CHAPTER V

USAGE OF CLASSIFIERS IN THAI
5.0. Introduction

Thai classifiers form a linguistic system of great richness and complexity. As already discussed in the previous chapters Thai classifiers exhibit many vital functions, both morpho-syntactic and semantic. The Thai language exemplifies universal patterns of classifier systems. It has been observed to be constructed on an interesting blend of arbitrary linguistic convention and extra-linguistic motivation. Carpenter (1991:94) finds about forty classifiers in everyday use of the Thai language whereas, another set of twenty classifiers are used relatively infrequently.

5.1. The Study of the Usage pattern of Thai Classifiers in Retrospective literature

Haas (1942:201-205) argues in brief for the use of numeral classifiers in Thai. She mentions that the classifiers in the Thai language are attributes to the noun phrase and the verb phrase in a sentence. The use of classifiers can occur with both animate and inanimate objects. She identifies five classifiers which are commonly used in referring to human beings. These are—/khon/ as a classifier for ‘human beings, /ñ conject as a classifier for ‘Buddhist monk, Buddha image, god, prince’, /rú:b/ as a classifier for ‘Buddhist monk, picture’, /thân/ as a classifier for ‘people in high rank such as prime minister etc.’, and /ton/ as a classifier for ‘ghost,
hermit, giant etc.' The usage of all classifiers except /ton/ are not found to occur with general human beings. The classifier /ton/ mostly refers to ghost, giant, hermit etc. The classifier /tɔŋ/ for 'Buddhist monk, Buddha image, god, prince' is used according to the social rank order which is referred to the royalty such as king, queen etc. /růːb/ 'Buddhist monk, picture' and /tʰâːn/ 'people in high rank' are used to indicate the general high position or respectful persons in society such as 'monk', 'prime minister' etc. Apart from this, the use of the variety of classifiers with numerals is discussed in order to enumerate the counting patterns. She observes that the classifier usage in Thai is a phenomenon governed by the culture and social status when they are used as classifiers to attribute or indicate person or things.

Wattanaprasert (1983:16-53) discusses the use of classifiers in a comparative study conducted in Bangkok and in Chiang Mai dialects. She finds that the usage of classifiers in both the dialects is a shared phenomenon of the area. Classifiers are used in both noun and verb phrases. She categorizes the use of the classifiers in a noun phrase into the following eight types which have been observed to be similar in case of both the dialects:

i. Classifiers used for human beings
ii. Classifiers used for non-human beings
iii. Classifiers used for animals
iv. Classifiers used for plants
v. Classifiers used for things
vi. Classifiers used for places
vii. Classifiers used for abstract nouns
viii. Classifiers used to indicate the measurement

She also classifies the use of classifiers in modifying the verb phrase as realized in both the dialects. She classifies verb classifiers into two major types as given in the following:

a. Use of classifiers to modify verbs of action which are both direct and indirect.

b. Use of classifiers to modify verbs of condition which are direct condition and indirect condition.

The study reveals that the usage of classifiers in different areas is dependant on the situation of those places which makes it a culture governed phenomenon. Both the dialects use classifiers to modify the category of things.

Sunkaburanuruk (1999) studies the use of classifiers in modern standard Thai by the speakers belonging to different age groups. She considers the classifier words suggested by The Royal Institute to study and identify the use of classifiers by the speakers of different ages. Generic classifiers and repeater classifiers are found to be more in use than specific classifiers. She opines that people, who belong to the age group of more than 40 years, use classifiers more correctly in a sentence than the younger generation who are less than 25 years in age, though the younger group uses classifiers more than the older group. She justifies the situation by stating that the younger group is having formal education in the language which enables them to use the classifiers with more intricacy.
James (2001:27) while studying the usage pattern of the Thai classifiers states “It is absolutely imperative to be able to master the use of classifiers when talking about classes of nouns in Thai. To use the wrong classifier when talking about a specific group of nouns would elicit lack of comprehension on the part of a Thai audience.” She discusses in brief the usage of Thai classifiers. She argues that a Thai speaker uses special words to identify particular groups of items. It has been pointed out that a classifier in the Thai language is an ‘extension of the numbering system’. The native speakers, who are learned, understand the mode or pattern of classifiers usage with appropriate use of classifiers in the sentence.

