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# *Classifiers and Their Syntactic Functions in Nepal Bhasa<sup>1</sup>*

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## **Introduction**

This paper discusses the classifying system of nouns in Nepal Bhasa, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Nepal. The system analyzes nouns in different classes by the inherent semantic values of nouns. This type of inherent value is marked by a linguistic device called the classifier, which is suffixed to the numeral words. On the basis of the study of the classifier languages of the world, undertaken by Dixon (1968), the Nepal Bhasa classifier system was examined by Hale and Shresthacharya (1973). Further study in this subject were carried out by Rao and Joshi (1985) and Malla (1985). Their observations basically focused on the morpho-phonemic structure of classifiers which reflects the semantics of nouns. In addition to this, recently Hale and Shrestha (1992) have examined a usage of the animate classifier 'mha' in narrative discourse. This paper explores an inventory of the classifiers in section 1 and a discussion of classifiers in relation to syntactic categories; their structure and function in Nepal Bhasa syntax will be presented in section 2. The last section discusses the findings of this study.

## **Structure of Nepal Bhasa Classifiers**

Nepal Bhasa is a good example of the numeral classifier languages which require the classifier morpheme in order to code the quantity of noun (N) as many south and east Asian languages do. The classifier morphemes are suffixed to numerals<sup>2</sup>. Semantically it categorizes nouns into either animate or inanimate classes forming an underlying sequence of constituents:

- (1) N numeral + Classifier

The numeral precedes the classifier morpheme. However, the head noun can either precede or follow the compound constituent. It is also noteworthy that all Nepal Bhasa classifiers do not follow the same sequence. Since the language distinguishes living beings from non-animate entities, a large number of classifying devices became necessary. The classifiers are good example of morphemes which differentiate the entities into different classes, and manifest native speakers' cultural beliefs by noun categorization.

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<sup>1</sup>I thank Prof. Collette Craig of the University of Oregon for her valuable comments and suggestions on the earlier version of this paper. I am using the historical term 'Nepal Bhasa' for the language popularly known as *Newari* in this paper. The nasalized vowels are used as follows:

ā , Ā , õ, ì, è, ù

<sup>2</sup> The underlying form of the numerals from 'one' to 'ten' are /chi/, /nasi/, /sõ/, /pi/, /nyA/, /khu/, /nhasa/ /cyA/, /gu/ and /sAna/. The forms for one, two, four and ten change to different forms when they are used with classifier as follows:

[cha-gu], छ-गु	[nigu], नि-गु	[pyè-gu], प्ये-गु	and [jhi-gu]: झि-गु
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By virtue of some phonological motivations, the rule given in (1) changes to noun + Numeral or classifier + numeral for some nouns. This type of change is also observed by Rao and Joshi (1985) as follows:

/cha dā/-->	dā-chi	द-ति	'one year'
/cha gĀ/-->	gĀ chì	गा-ति	'one village'
/cha cA/-->	ca chi	च-ति	'one night'

In Nepal Bhasa, some classifiers have a single function and some have more than one. On this basis, Nepal Bhasa classifiers can be categorized into two types:

- (2) 1. General  
2. Specific

### General Classifiers

The general classifier is a broad term which places nouns into either animate or inanimate classes. This type of classification is also available in Yagua (Payne 1986). In her work Payne has proposed a term 'material classification.' In Nepal Bhasa, animacy is classified by using the form /mha/ and inanimacy by /gu/. The animate classifier is derived from the lexical word /mha/ 'body' which categorizes all kinds of living beings into one group, from very tiny creatures like ants or bugs to huge animals like dinosaurs or giraffes. All other entities are considered the non-living objects. Structurally, both of these classifier morphemes are bound to numerals. However, they can also occur with other lexical categories such as adjectives, pronouns and verbs. This is discussed in section 2.

In terms of typological variation of classifier languages, the sequence of constituents denoting quantifier (Q), classifier (C) and noun (N) in numeral classifier languages are observed (Allan 1977) as follows:

- (3) 1. N Q C  
2. Q C N  
3. C Q N  
4. N C Q

Among these, Nepal Bhasa demonstrates the first type of underlying structure, as in Burmese (Burling 1965), Thai (Carpenter 1986), Tuyuca (Barnes 1990) and Garo (Adam 1986). However, it is also possible to get the sequence 2 as in Amerindian languages, Semitic languages, Bengali, Chinese, and Vietnamese (Allan 1977). The numeral classifier languages establish some parameters which categorize and quantify the noun. This notion of quantifying a noun is also available in non-classifier languages such as English (Hale & Shresthacharya 1973, Malla 1985):

- (4) one stack of books saphu: cha-pā

From this, it can be inferred that the non-numeral classifier languages may manifest structures similar to the classifier languages. Carpenter (1988) regards this as a matter of degree, rather than a strict dichotomy. Thus, similar to her argument for Thai, in the continuum of numeral and non-numeral classifier languages proposed by Collin, Nepal Bhasa could be placed in the far left, along with unambiguous numeral classifier languages such as Thai, Burmese and Garo, while a language like English would be placed in the far right. In the numeral classifier languages, the classifier (Cl) and numerals must occur simultaneously. This is observed in Nepal Bhasa in the following examples:

- (5) मनु छम्ह  
manu: cha-mha  
man one-Cl  
a man
- (6) सफू छ-गू  
saphu: cha-gu  
book one-Cl  
a book

Although the head noun precedes the numeral and classifiers /-mha/ and /-gu/, the order is not rigid in Nepal Bhasa. This can also be observed in a phrase consisting of modifiers to the noun. The general classifiers have a distinct function in Nepal Bhasa grammar. It also demonstrates grammatical function in syntax (see section 2). Some nouns take the general classifiers as in the following examples:

- | <b>Animate</b>   | <b>Inanimate</b>  |
|--|---|
| (7) मिसा छम्ह<br>misA-(ta) cha-mha<br>woman-Pl one-Cl<br>a woman | (8) मेच छगू<br>mech cha-gu<br>chair one-Cl<br>a chair       |
| (9) मचा छम्ह<br>macA cha-mha<br>child one-Cl<br>A child          | (10) न्हचवसा छगू<br>nhyawa:sA cha-gu<br>toy one-Cl<br>a toy |

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(11) खिचा निम्ह<br/>khicA ni-mha<br/>dog two-Cl<br/>two dogs</p>        | <p>(12) नसा छगू<br/>nasA cha-gu<br/>food one-Cl<br/>an edible stuff</p>  |
| <p>(13) न्या स्वम्ह<br/>nyA swa-mha<br/>fish three-Cl<br/>three fishes</p> | <p>(14) ख छगू<br/>khā cha-gu<br/>matter one-Cl<br/>a subject of talk</p> |
| <p>(15) झग प्यम्ह<br/>jhānga: pye-mha<br/>crow four-Cl<br/>four birds</p>  | <p>(16) ज्या छगू<br/>jyA cha-gu<br/>work one-Cl<br/>a work</p>           |
| <p>(17) की खुम्ह<br/>ki: khu-mha<br/>bug six-Cl<br/>six bugs</p>           | <p>(18) गा छगू<br/>gĀ cha-gu<br/>village one-gu<br/>a village</p>        |

