relationship of similarity. In metonymy, their relationship is that between a part and a whole: a classifier is used for the description of a part to represent a whole. The characteristic of the object is conspicuous.

5.4. Exaggeration

Exaggeration overstates, magnifying or diminishing an object beyond its natural bounds. As we said before, the quantity represented by a rhetorical classifier is not important. So in literary works, a magnifying quantity or a diminishing quantity can be used to increase an object's images. From an emotional need, we can exaggerate an object in various ways. The object represented by the classifier is purposely exaggerated beyond its size and importance for the sake of surprise and emphasis.

(14) yī tān xiě
one CL=beach blood
'a lot of blood'

(15) tā xià le yī tiào
she scare PAST one CL=jump
'She was scared.'

(16) yī xiáo cuō huài rén
one small CL=pinch bad person

'a handful of scoundrels'

(17)

yī	yè	biān	zhōu
one	CL=leaf	small	boat

'a small boat'

When tān 'beach' is used as a noun, its area is very large. Here we use tān 'beach' as a classifier and compare the quantity of blood with the size of a beach, which is of course an exaggeration. Its function stresses a large amount of blood, not several drops of blood. When we are nervous and scared, our body can give a little start. However people use 'jump' to describe such a light start; an exaggeration occurs as it is not normal for us to jump in the air when we are startled. This is a kind of exaggeration which magnifies an object beyond its natural bounds. The diminutive classifier cuō is normally used to refer to small powdery substances such as salt and soil, but a reference to a person as 'pinch' expresses contempt; their strength like a pinch of powder is looked down upon. To compare with the river and sea, a boat seems very small: the boat may be considered diminished to a leaf in the sense perception. This is a kind of exaggeration which diminishes an object beyond the truth.

5.5. Irony

Classifiers can express a range of feelings and attitudes on the speaker's part, e.g., sarcasm, hostility, and irony. There are derogatory classifiers like bāng 'gang', huǒ 'band' which usually refer to bad people like 'gangsters, robbers, thieves, rioters, lawbreakers'. There are commendatory classifiers, too. The classifier yuán expresses a praising feeling and combines with a noun like hǔ jiàng 'brave general'. The classifier wèi is an honorific classifier, used in a formal way to indicate the speaker's wish to show marked politeness. We find the same thing for wèi in Cantonese as Killingley showed in analysing the difference beween wèi and gò (1986:324): "wèi may not be used with nouns referring to people who are traditionally regarded as inferiors, e.g., labourers, farmers, servants, and children. And while it would be appropriate to say nèy wày fūlyán your-classifier-wife in a marked polite register to an unfamiliar professional colleague, it would sound rude and mocking if the same phrase were said to a butcher." When a commendatory classifier combines with a derogatory noun, the classifier can express a feeling of irony; it intentionally or unintentionally belies the real meaning and expresses the opposite of what is said. One may express a satirical feeling toward the person referred to by adding an unexpected expression of respect. We can find such usage in literary works.

(18)	zhè	wèi	ànchāng	
	this	CL	unlicensed prostitute	(CL.=honorific)

'this unlicensed prostitute'

Another example is wō which is used normally with non-human animate nouns, e.g., birds, pigs and chickens. Wō is also used ironically with certain human nouns to express the attitude of hostility.

(19) yī wō tǔfěi
one nest bandit
'a lair of bandits'

Here we can feel a sense of hostility as people who are doing bad things are compared to animals. In certain contexts, however, this classifier can express an intimate relationship.

(20) tā shì wǒmen yī wōzi rén
he is our one nest people
'He is one of us.'

The form wōzi in (20) is an extended, restricting form of wō.

5.6. Collocation

The speaker's particular desire to gain a special effect may lead him to use an unusual collocation. An abnormal collocation of classifier and noun can also produce a rhetorical function. The following are examples from Xu's paper (1987:91-94):

(21) yī chuán míng yuè

one CL=boat bright moonlight

'a boatful of bright moonlight'

A boat is very concrete; moonlight is less so. This abnormal collocation can show us a scene in which a bright moonlight shines over the boat, while the boat moves through the water in the moonlight.

(22) tā hǎoshì zuò le yī huǒchē

he good thing do PAST one train

'He did good very much while he took the train.'

"Doing good" cannot be counted by trainloads. But here this has been used purposely to present a picture of a person doing good from the moment he steps on the train to the moment he steps off it.

(23) tāde jiān shǎng guà zhuó yī

his shoulder over sling one

chuàn chuàn kǔnǎ

CL=string CL worries

'One chain of worries slung over his shoulder.'

'Worry', as a kind of feeling, cannot be counted by a classifier. 'String' and 'worry' do not go together. However, it is this unusual collocation that has a

surprising rhetorical effect. Here 'worry' becomes a concrete thing which can be touched, counted. How many worries does he have ? 'One chain of worries hanging on his shoulder.' We can imagine how difficult his life is. In Chapter One, I briefly mentioned the descriptive and emphatic functions of repeating a classifier. This example seems to show yet another function: when an abstract noun can not be counted by a concrete classifier, the classifier can be repeated. It seems that the second classifier together with the abstract noun forms a new concrete noun phrase. It is this concrete noun phrase that is then counted by the first classifier.

The parts of speech can be changed freely in Mandarin. The change of parts of speech is what results in the temporary classifiers and the rhetorical function. These temporary classifiers have the strongest rhetorical function. From this we can see that classifiers have developed from only expressing quantity to their use in vivid and lively representations.

There would appear to be a trend towards the simplification of classifiers: many classifiers will ultimately be replaced by the general classifier gè. However, the general classifier gè e.g., yī gè yān will probably not supersede the rhetorical classifier yī lǔ yān 'a wisp of smoke'.

CONCLUSION

This paper discusses classifiers in Mandarin, briefly mentioning the historical development of Mandarin classifiers and concentrating on two main kinds of classifiers: mensural classifiers and shape classifiers. Mensural classifiers are found in almost all languages, shape classifiers in many Southeast Asian languages. This paper also mentions recent and different views about classifiers, including those of Greenberg, Denny, Keith Allan, Erbaugh, and Killingley. Concerning rhetorical classifiers the discussion is limited to data from Mandarin, but these kinds of rhetorical classifiers will find echoes in other classifier languages. My purpose in this part is to suggest avenues to further research work on the rhetorical function of classifiers in other classifier languages. This paper, I hope, will give some idea of the scope of Mandarin classifiers and provoke scholars into re-examining the rhetorical function of classifiers in other languages.

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