Higbie and Thinsan (2003:36-40) discuss in brief the use of classifiers in Thai. They observe two kinds of classifiers in Thai—/jæːŋ/ ‘kind, type, manner’ and /sĩŋ/ ‘thing.’ According to them a classifier /jæːŋ/ ‘kind, type’ is a general term used in the sentence while a classifier /sĩŋ/ ‘thing.’ is more specific and a formal term used in the sentence.

Smyth (2004:31-38) observes in brief, the structure and usage of classifiers in Thai. He mentions that a classifier is an obligatory component used with noun phrases which are modified by numerals in a sentence. He observes the use of specific classifiers, such as, /kʰon/ ‘human being’ used for counting people, /tua/ ‘body’ used as a classifier for animals, for objects with four legs’ and /lêm/ as a classifier for ‘sharp-pointed objects’ like books, knives, axes, pins, needle, carts, etc.’

Jaturongkachoke (2005:34-57) discusses the classifiers and discourse in a paper. She collected the data of classifier usage from three
stories and four conversations from different informants at different places. The discussion focuses on the use of classifiers in the Thai language that is dependent on the social status of the speaker. For example, /thân/ as a classifier for 'human being' is used for the person respected in the Thai society but the classifier /khon/ 'human being' is used for the general people.

A classifier can be used in both formal and informal discourse. She finds that the classifiers can be used in Thai with noun deletion permissible to the intuitive knowledge of the language of the native speakers. So, from her point of view, the usage of classifiers in the Thai language is controlled by context and cultural factors. Jaturongkachoke (2005:55) says, “In the process of using classifiers to classify, people achieve other communicative goals (cohesion of text, flowing of intended message) and the meaning of classifier is inevitably affected. The semantics of the classifier, therefore, alters from one context to another.”

Kookiattikoon (2005:15-33) mentions that the classifiers in the Thai language are not used with numbers only but are required to be used for quantifiers too. Classifiers in Thai normally follow the numeral in a sentence. For example: /sôm sḇːy lūːːk/ ‘two oranges’

In addition to this he discusses the use of classifiers in Thai. He refers to 75 classifier words which are mentioned by Hiranburana (1979). He mentions that the Thai language uses repetition of a noun to function as a classifier in a sentence such as /práthēd sḇːy práthēd/ ‘two countries’ etc.
Burusphat (2007:145-147) discusses the general usage of classifiers with specific reference to three general classifiers, such as /ʔan/ used for 'small thing', /lùːkl/ used for 'mountain, fruit, egg, etc.' and /tual/ used for 'animal, shirt, trouser, chair, table etc.' in the Thai language.

Nagamatsu (2007) is a comparative study of classifiers in Thai and Japanese. According to him the classifiers in the Thai language are mostly used to indicate social status, jobs, and sexes. He categorizes the classifiers into eight types while providing a comparative study of the usage of classifiers in both the languages. The eight categories are presented in the following,

i. The classifiers used with animates
ii. The classifiers used with plants
iii. The classifiers used with things
iv. The classifiers used with groups
v. The classifiers used with abstract nouns
vi. The classifiers used with places
vii. The classifiers used with kinds

However, he offers a general statement that the usage of classifiers in language depends on the culture and knowledge of the native speakers.

5.2. The Study of the Usage of Thai Classifiers

Taking cues from the earlier studies regarding the usage pattern of classifiers, the present study attempts to deal with the usage of classifiers among the native speakers of Thai belonging to different age groups. The
data have been collected from the Thai speakers belonging to both the sexes and from different educational backgrounds.