These examples support the proposition that in Nepal Bhasa the numeral cannot occur by itself as the quantifier to the head noun. Countable nouns require the classifier suffix. It can also be noted that the head noun does not agree with the number in most of the examples. However, the animate noun requires the optional plural marker /-ta/ which is suffixed to the head noun. This observation supports the modification of rule (1) as follows:

- (19) N -(Pl) Numeral + Cl

### Semantic Extension of the General Classifiers

Although the general classifiers are restricted to animate and inanimate distinctions, the inanimate nouns are analogous to animate beings. For example toys, statues, and animal-shaped cookies are also classified by the same animate classifier.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(20) कातोमरी छम्ह<br/>katĀmari cha-mha<br/>doll one-Cl<br/>A doll</p> | <p>(21) किसि छम्ह<br/>kisi cha-mha<br/>elephant one-Cl<br/>An elephant (a toy)</p> |
|--|--|

In addition to this, the deities and evil spirits which are neither living beings nor inanimate things are also categorized with the same animate classifier /mha/.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(22) दच छम्ह<br/>dya cha-mha<br/>god (Statue) one-Cl<br/>A statue</p> | <p>(23) कव छम्ह<br/>kawā cha-mha<br/>skeletal spirit one-Cl<br/>A skeleton</p> |
|--|--|

### Specific Classifiers

Some of the inanimate nouns cannot be categorized by the general classifier /gu/, but need specific classifiers. These are based on native speakers' cultural and cognitive view of entities. Although the appearance of the entities is universal, the speakers' belief may vary from one language to another. In Nepal Bhasa, the specific classifiers categorize the nouns in terms by their shapes and consistency. They also sort the nouns into different classes. This categorization is reflected in classifiers as sortal classifiers (Denny 1986). Accordingly, the specific classifiers which categorize the nouns in terms of arrangement and measuring units are mensural classifiers.

### Sortal Classifiers

In the semantics of sortal classifiers, a shape can be perceived by three salient features of various dimensions (Allen 1977, Payne 1986) such as length, roundness, flatness, etc. This type of classification is

also examined in Garo (Adam 1986) and Yagua (Payne 1986). However, some classifications are idiosyncratic in Nepal Bhasa. The classification based on the physical properties of shape are as follows:

### 1. Length

The entity which has a property of both length and thinness in appearance is classified by the classifier /-pu/ which includes the following nouns

(24)	Nepal Bhasa	Gloss	Nepal Bhasa	Gloss
	nhAe	nose	cupi	knife
	lhA	hand	khipa:	rope
	patì	finger	lā	way/path
	kerA	banana	kathi	stick
	tuti	leg	kalam	pen
	sā	hair	curas	cigarette
	sukA	thread	mulu	needle
	khusi	river	tā	bridge
	mye	song	cinAkhā	poem
	bAkhā	story	pau	letter

This shows that the classifier /-pu/ is used not only with the physical appearance of long and thin, but also used to illustrate the length in the case of abstract nouns, like literary works such as /mye/ 'song' and /bAkhā/ 'story' and /pau/ 'letter', etc. This type of classification is also available in the Ponapean language, but Nepal Bhasa does not count tree and canoe into this class as does Ponapean (Allen 1977). Thus, this classification could be assumed to be a specific feature of Nepal Bhasa.

### 2. Flatness

The nouns referring to things which have flatness or are two-dimensional in shape and size are classified by /-pA/ as follows:

(25)	Nepal Bhasa	Gloss	Nepal Bhasa	Gloss
	nyetA:	cheek	mari	bread
	lhA:	palm	panjA	glove
	kapA:	forehead	mojA	sock
	khwA:	face	lAkā	shoes
	pAli	foot	mhicA	pocket
	nhAepā	ear		

Nepal Bhasa makes a further distinction of flatness between big and small. An ordinary flatness is semantically derived from the shape of a leaf. However, a big flat thing is categorized by /pAta/. By virtue of phonological process of the compensatory lengthening of the second syllable, the classifier /pAta/ becomes [pA:] in surface structure. So, a noun which is larger in size than the nouns listed in (25) is classified with [pA:]. Some examples are as follows:

(26)	Nepal Bhasa	Gloss
	lapte	a plate made of leaves
	bhō	paper
	lAsA	mattress
	akhbAr	newspaper
	lā:	clothes worn on the torso (except hat, tie)

### 3. Roundness

The noun referring to some thing with some form of roundness or three dimensional in shape is classified by /-gala/ --> [ga:]. This includes small objects like pebbles, or huge objects like temples. Things which are neither flat, thin, or long are categorized by this classifier, as in the following examples:

(27) Nepal Bhasa	Gloss	Nepal Bhasa	Gloss
gau	ankle	khè	egg
kwAsi	testicle	guccA	marbles
mikhA	eye	lõ:	stone
chyā	head	phùga	pillow
nhepu	brain	bArcA	bowl
pyā	buttock	battA	box
dhebA <sup>3</sup>	coin	tapuli	hat
pu:	bead	bhimpu	coral
thi:	gems	hirA	diamond
dega:	temple	caitya	Buddhist Shrine

The classifier [ga:] refers only to the countable substances with generally spherical properties, objects with roundness, or three dimensions. Some borrowed words which have no conventionalized classifiers but are three-dimensionals are also denoted by this classifier. Some of them are as follows:

Computer	Telephone	Bus
Car	Camera	Ball
Radio	Tape recorder	Engine

In fact, Nepal Bhasa does not make a distinction between large and small sizes as it does with flatness. All entities with dimensionality are indicated by this classifier. Besides this, there are many sortal classifiers in Nepal Bhasa. They are semantically based on other physical properties which cannot be generalized by basic shapes of length, flatness and roundness as given in the following table 1:

(28) Table 1: Shape

Classifier	Semantics
-twA	long folded/a section of a long object
-thu:	hollow
-phwa:	flower, objects in a shape of flower
-dhi	frozen objects
-pwA:	hole, lamp
-pu:	thin sheet in vertical

In addition, Nepal Bhasa also makes a distinction among other kinds of nouns which are rigid or flexible in shape and consistency as given in table 2.

(29) Table 2: Shape and Consistency

Classifiers	Semantics
-gwa	spherical shape
-tyA	solid cylindrical
-gwArA	solid spherical large
-dhā	solid without particular shape
-dhA:	circular shape of liquid

### Mensural Classifiers

Besides sortal classifiers, Nepal Bhasa also demonstrates a large number of mensural classifiers which categorize the nouns in terms of arrangement and measuring units. The classifiers, which indicate some sort

<sup>3</sup> Historically, Nepalese coins are three dimensional in shape. Even though the modern coins are flat they take the classifier [ga].

of arrangement, are semantically referred to heap, mass or stack of entities. A dozen of these classifiers are listed in table 3.

(30) Table 3: Arrangements

Classifiers	Semantics
-pā	stack
-dwā	heap
-ba:	thin layer
-bhe:	pouch of bittle leaves
-bhu:	stripe
-cA:	circle
-hAka:	long object in terms of length
-tA:	timing of a bell ringing
-dho:	row
-phi	thick layer
-kale	bunch of short things (vegetables)
-pwAè	bunch of things (hair, thread, keys etc.)
-pAè	a loaf of meat or lump of clay

Mensural classifiers can be either conventional or ad hoc (Carpenter 1986) depending upon the system of measurement used in the native speakers' society. The conventional measure classifiers are two types: borrowed and local. The conventional measurement uses the 'borrowed terms.' In Nepalese society, mass, liquid and area are by the metric system (for example Kilo, Liter and Meter). All of these measuring terms function as classifiers. The local measuring units are adopted by native speakers for other kinds of measurements which reflect semantic categories of different states of entities. Some specific classifiers used as unit terms are given in table 4.

(31) Table 4: Local Measure units

Classifiers	Semantics
-jo:	pair in general
-ju	set of wearings (shoes, gloves, socks)
-ku	a vesselful of load (especially liquid)
-pe	a mouthful of food, especially mass
-bhWA:	a mouthful of edible grains
-khā	a serving of steamed rice
-phuti	a drop of liquid
-tiki	a drop of liquid before it falls to the ground
-pA	a unit of a pair
-ku:	a piece
-mhu:	a handful of grains
-thu	a bunch of vegetables
-bo	a plate of food used in feast
-mhicA	sack
-pi:	land
-tā	step, house floor
-jA:	height
-tu	a scoopful of liquid or semi-liquid items
-tA	item
-co:	tip of long thin object (apex)

The adhoc measure has no specific term. However, some noun forms demonstrate a quantity of an entity which is being kept in a container. These noun forms also function as classifiers, as illustrated in the following examples:

- |      |  |      |   |
|------|--|------|---|
| (32) | दुरु छ-बाचा<br>duru cha-bArch<br>milk one-bowl<br>A bowl of milk             | (33) | थो छ-भचग<br>thõ cha-bhyaga:<br>beer one-pot (made of clay)<br>A pot of beer |
| (34) | ऐला छ सली<br>aelA: cha-sali:<br>wine one-cup (made of clay)<br>A cup of wine | (35) | दुरु छ-प्व<br>duru cha-pwa:<br>milk one-pouch<br>A breast                   |

In summary, all of these classifiers refer to things which have a specific physical appearance. Although these appearances are considered differently in different languages, the above mentioned entities are based on native cultural beliefs. For example, the classifier /pA/ is used for a flat, two dimensional object. But, it is also used to connote a pair. This is a language-specific feature of Nepal Bhasa.

In fact, the classifier for a pair is derived from the semantics of 'a couple made up of husband and wife.' This is expressed by verb phrase 'pA khAye'. I assume that the form /pA/ is used to express a unit of a pair of items, such as legs, hands, eyes, ears, or breasts. If these nouns are observed as an individual item, the sortal classifiers are used as follows:

(36)	<b>A unit of an object</b> tuti cha-pu lhA: cha-pu duru cha-pwa	<b>A unit of a pair</b> tuti cha-pA lhA: cha-pA duru cha-pA	<b>Gloss</b> leg hand breast
------	--	--	---------------------------------------

Since the body parts are viewed as a pair, the quantity of a paired body parts implies the semantics of 'a unit of a pair.' When these nouns are counted, a unit of a pair is understood with each number as follows:

(37)	tuti ni-pA = 1 unit of pair + 1 unit of pair leg two-Cl = two units of a pair = two legs
------	--

The notion of a pair can be extended to non-human and other kinds of countable inanimate objects. However, in these cases a pair is categorized by the classifier /jo:/. I assume that the classifier /jo:/ is derived from the verb /jolAe/ 'to look the same' - a pair of male and female non-human living beings or things that look similar in appearance (for example a pair of birds, a pair of bracelets, a pair of earrings and anklets, etc.) This demonstrates the native speakers' mental concept of a pair of entities. From this perspective, the animate and inanimate nouns given in (38) are categorized with classifiers /jo:/:

(38)	<b>Pair with /jo:/</b>	
	<b>Non-human</b>	<b>Inanimate</b>
	<b>Nepal Bhasa</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
	bakhù	pigeon
	sarpa	snake
	bhatu	parrot
(39)	bakhù	cha-jo:
	sarpa	cha-jo:
	bhatu	ni-jo:
	tuki	ni-jo:
	tuki	earring
	curA	bracelet
	kalli	anklet
		'a pair of pigeons = two'
		'a pair of snakes = two'
		'two pairs of parrots = four'
		'two pairs of earrings = four'



When inanimate things are used with /pA/ they are viewed as a flat object rather than in pairs.

(40)	<b>Inanimate with /pA/</b>	
	<b>Nepal Bhasa</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
	tuki	earring
	curi	bracelet
	kalli	anklet
	panjA	glove
	mojA	sock
	lAkĀ	shoes

### Unique Classifiers

Nepal Bhasa also makes a distinction between other kinds of inanimate nouns which take neither the general nor the specific classifiers. In this category, each noun has a unique classifier as in Burmese (Burling 1965). I assume that the nouns which do not demonstrate the physical properties mentioned in the inanimate category of nouns take unique classifiers.

(41)	<b>Nouns</b>	<b>Classifiers</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
	swĀ	phwa:	flower
	chè	khA	house
	mata	pwA:	lamp
	mAsi	phyAè	female genital
	lukhA	duwA:	door
	pAli	khwAè	footprint
	pujA	thA	ritual ceremony
	sina:	patA	vermillion mark on forehead
	sì	gwō	a log of wood

### Unique Classifiers as the Repeaters

There are some nouns which do not have a separate classifier but rather repeat the same noun as a classifier. This type of repeated classifying system is seen in some of the Southeast Asian languages as well (Carpenter 1986). In this category, the noun itself functions as its own classifier. Some of these nouns are as follows:

(42)	हो छ-हो ho cha-ho hole one-Cl	(43)	प्वा छ-प्वा pwA: cha-pwA: hole one-Cl
(44)	गौ छ-गौ gau cha-gau ankle one-Cl	(45)	धो छ-धो dho: cha-dho line one-Cl
(46)	माछमा mA: cha-mA: garland one-Cl	(47)	पु छपु pu cha-pu bead one-Cl
(48)	ता छ-ता tA cha-tA item one-Cl	(49)	स. छ-स sa: cha-sa: sound one-Cl

### Class Terms

Apart from classifiers, Nepal Bhasa employs another type of classification which includes all varieties of plant life. In Nepal Bhasa, a plant is categorized by /mA/, which can occur with all kinds of nouns describing fruits, vegetables, beans, grains, spices, nuts, and roots, as follows:

- |      |  |      |  |
|------|--|------|--|
| (50) | सान्नासी मा<br>satrAsi mA<br>orange plant<br>Orange tree | (51) | स्याउ मा<br>syAu mA<br>apple plant<br>Apple tree |
| (52) | सिमि मा<br>simi mA<br>bean plant<br>Green bean plant     | (53) | सि मा<br>simA<br>wood plant<br>tree              |