Both the linguistic and extra linguistic factors that are involved in such a grammatical construction have been taken into consideration for the purpose. A field investigation has been conducted to have a glimpse at the usage pattern of the Thai classifiers among the native speakers of the language belonging to different age groups and sexes. Four popular stories have been taken into account for the purpose of data collection. Sampling of data has been done from the informants, the number of informants being sixteen belonging to four different age groups. The informants belonging to four different age groups are, 0-20, 21-40, 41-60 and 61-80. The detailed information regarding the informants taken for the study is presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Education/Qualification</th>
<th>Place of residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mr. Paramuch Asawakittimatin</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ms. Thitima Vilaipornsawai</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>Surat Thani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Mr. Kati Thongsri</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ms. Patcharapak Suriwong</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>Nonthaburi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Education/Qualification</td>
<td>Place of residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
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<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ms. Nusra Kingwan</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Udon Thani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Phra Prawit Bunjai</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Ayuthaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ms. Tongta Wannawong</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Certificate in Accountancy</td>
<td>Sisaket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Phramaha Suwit Nalat</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mrs. Siriporn Somboonboona</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Nonthaburi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mr. Viriya Sawangchot</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Nonthaburi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Phra Palad Songkrit Mongkolsin</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Nakhonsawan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mrs. Waree Khosungnoen</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Nakhonratchasima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mr. Komol Pannak</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Srakeaw</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No | Name                 | Age | Sex  | Education/Qualification | Place of residence |
---|----------------------|-----|------|-------------------------|-------------------|
14. | Mrs. Mutita Kanchanapoom | 63  | Female | Grade 8                | Bangkok           |
15. | Mrs. Poem Phimthong   | 67  | Female | Grade 4                | Udon Thani        |
16. | Mr. Manit Kanchanaphoom | 75  | Male  | Grade 9                | Bangkok           |

5.2.0. Methodology of the Study

In the investigation an attempt has been made to identify the usage pattern of the classifiers in the Thai language as realized in the use of classifiers in the given popular stories by the informants belonging to different sex and age groups.

The method of our study takes into account the four very popular short stories which most of the Thai speakers are acquainted with. The four stories are mentioned in the following:

Story No.1: “The shepherd boy”
Story No.2: “The hare and the tortoise”
Story No.3: “The farmer and the snake”
Story No.4: “The blind man and the elephant”

These above-mentioned stories are transcribed and presented below along with their translation in the following:
Story No.1: “The shepherd boy”

mi: dèk liąŋ kæ? jù: khon nįŋ liąŋ
have child look after sheep be CL one look after

kæ? jù: thá:j thũŋ naj khanáʔ thĩ: nāŋ
sheep be lower field in while that sit

faw kæ? jù: nán khǎw nǐk sanũk
watch sheep be that he think funny

up come act that have wolf come eat sheep

khỹŋ tuaʔe:ŋ do:j rỹŋ tàko:n ?ã:k pøj
of himself with call yell out go

dañ dañ wá: mi: mǎ:pã: ma: kin kæ?
loudly loudly that have wolf come eat sheep

cha:wbå:n thĩ: tham ḃa:n jù: klãj klãj dâjjìn eĩŋ
villager that do work be near near hear so

rĩ:b wĩŋ ma: chúaj pra:kòd wá: māj
quick run come help happen that not
mi: mǎ:pà: sāk tua đèk lìaŋ kæʔ nành
have wolf single CL child look after sheep sit

hǔarʔ chzą:bcaj thị: ko:hòk cha:wbâ:n đâj khaw
laugh happy that lie villager get he

tham bâ:b nǐ: jù: sỳ:ŋ sā:m khráŋ najthːsǔd
do CL this be two three CL finally

cha:wbâ:n kʒ: māj chīa khâw ʔːk
villager then not believe he more

wan tɔ:ma: mi: mǎ:pà: làj tua khâw ma: kin kæʔ
day next have wolf many CL entry come eat sheep

cính cính tæ: māj mi: cha:wbâ:n khon đâj khâw
really really but not have villager CL any entry

ma: chūaj sāk khon diaw phrŋʔ cha:wbâ:n
come help single CL single because villager

khíd wâ: khâw ko:hòk ʔːk mǎ:pà: cĩŋ kin
think that he lie again wolf so eat
A shepherd boy was looking for the sheep in the field. He was looking for the sheep in the lower field. While he was watching the sheep, he got a funny idea. He shouted as if a wolf was eating his sheep. The villagers who had been working near by that area, heard him, and reached there quickly to help the shepherd boy. When they reached there, they found no wolf. The shepherd boy was laughing at them because it was a lie. He did the same thing twice or thrice. The villagers reached to help the shepherd boy repeatedly but the same thing happened. Finally, one day wolves really came. He shouted as usual for help but people thought it false as usual and did not come for his help. The wolves ate all the sheep of the shepherd boy.