The form /mA/ is a general term for plants or a class term as proposed by Delancey (1986) in his study of Thai classifiers with reference to the work of Haas in 1942. For this type of classifier, Delancey proposes that a cover term is used as a head of compound nouns. In Nepal Bhasa /mA/ is also used as a classifier for plant beings. When it appears with a numeral, it simply refers to a general plant. However, in structure, it is duplicated using the first one as a noun and the second one as a classifier as in the case of repeaters mentioned above:

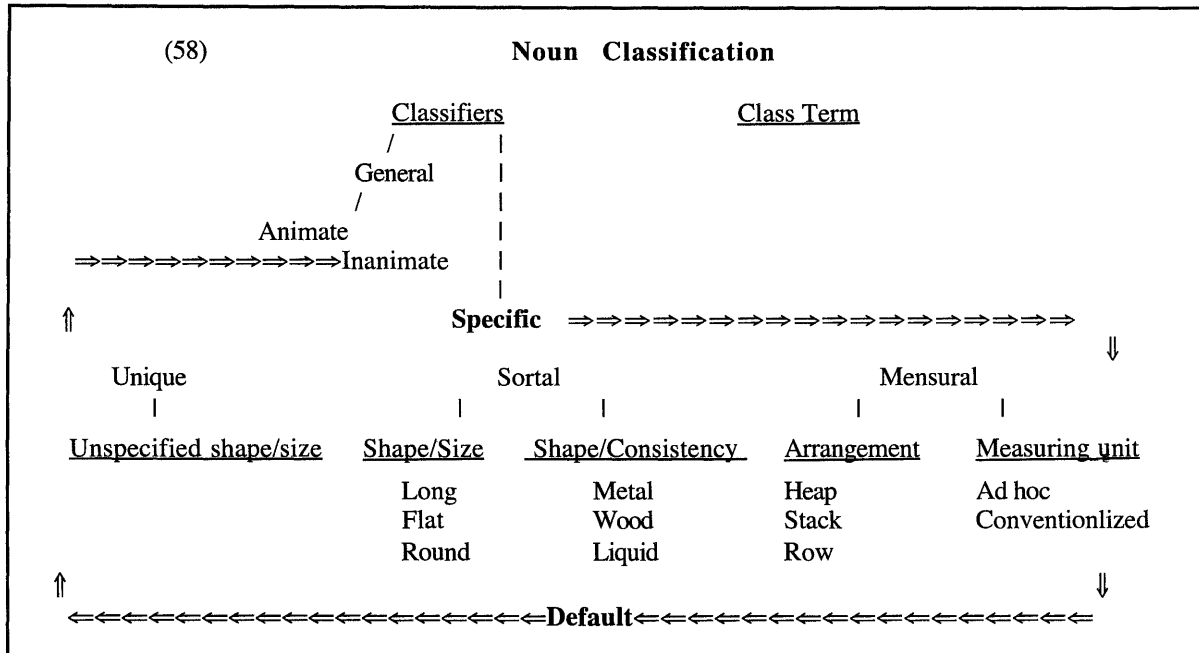
- (54) मा छ-मा  
mA cha-mA  
plant one-Cl  
a plant

In order to specify a plant the noun precedes the numeral and classifier. When the form other than /mA/ is used it refers to an object of the same entity as follows:

<b>Plant</b>	<b>Object</b>
(55) सान्नासी छ-मा santrAsi cha-mA orange one-Cl an orange tree	सान्नासी छ-ग santrAsi cha-ga: orange one-Cl an orange
(56) काउले छ-मा kAule cha-mA cauliflower one-Cl A plant of cauliflower	काउले छ-वा. kAule cha-thwA: cauliflower one Cl a head of cauliflower plant
(57) छो छ-मा cho cha-mA wheat one-Cl A wheat plant	छो छ-ग: cho cha-ga: wheat one-Cl a grain of wheat

In summary, the classifier is suffixed to the numeral heads. The noun head precedes the numeral and classifiers. However, this is not the fixed order in most cases. When the underlying form of numeral 'one' /chi/ is used in a sentence, the classifier is prefixed to the numeral head (see notes 2).

Nepal Bhasa classifiers are of two types: general and specific. The general classifiers distinguish the nouns as either animate or inanimate. The inanimate classifiers can be further extended into several classes based on semantic features such as the shape and size of the objects. In addition, some inanimate nouns are unique. Some nouns do not employ classifiers. However, the noun form itself is repeated and functions as the classifier. They appear only with a certain noun. Nepal Bhasa measuring unit terms also function as the classifiers and are of two types: borrowed and local. The borrowed are universal terms, whereas the locals are used as the language specific measuring terms. In addition, Nepal Bhasa also uses other kinds of classification which do not function as true classifiers, but as a class term. Since the class term is used only with the plant system, it behaves like the unique classifiers in Nepal Bhasa. So, in order to conceptualize the classifier system in Nepal Bhasa, I propose the following generalization which helps to choose the right classifier for a noun:



This configuration tells us that a speaker of Nepal Bhasa needs to distinguish a noun in terms of animacy in order to pick up the right classifier. If a noun belongs to the inanimate category, the first choice would be to see whether the noun has a classifier or a class term. Since the class term is used only with plant nouns, the next task is to identify the specific classifiers which are divided into unique, sortal and mensural classifiers. The unique classifier is indivisible, and appears with only one specific noun. The sortal classifier consists of shape, size, and consistency, while the mensural classifier includes arrangement and measuring unit terms. There are many classifiers under these categories. They are considered to be the true classifiers (Hale & Shresthacharya 1977) in Nepal Bhasa. These classifiers need to be memorized in order to conceptualize the nouns. The measuring unit terms do not manifest the same characteristics as the true classifiers do. They appear only with a numeral head in counting the nouns. If the noun does not take any of these classifiers then the speaker has no choice, so in this case the noun takes the inanimate general classifier by default. Most of the borrowed words also take the general classifier /gu/.

### Syntactic Features of Classifiers

The previous section discussed the typological variation of classifiers depending upon the semantics of nouns. This section discusses the morphosyntactic usage of classifiers. As was mentioned before, the classifiers only occur with a numeral head, but they also show syntactic characteristics which can be considered as specific features of Nepal Bhasa classifiers. However, not all classifiers carry syntactic function. So the problem is, what types of classifiers demonstrate the syntactic features? Do these classifiers also occur with any constituents of syntactic or grammatical categories? What function do these classifiers fill when they occur with constituents other than a numeral head? These issues will be examined in this section.

Among the classifiers mentioned, the general and true classifiers (i.e. specific and unique) also occur with lexical categories such as adjectives, pronouns, question words, verbs, and as gender modifiers. Basically the general classifiers have several functions that differ from true classifiers. In some syntactic constructions, two classifiers, general and unique, are obligatory. In this construction the true classifiers cannot stand by themselves, but need to be modified by the general classifiers in order to demonstrate their grammatical function.

## Classifiers and Adjectives

Adjectives are not distinct and independent categories in Nepal Bhasa as they are in English (Kolver 1977). They appear as verbs with an infinitive marker /-e/. By definition, the adjective modifies a noun. The adjectives which modify nouns are specified by the general classifiers /mha/ or /gu/, and differentiate nouns into either animate and inanimate classes. The general classifier is suffixed to the adjective forming a noun phrase (NP) with the noun preceded by the adjective head. In this case, the classifier functions as the relativizer in clausal construction. If the classifier is omitted from the adjective, the two constituents function as one compound noun without attribution of adjective. So, in order to modify a head noun, the classifiers are obligatory for the adjective. This allows one to generate a rule (59) for constituent order as follows:

(59) Adj-Cl N

- (60) हाकु-म्ह मन्  
 a. hAku-mha manu:  
 black-Cl man  
 a black man  
 b. \* hAku manu

(61) बिरामि-म्ह मचा  
 birAmi-mha macA  
 sick-Cl child  
 a sick child

(62) ग्वारा-म्ह सा  
 gwArA-mha sA  
 fat-Cl cow  
 a fat cow

\* Notice that the example (60 b) is not acceptable. When a classifier does not appear in the phrase the adjective does not modify the noun. In addition, an NP which consists of an adjective and a numeral requires classifiers for both constituents. In the case of animate nouns, the same general classifier /-mha/ occurs with numerals and adjectives:

(63) Adj-Cl N Num-Cl  
 Gen(Anm) Gen(Anm)

(64) हाकुम्ह मन् नि-म्ह  
 hAku-mha manu: ni-mha  
 black-Cl man two-man  
 two black men

(65) बिरामि-म्ह मचा स्व-म्ह  
 birAmi-mha macA swa-mha  
 sick-Cl man three-Cl  
 three sick children

(66) a. ग्वारा-म्ह सा नि-म्ह  
 gwArA-mha sA ni-mha  
 fat-Cl cow two-Cl  
 two fat cows

- b. \* gwAra sA ni-mha  
 \* gwArA-mha sA ni

(67) न्हू-म्ह मिसा छ-म्ह  
 nhu-mha misA cha-mha  
 new-Cl woman one-Cl  
 A new woman (recently known to the family)

As with the animate nouns listed above, the inanimate general classifier also must appear with adjectives to form an NP.

(68) हाकु-गु सफ्  
hAku-gu saphu:  
black-Cl book  
a black book

(69) हचा-गु मेच  
hyAù-gu mec  
red-Cl chair  
a red chair

So two classifiers are obligatory in a NP consisting of an adjective and a numeral head:

(70) हचागु मेच स्वगु  
hyAù-gu mech swã-gu  
red-Cl chair three-Cl  
three red chairs

(71) हाकुगु सफ् स्वगु  
hAku-gu saphu: swã-gu  
black-Cl book three-Cl  
three black books

These examples suggest that the attributive construction requires the general classifiers in order to function as the modifier to the head noun.

In addition, all adjectives do not require the general classifiers in Nepal Bhasa. So what is the motivation for the occurrence of classifiers with adjectives? Are they arbitrary? The answers to all these questions would be available in examining the types of syntactic structure. In order to identify a relationship between classifier and adjectives, consider some simple sentences (72-77) in which the adjectives function as the predicate to the subject.

	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Adjective Category</b>
(72)	व न्या चीधि wa nyA ci:dhi: The fish is small.	Dimension
(73)	व ल्वो झचातु wa lō jhyAtu The rock is heavy.	Physical property
(74)	व मनु हाकु wa manu: hAku The man is black.	Color
(75)	व मनु बुरा wa manu burA The man is old.	Age
(76)	व मिसा धनी wa misA dhani The woman is rich.	Value
(77)	व मिज बला wa mijā bAllA The man is strong.	Human attribute

These examples show that the classifiers are optional in some constructions. The adjectives which function as the predicate to the subject do not necessarily require the general classifiers. The adjectives can also function as verbs when they take the verbalizer suffix /-e/ such as jhyAtu-e 'to be heavy', hAku-e 'to be black', ballA-e 'to be strong.' However, adjectives like /burA/ in (75) and /dhani/ (76) do not take verbalizer /-e/. These sentences require an independent verb either /kha/ 'copula' or /jul-a/ 'happened'. Since the adjectives /dhani/ 'rich' and /burA/ 'old' are also used in Nepali, they could be borrowed adjectives which do not use morphology as the other adjectives do. The adjectives which attribute the noun take the general classifier, whereas the predicative construction does not take them. In addition, although the adjectives (such as color, physical property, value, human propensity) take the general classifiers, the numerals take the specific classifiers as the NP structure rule states:

- (78) Adj-Cl N Num-Cl  
Gen Spe

This shows that two classifiers can occur in a NP which consists of an adjective and a numeral unit:

- (79) हचागु दराज निग  
hyAù-gu darAj ni-ga:  
red-Cl shelf two-Cl  
Gen Sp  
two red shelves
- (80) ज गु चुपि निपु  
ja:-gu cupi ni-pu  
sharp-Cl knife two-Cl  
two sharp knives
- (81) थिकेगु भो प्यपा  
thike-gu bhō pye-pA:  
expensive-Cl paper four-Cl  
four expensive papers
- (82) पुलागु सफू  
pulA-gu saphu:  
old-Cl book  
an old book
- (83) हचागु दराज निग  
\* hyAù-ga darAj ni-ga  
Sp Sp
- (84) हचागु दराज नि-ग  
\* hyaù-gu daraj ni-gu  
Gen Gen

Referring to Dixon's (1982) observation on adjectives, Schachter (1985) and Philips (1989) categorize adjectives in Igbo and Tibetan as follows:

- (85) 1. Dimension: big, tall, long, short, fat, thin  
2. Physical Property: heavy, warm, dry, loud, soft, flat, clean, hot  
3. Color: red, white, blue, yellow, black, green  
4. Age: young, old  
5. Value: rich, cheap, expensive, poor, easy, beautiful, convenient  
6. Speed: fast, slow  
7. Human propensity: strong, good, bad, selfish, happy, sick, sad, angry, etc.

All these adjectives (except the dimensional adjective) take general classifiers. In Nepal Bhasa, the form of adjective which indicates the dimension of a noun does not stand by itself as the other adjectives do. It is

interesting that the dimensional adjectives are derived from the stems /ta-/ 'big' and /ci-/ 'small', which require the true classifiers as illustrated below:

(86)	Big	Gloss	Small	Gloss
	ta-pu	long	ci-pu	short thin
	ta-khA	house	ci-khA	house
	ta-mA	tree	ci-mA	plant
	ta-ha:	leaf	ci-ha:	little leaf

In contrast, the general classifiers cannot be suffixed to these adjective stems.

(87)	* ta-gu	* ci-gu	inanimate general
	* ta-mha	* ci-mha	animate general

However, they can be affixed to the true classifiers with the adjective base.

(88)	ta-pu-gu	'big thick'	ci-pu-gu	'short thin'
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These examples show that the dimensional adjectives require two classifiers: true and general. The true classifier demonstrates the semantic of noun which is modified by an adjective stem, whereas the general classifiers code the relation between an adjective and a noun as in the examples (89-94) below. This will be discussed later in a section on relativization.