Story No.2: “The hare and the tortoise”

in forest big CL one have herd animal live
many be come CL one have turtle CL one
walk out come from forest CL that in between way
dày phở kề kratà:j tua nín sìn wỉnh ta:m mà:
get see with rabbit CL one which run follow come

kratà:j tua nán hưar5įǜ tù wua nán phrįį man
rabbit CL that laugh at turtle CL that because it

də:n dây chả: mà:k kratà:j cijn thà: tò wua nán
walk get slow very rabbit so challenge turtle CL that

wâ: khraj càʔ pàj thỹ nha vál: k là:k là:k:я:nâ: dây
that who will go reach mountain CL ahead get

kə:n kan do:j mi: phian phian sàd pà:
before each other with have friend friend animal forest

pen kammakə:n tàdsìn ka:nkhaęykhàn dâj rîmkhîn
be committee decide competition get start

do:j kratà:j wîʔ nàm tò wà pàj klàj mà:k sàd
with rabbit run lead turtle go far very animal

pà: là:j tua tà:ŋ khìd wâ: kratà:j tịży
forest many CL different think that rabbit have to
chana? taw tua ní: nā:nɔ:n phrählt kratə:j wín
win turtle CL this certain because rabbit run
dâj waj kwà: mĩa kratə:j wín thû: hà:ŋ
get quickly more when rabbit run leave far
paj kraj mā:k ciŋ khûd náj caj wâ: jà:ŋraŋ
go far very so think in heart that however
taw tua nán jay d wnętr ma: mâ:j than
turtle CL that yet walk follow come not on time
certain so stop rest be under tree CL one
dâ:nkhiŋ khû:j thû:n nân nán kratə:j nâŋ dâj
beside of road CL that rabbit sit get
sâk khru: kĩ: plă: lâb paj suân taw tua nán
single CL so forget sleep go beside turtle CL that
phâja:ja:m dâ:n ma: do:j mâ:j thû:thû:j nâj khanâ?
try walk come with not lose heart in while
that rabbit sleeping be that turtle pair compete
got walk pass go with that rabbit not feel
body and turtle that so walk reach mountain
CL that before rabbit beside rabbit wake up come
again so know that itself lose turtle CL that

go already animal forest different out come show
congratulation with victory belong turtle in CL
this with be many
Translation

There were herds of animals in a big forest. One day, a turtle walked out from the forest. On the way, he came to know of a rabbit, who was running behind him. The rabbit was laughing at the turtle because the turtle was walking slowly. So, the rabbit challenged the turtle and they agreed to compete each other to reach the next mountain. The turtle accepted the competition with the rabbit. There were many animal friends who were in the judgment committee. When the competition started the rabbit was the first to go ahead of the turtle. He went a long distance away from the turtle within no time. Many animals thought that, the rabbit would certainly win the race. As the rabbit could run very fast he went far away from the turtle. He thought that, it would not be possible for the turtle to catch him. Being sure he sat under a tree beside the road to take some rest. He soon fell asleep. The turtle continued to walk towards his goal. The turtle passed the rabbit who was sleeping deeply. The turtle continued his walk steadily to reach the mountain while the rabbit was sleeping over there. When the rabbit woke up he heard that, he had lost the race and the turtle had won. Many animals came congratulating the turtle, who was the winner.

Story No.3: “The farmer and the snake”

mi: cha:wna: khon nìŋ ʔɔ:k paj du:
have farmer CL one out go see

na: tæ:chá:w naj r̥du: nã:w
paddy early in season cool
naj rawāːŋ thāːŋ khāw phoːb ŋuːhāw tua jaj
in between way he see cobra CL big

tua nīːŋ nɔːːn nīːŋ phrɔːʔ pāːkàːd nāːːw
CL one sleep quiet because weather cool

khāw ciŋ ŋūm ŋuːhāw tua nān khīn maː
he so take cobra CL that up come

kɔːːd wāj naj khān ŋuːhāw tua nān mìa dāj
hug keep in hand cobra CL that when get

rāːb khwaːm rōb ŋūm ciŋ khājəːb tua thandajnān ŋuːhāw
receive warmth so move body suddenly cobra