(89)	त-प-गु सफू ta-pā-gu saphu big-Cl-Cl book a big book	(90)	त-धि-म्ह मनु ta-dhi-mha manu: big-Cl-Cl man a big man
(91)	त-पु-गु चुपी ta-pu-gu cupi big-Cl-Cl knife a big knife	(92)	त-ग्व-गु बल ta-gwa-gu bal big-Cl-Cl ball a big ball
(93)	त-पा-गु भो ta-pA:-gu bhō big-Cl-Cl paper a big sheet of paper	(94)	त-पु-गु केरा ta-pu-gu kerA big-Cl-Cl banana a big banana

Thus, if the adjectives take the specific classifiers, as in dimension, the general classifier is also obligatory to show a relationship between noun and adjective. In this case the general classifier codes semantic referentiality, which differentiates the nouns into animate and inanimate classes. This modifies the rule (84) as follows:

(95)	Adj -specific Cl -General Cl N
------	--------------------------------

In addition, the true classifier occurs with the dimensional adjectives, and is repeated with the numerals also specifying the noun as inanimate, while the animate takes only the general classifier for both constituents:

(96)	त-पु-गु केरा स्व-पु ta-pu-gu kera swa-pu big-Cl-Cl banana three-Cl three big bananas	(97)	त-खा-गु छे स्व-खा ta-khA-gu chē swa-khA big-Cl-Cl house three-Cl three big houses
------	---	------	--

- (98) त-ग्बारा-म्ह मन् स्व-म्ह  
 ta-gwArA-mha manu: swa-mha  
 big-Cl-Cl man three-Cl  
 the three fat people

Notice that the classifier /-pu/ and /-khA/ classifies the noun as inanimate in (96) and (97). However, (98) shows that the two classifiers /-gwAra/ and /-mha/ occurring with the adjective code refers to the big and fat person, while /-mha/ occurring with the numeral simply refers to animate nouns in general. This leads to the modification of the NP structure rule (95) as follows:

- (99) [ Adj-Cl ]-Cl + N + [Num-Cl] Inanimate  
 { Sp Gen Sp }NP
- (100) [ Adj-Cl ]-Cl + N + [Num-Cl] Animate  
 { Sp Gen Gen }NP

In summary, all adjectives take classifiers. The adjectives that specify physical property, color, age, and human propensity take the general classifiers. However, the dimensional adjectives do not stand by themselves. They take either a specific, unique, class term or repeater as the modifier to the head noun. In addition, the general classifiers are obligatory to attribute the noun. An NP consisting of a dimensional adjective and a numeral requires the same classifier with both categories. However, in this case the general classifier is suffixed to a phrase consisting of an adjective and a classifier.

#### Classifiers and Pronouns

In possessive construction, the general classifiers is used with pronouns. If the possessed noun is animate, the classifier /mha/ or if the noun is inanimate, the classifier /gu/ occurs with the pronoun, as shown in the following examples.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>(101) जि-म्ह काय<br/>         ji-mha kAe<br/>         1sg-Cl son<br/>         My son</p> | <p>(102) जि-गु सफू<br/>         ji-gu sabhu:<br/>         1sg-Cl book<br/>         My book</p> |
|---|--|

If the possessor is a full noun then the genitive marker /yA/ is suffixed to the noun and the classifier becomes optional:

- (103) जोन-या म्ह काय  
 john-yA (mha) kAe  
 John's son

In contrast, if the possessed noun is inanimate, then the classifier is obligatorily suffixed to the nominal after the genitive marker:

- (104) जोन-या छे  
 john-yA-gu chè  
 J-GEN-Cl house  
 John's house

In a construction with an inalienable inanimate noun, the general classifier becomes optional:

- (105) जोन-या छय  
 john-yA-(gu) chyā  
 J-GEN-(Cl) head  
 John's head



However, in the case of pronouns the classifier is obligatory and the genitive marker becomes optional:

- (106) जि -(या)-गु छय  
 ji-(yA)-gu chyā  
 1sg-GEN-Cl head  
 My head

This suggests that the general classifiers are obligatory with pronouns in possessive construction, like a reduced relative clause.

### Classifier and Question Words

Since Nepal Bhasa has a numeral classifier system, the interrogative quantifiers also require classifiers. An interrogative quantifier /go-/ is used for countable nouns which are specified by classifiers as animate or inanimate. The quantifier /go-/ can take class terms or any classifier from general, sortal, unique and mensural as follows:

(107)	1. Class Term	go-mA	how many plants
	2. Classifier:		
	a.General	go-mha	how many (animate)
		go-gu	how many (inanimate) things
	b.Unique	go-khA	how many houses
		go-pwA:	how many holes.
	c. Sortal	go-pA	how many flat objects
		go-pu	how many long thin objects
	d. Mensural	go-pā	how many stacks
		go-muri	how many muris (heap)

In contrast, the quantifier /go/ used with the measuring unit term also requires the inanimate general classifier. However it becomes optional with the local measuring terms:

(108)	Borrowed:	go-gu kilo Alu	How many kilos of potatoes?
		go-gu mitar kApa:	How many meters of fabric?
		go gu liter cikā	How many liters of oil?
	Local:	go-(gu)-dhAni Alu	How many dharnis of potatoes?
		go-(gu) gaj kApa:	How many yards of fabric?
		go-(gu) manA jAk	How many manas of rice?

Uncountable nouns are quantified by /guli/, which do not require a classifier or a mensural term:

(109)	guli jA	How much rice (cooked)?
	guli duru	How much milk?

However, if measuring terms are used with the /guli/, only the conventionalized terms can occur:

(110)	guli kilo Alu	How many kilos of rice?
	guli liter duru	How many liters of milk?

### Classifiers and Gender

In Nepal Bhasa gender is not marked morphologically. However, the words like /mijā/ 'man' and /misA/ 'woman' illustrate the gender difference for non-human nouns. The nouns which are not differentiated by gender require the animate general classifier /mha/ suffixed to /mijā/ and /misA/:

(111)	मिज-म्ह खिचा	(112)	मिसा-म्ह सल
	mijā-mha khicA		misA-mha sala
	man- Cl dog		woman-Cl horse
	the male dog		The female horse

This suggests that Nepal Bhasa distinguishes gender in animate nouns with lexical items /misA/ and /mijā/. The inanimate noun is not a matter of gender based concern in Nepal Bhasa.