tòkcaj thīː hēn chaːwnaː khon thīː ŋūm man jūː
scare that see farmer CL that take it be

ciŋ chōk paj thīː khān chaːwnaː khon nān thanthīː
so bite go at hand farmer CL that immediately

chaːwnaː ciŋ rɔːːŋ dúːaj khwaːmcebpuːad phiaŋ
farmer so scream with pain just
There was a farmer who went to the paddy field early in a winter morning. On the way, he saw a big cobra. The cobra was sleeping quietly because of cold. The farmer took the cobra into his hand to make him warm. When the cobra got the warmth from the farmer the snake started moving his body. The cobra saw the farmer. He suddenly felt scared of the farmer. Being afraid the snake bit the hand of the farmer. The farmer screamed out immediately in pain. He got just three or four minutes only. Then the farmer died.

Story No.4: “The blind man and the elephant”

There was a king who one day gave an order to take all blind persons in the palace. He ordered to give all blind persons entry to touch the body of the elephant. Then he gave.
tell that elephant have character however to him

person blind CL first answer that elephant like pot

because touch at head of elephant

person blind CL second answer that elephant like tray

because touch at ear of elephant

person blind CL third answer that elephant

like ploughshare because touch at tusk

of elephant
khon  ta:bɔ:d  khon  thːsːtː  tɔ:b  wːː  chá:ŋ
person  blind  CL  fourth  answer  that  elephant

mɔn  nɔ:nθaj  phɾːŋ  səmpʰːd  thː:  ɲuaj
like  handle  of  plough  because  touch  at  trunk

khɔŋ  chá:ŋ
of  elephant

khon  ta:bɔ:d  khon  thː:hːː  tɔ:b  wːː  chá:ŋ
person  blind  CL  fifth  answer  that  elephant

mɔn  chá:ŋkʰːw  phɾːŋ  səmpʰːd  thː:  tua
like  barn  because  touch  at  body

khɔŋ  chá:ŋ
of  elephant

khon  ta:bɔ:d  khon  thː:hːk  tɔ:b  wːː  chá:ŋ
person  blind  CL  sixth  answer  that  elephant

mɔn  sɔw  phɾːŋ  səmpʰːd  thː:  khɔː:
like  pole  because  touch  at  leg
*khɔ̀ŋ*  chàːŋ

of  elephant

khɔ̀ŋ  taːbɔːd  khon  thːcɛd  tɔːb  wâː  chàːŋ

person  blind  CL  seventh  answer  that  elephant

mǐːn  khrɔ̱ktamkhɔː:w  phrɔʔ  sãmphɔd  thː  lâːŋ

like  mortar  because  touch  at  back

*khɔ̀ŋ*  chàːŋ

of  elephant

khɔ̀ŋ  taːbɔːd  khon  thːpæːd  tɔːb  wâː  chàːŋ

person  blind  CL  eighth  answer  that  elephant

mǐːn  sâːk  phrɔʔ  sãmphɔd  thː  khoːnhɔːŋ

like  pestle  because  touch  at  bottom  of  tail

*khɔ̀ŋ*  chàːŋ

of  elephant

khɔ̀ŋ  taːbɔːd  khon  thːkɔːw  tɔːb  wâː  chàːŋ

person  blind  CL  ninth  answer  that  elephant
Translation

In the past, there was a king. He ordered nine blind men to come to the palace. He told them to touch the elephant and describe the character of the elephant to him. The first blind man touched the head of the elephant and then told the king that, the elephant was like a pot. The second blind touched the ear of the elephant and then said that, the elephant was like a tray. The third blind man touched the tusk of the elephant and then said that, the elephant was like a ploughshare. The fourth blind man touched the trunk of the elephant and then said that, the elephant was like the handle of a plough. The fifth blind man touched the
body of the elephant and said that, the elephant was like a barn. The sixth
blind man touched the leg of the elephant and said that, the elephant was
like a pole. The seventh blind man touched the back of the elephant and
said that, the elephant was like a mortar. The eighth blind man touched
the bottom of the tail of the elephant and said that, the elephant was like a
pestle. The ninth blind man touched the tail of the elephant and said that,
the elephant was like a bloom. The nine blind men had been confirming
their answers. So, they argued with each other in that place.

5.2.1. The Classifiers Used by the Informants

The data (the four stories from 16 informants) collected for the
purpose exhibit the use of the following classifiers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Classifier</th>
<th>As classifiers for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>/bə:b/</td>
<td>model, type, style, pattern, form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>/fũ:ŋ/</td>
<td>flock, herd of animals, group of airplanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>/hæŋ/</td>
<td>place, location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>/jã:ŋ/</td>
<td>kind, sort, variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>/khã:/</td>
<td>leg, microphone pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>/khâ:ŋ/</td>
<td>side of things, shoulder, hand, part of shoe, sock, side of body part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>/khoŋ/</td>
<td>human beings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>/kr₃:bkhrua/</td>
<td>family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>/krᵣɯ:/</td>
<td>time (moment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>/krᵣəg/</td>
<td>time, instance, event, incident, occurrence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The generic and specific classifiers that are found to have been used by the informants in the data are given in the following:

**Generic Classifiers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Classifier</th>
<th>As classifiers for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>/bə:bl/</td>
<td>model, type, style, pattern, form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>/ʃuːyl/</td>
<td>flock, herd of animals, group of airplanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Classifier</td>
<td>As classifiers for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>/hæŋ/</td>
<td>place, location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>/jàːŋ/</td>
<td>kind, sort, variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>/kʰaːl/</td>
<td>leg, microphone pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>/kʰaːŋ/</td>
<td>side of things, shoulder, hand, part of shoe, sock, side of body part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>/kʰrāŋ/</td>
<td>time, instance, event, incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>/phæːn/</td>
<td>paper, breath, CD, phonograph record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>/ŋkʰaːŋ/</td>
<td>story, event, instance, play, tale, anecdotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>/thiːː/</td>
<td>time, instance, occasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>/thiːː/</td>
<td>location, place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>/tual/</td>
<td>all kinds of animals, all kinds of objects with four legs, letter, nail, shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>/ʔon/</td>
<td>Buddhist monk, Buddha image, god, royalty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Specific Classifiers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Classifier</th>
<th>As classifiers for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>/kʰrʰːkʰrua/</td>
<td>family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>/kʰruːː/</td>
<td>time (moment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>/kʰhon/</td>
<td>human beings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>/míː/</td>
<td>meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>/ŋtːb/</td>
<td>time (of a nap)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>/phâk/</td>
<td>time (moment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No. Classifier As classifiers for
7. /phráʔɔŋ/ king, queen, royalty
8. /phùː/ human beings
9. /tʰːn/ time (of Sleep)
10. /wan/ day

5.2.2. The Pattern of the Usage of Classifiers

The pattern of the use of classifiers across the different age groups in the data (four given stories) has been quantified in terms of percentage of vocabulary items for the sake of analysis. The picture is presented below in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>0-20</th>
<th>21-40</th>
<th>41-60</th>
<th>61-80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story 1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No.1

The percentage of classifiers used in terms of total vocabulary items

5.2.3. The Observation

The usage pattern of the classifiers in Thai among the native speakers of the language belonging to different age groups as mentioned earlier reveals the following scenario,
I. The use of classifiers is consistently and relatively high with higher age groups and relatively low with lower age groups along with some marginal exceptions. Only one exception has been noticed in case of the use of classifiers among the age group 21-40 in the story number 3. The above observation has been graphically represented in the following.

![Chart No.1](image)

The usage pattern of the classifiers in Thai (%)

II. The tendency to use generic classifiers is more than the tendency to use specific classifiers. Such a tendency shows consistency with respect to all the age-groups.
The following table and the graph substantiate the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Classifiers Used</th>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>61-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 2
Number of generic and specific classifiers used by the informants of different age groups

Graph No.1
The tendency to use the generic and specific classifiers among the people of different age groups

III. The tendency to use classifiers is more among the people with formal education (in Thai, the mother tongue) than among those without formal education. The reason may be the initiation of the grammatical structures of the language being taken place more formally in case of those who undergo formal education.
Therefore, it can be argued that though the use of classifiers in Thai is a very natural and general phenomenon from the point of view of the grammatical structure of the language, the present study of the usage pattern of the classifiers reveals the significance of different social and cultural factors that remain involved in the use of this particular grammatical form.

References