### Nominalizing Function of the Classifiers

An interesting feature of Nepal Bhasa classifiers is that they also demonstrate other functions besides classification of nouns. I have mentioned above that the general classifiers /mha/ and /gu/ occur with nominal constituents such as numerals, pronouns, question words, and gender determiners. They can also occur with a verb phrase. Since the classifiers coordinate with noun categories, they can turn a non-noun category into a nominal form. The discussion presented in section 2.1 on adjectives shows that the general classifiers occurring with adjectives determine the nominal form of adjectives such as /tadhā-mha/ 'big animate being', /tadhā-gu/ 'big inanimate thing'. Similarly when these general classifiers occur with the verbs they tend to function as nouns rather than verbs. In this case, the classifier reduces the degree of verbal behavior and functions as a nominalizer (Kolver 1977). This extends the function of classifiers from noun classification to the grammatical process of nominalization in Nepal Bhasa:

- (113) व न गु बाला-त  
wā na:-gu bĀlA-t-a  
3sg-ERG eat-Cl nice-Stem-Pst (Inanimate)  
His (style of) eating became nice.
- (114) व ल्वा गु य  
wa lwA-gu ya:  
3sg fight-Cl likeHAB(1s/Pl)  
I like his fighting.
- (115) न म्ह व ख  
na:-mha wa kha  
eat-Cl 3sg COP (Animate)  
He is the eater.
- (116) आख ब्ब कीम्ह वइ  
Akha: bwāki-mha wa-i  
alphabet teach-Cl come-Npst  
The teacher will come.

These sentences illustrate that the classifiers /mha/ and /gu/ appearing with the verb /na-/ 'eat', /lwA-/, 'fight' and /bwank-/ 'teach' function as nominals equivalent to the English gerund (-ing) and agentive (-er) suffixes. In addition the classifiers also code the determinative function of relativization<sup>4</sup>. This occurs with all nominalized NPs, regardless of any grammatical categories.

#### Subject Nominalization:

- (117) ह्यु गु ल गुत  
hyu-gu lā gut-a  
wash-Cl cloth be torn-Pst  
The washed cloth is torn.  
i.e., the cloth [that is washed] is torn.
- (118) ह्युम्ह मनु वल  
hyu-mha manu wal-a  
wash-Cl man come-Pst  
The washerman came.  
i.e., the man [who washed X] came.

<sup>4</sup> It is noteworthy that the classifiers code only singular forms. In order to code plurality with nominalization in animate nouns, the plural marker /-pī/, which occurs only with kinship terms, functions as the nominalizer (Kolver 1977):

/kAe/	'son'	/na:-mha/	'eater'
/kAe-pī/	'sons'	/na:-pī/	'eaters'.

Notice that these sentences consist of the general classifiers /mha/ and /gu/ suffixed to the verb /hi-/ 'wash' differentiating the animate and inanimate NPs /hyu-mha manu/ and /hyu-gu lã/. These phrases function as the subject of the finite verb /gut-a/ 'torn' and /wal-a/ 'came'. Similarly, these classifiers can also occur with NP constituents functioning as the object of the finite verb, as shown in the following examples:

Direct Object Nominalization:

- (119) जोन दा-म्ह मन् तन  
 john-ã dA-mha manu tan-a  
 J-ERG hit-Cl man loose-Pst  
 The man beaten by John was lost.  
 i.e. the man [whom John beat] was lost.

Indirect Object Nominalization:

- (120) जोन दागु कथि तन  
 jon-ã dA:-gu kathi tan-a  
 J-ERG hit-Cl stick loose-Pst  
 The stick used by John was lost.  
 i.e., the stick [that John has used to beat the man] was lost.

Thus, when the general classifiers occurs with the verb root, there is a strong tendency for the verb to act like a nominal phrase. This may be a language-specific feature of Nepal Bhasa. This feature generates an additional NP structure rule for the occurrence of the classifiers, as follows:

- (121) NP--> V.root-Cl N

Apart from this, the same classifiers can be affixed to a clause. Sentences (122) and (123) are finite clauses identified by the tense markers /-A/ and /-a/.

Simple Clauses:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>(122) जि नया<br/>         jì nay-A<br/>         1sgERG eat-PC<br/>         I ate (it).</p> | <p>(123) व सिल<br/>         wã sil-a<br/>         3sg know-PD<br/>         He knew it.</p> |
|---|--|

These two sentences can be joined by the classifiers /gu/ and /mha/ forming nominalized clauses (124) and (125). They show that the same finite clauses (in 122 and 123) become dependent to the verb /sil-/ 'know' when the clause is affixed with the classifiers /-gu/ and /mha/.

Compound Clauses:

- (124) व ( जि नया)-गु सिल  
 wã [ jì nay-A-gu ] sil-a  
 3sgERG [ 1sgERG eat-PC-Cl ] know-PD  
 SUB OBJ  
 He knew [that I ate it].
- (125) व जि नया-म्ह सिल  
 wã [ jì nay-A-mha ] sil-a  
 3sgERG [ 1sg eat-PC-Cl ] know-PD  
 SUB OBJ  
 He knew [that I ate it (animate thing like fish)].

These examples indicate that the usage of classifiers can be extended from their morphological behavior to syntactic functions. In (124) and (125) the whole clause functions as the object to the main verb /sil-/ 'know'. The general classifiers can be identified as multi-functional units in Nepal Bhasa. In terms of clause level construction, they occur only with the embedded clause.

Finally, the inanimate general classifier can also be suffixed to a complement clause consisting of a finite verb. In this construction, the clause is embedded within the matrix clause, with an auxiliary verb functioning

as the main verb. In order to show the relationship between the complement clause and the main clause, the quantitative marker or complementizer /dhakA:/ is used as in the following sentence.

- (126) व नया-गु धका धाल  
 wā nayA-gu dhakA: dhAl-a  
 3sg eat-PC-Cl COMP say-Pst  
 He said "I ate (it)".  
 He said that he ate (it).<sup>5</sup>

In summary, the discussion of this section shows that the general classifier not only occurs with the NPs but also with verbs demonstrating their nominalizing function in Nepal Bhasa syntax.

### Relativising Function of Classifiers

In addition, the general classifiers also occur with subordinate clauses which modify to the head noun of the main clause. As in the case of nominalization, the classifiers /mha/ and /gu/ are used depending upon the animacy of the head noun. A syntactic structure which consists of a classifier suffixed to the verb is also found in Tuyuca (Barnes 1990, Craig 1991), a South American Indian language. The kinship and pronominal plural marker /pî/ is also used if the modified head noun is coded with plural form. In this type of construction the classifiers /mha/, /gu/ and the plural marker /pî/ code the relation between the main and subordinate clause. These classifiers are suffixed to the verb in a subordinate clause with tense inflection marked with conjunct and disjunct variation (Hale 1973, Hargreaves 1991), coded in the verb as follows:

(127)		<b>Past</b>	<b>Non-past</b>
	<b>Conjunct</b>	-A-gu/mha	-e-gu/mha
	<b>Disjunct</b>	V:rt-gu/mha	-i-gu/mha

The past tense disjunct inflection requires a verb stem which does not appear when the classifiers are suffixed but rather only attached to the verb root. The classifiers suffixed to the inflected verbs of the dependent clause are illustrated below:

- (128) जि धया-म्ह मन् छे वल  
 [ji dhay-A-mha] manu ché wala  
 1sgERG say-Pst-Cl man house come-PD  
 The man [about whom I told X] came home.
- (129) जि च्वेगु पौ बालाद्  
 [ji cwa-e-gu] pau bĀlA-i  
 1sgERG tell-Pst-Cl letter be nice-Npst  
 The letter [which I will write] will be nice.
- (130) व धा-म्ह मन् छे वल  
 [wā dhA-mha manu] chè wal-a  
 3sgERG say-Pst-Cl man house come-Pst  
 The man [about whom he told you] came home.
- (131) व च्वद्-गु पौ बालद्  
 [wā cwa-i-gu] pau bĀlA-i  
 3sgERG write-Npst-Cl letter be nice-Npst  
 The letter [which he will write] will be nice.

<sup>5</sup> In this sentence the eater and the teller is the same person. However, in the following sentence two participants are involved.

wā na:-gu dhakA: dhAl-a  
 He (1) said that he (2) ate (it)

Each of these sentences consists of a main clause and a subordinate clause. The main clauses are /manu chè wala/ 'A man came home' and /pau bĀ lAi/ 'A letter will be nice' while the subordinate clauses are /jì dhay-A/ 'I said' and /jì cwa-e/ 'I will write'. The head nouns in (128) and (130) are animate, while in (129) and (131) they are inanimate. The propositions /jì dhayA/ and /jì cway-A/ modify the head noun of the main clauses. They are conjoined with the classifiers /mha/ and /gu/, and function as the relativizers. Even though /manu/ 'man' and /pau/ 'letter' are head nouns they are not syntactically obligatory in clause combination. The function of the head noun is fulfilled by the classifiers and the main clause becomes headless. However, the classifiers tend to recover the feature of the subject as an either animate or an inanimate noun which is considered the arguments to the verb /wal-/ 'come' and /cwa-/ 'write' as follows:

(132) जि धयाम्ह छे बल  
[jì dhay-A-mha] chè wala  
[The (one) which I said] came home.

(133) जि च्वये-गु बालाइ  
[jì cwa-e-gu] bĀIA-i  
[The one which I will write] will become nice.

Thus the general classifiers can be affixed to a clause which functions as the modifier to the head noun of the main clause. This generates a syntactic rule affixing the general classifier, as follows:

(134)

$$\begin{array}{c}
 S \\
 / \quad \backslash \\
 \text{NP} \quad / \quad \backslash \\
 \quad \quad S \quad \quad \backslash \quad \quad \text{NP} \\
 \quad \quad / \quad \backslash \\
 \quad \quad \text{V} + \text{Cl}
 \end{array}$$

This rule tells that the classifier suffixed to the final verb of the relative clause agrees with the head noun.

In addition, the verb of the main clause in the above sentences are intransitive, so the subject is in the absolutive case. If the verb is transitive the subject is coded in the ergative case which is marked by /V~/ . If a subordinate clause functions as the modifier of the subject of the transitive main clause, the case is marked on the classifiers. The proposition becomes an agent relative clause:

(135) जि धया-म्ह वयात दाल  
[jì dhay-A-mhā] wa-yAta dAl-a  
SUB [1sgERG say-Pst- Cl]-ERG 3sg-ABS hit-Pst.  
[The (person) about whom I talked] hit him (another).  
SUB

In contrast, if the subject of the main clause is inanimate, the subordinate clause becomes an object relative clause which is marked with instrumental oblique case:

(136) ज धया-गुलि वयात दाल  
[jì dhay-A-gu(l)]-i wa-yAta dAl-a  
1sgERG say-Pst- Cl-INST 3sg-ABS hit-Pst.  
[The (thing) about which I talked] was used to hit him.

In addition, if the subordinate clause modifies the object of the main clause, the absolutive marker /-yAta/ is affixed to the animate classifier, and the proposition becomes a patient relative clause:

(137) व जि धया-म्ह-यात दाल  
wā [jì dhay-A-mha(s)]-yAta] dAl-a  
SUB OBJ  
3sgERG 1sgERG say-Pst- Cl-ABS hit-Pst.  
He hit [the person about whom I was talking].

In contrast, if the same clause has an inanimate object then the clause functions as an oblique relative clause of location.

- (138) व जि धया-गुलि दाल  
wā [ji dhay-A-gu-] (l)i dAl-a  
SUB OBJ  
3sg/ERG 1sgERG say-Pst- Cl-LOC 3sg-ABS hit-Pst.  
He hit (at the thing) about which I was talking.

It is noteworthy that, in all these sentences, the case marker is affixed to the classifiers; in addition, some phonological segments appear, such as [s] with animate classifier and [l] with an inanimate classifier. These segments support the hypothesis that the proto-forms of the general classifiers can be identified as /\* mhasa/ and /\* gula/.

In summary, the general classifiers demonstrate several usages in Nepal Bhasa syntax. They occur with numeral, adjective, and verbs as well as with clauses. In the case of clause construction, the classifiers have functions besides the classification of nouns. In NP construction, the classifiers occur with numerals and adjectives, whereas in the case of clause construction the classifiers code the process of nominalization which distinguishes an action and an agent by the inanimate and animate general classifiers. This process also allows the coding of the derivational function of verbs into nominal constituents. In addition, the general classifiers also occur with a non-finite clause which functions as a relative proposition to modify the head noun by the process of relativization. In this construction, the relative clause is fully embedded within the main clause. If the subject of the main clause is an agent then the relative clause is marked in ergative case. If the object of the main clause is patient, the relative clause is marked in absolutive or dative case. These case marks are affixed to the classifiers. The occurrence of animate or inanimate classifiers in relative clause construction changes the grammatical categories from subject to instrumental oblique and from object to locational oblique. These classifiers also occur with complement clauses which are embedded in the main clause and are complementized by the morpheme /dhakA:/. In order to examine more syntactic functions of classifiers further study is needed.

## Conclusion

This paper discussed the categorization of nouns starting with a coding by class terms or classifiers. They are suffixed to numerals. The class term is used only for plant related nouns, whereas the classifiers code various types of animate and inanimate nouns. The earlier section discusses the structure, semantics, and types of classifiers. Basically, the classifiers are bound morphemes suffixed to numerals. They categorize nouns into two major groups: animate and inanimate. Among the inanimate group there are several structure. Some of them only occur with certain nouns. They are labeled as unique classifiers. Some nouns themselves function as classifiers and also repeat the form with numerals.

In addition, there are several other types of classifiers which based on the physical semantics of nouns, such as sortal and mensural. The sortal classifiers sort the nouns into several classes shape, size, and consistency of entities. The mensural classifiers categorize the nouns in terms of arrangement and measuring unit terms. The classifiers based on semantics of shape, size, consistency and arrangement are considered to be the true classifiers of Nepal Bhasa. The classifiers based on shape and size can be divided further into long-thin, flat, and round or three-dimensional. There are a dozen classifiers based on the consistency, while classifiers based on arrangement number a half dozen. These classifiers are similar to expression of quasi-units, such as heap, stack, row, layer, pouch, stripe, etc. The measuring unit terms are not real classifiers, but they function as the other classifiers. They are of two types, conventionalized and adhoc. The conventionalized measuring terms are of borrowed and local types. The borrowed units are used universally in most of the languages whereas the local measuring units imply the traditional concept of quantifying nouns. If a noun does not take any of these classifiers, the inanimate general classifier is used by default.

The second section discussed the syntactic usage of classifiers. Although these classifiers are suffixed to numerals, they can also occur with adjectives, pronouns and verb phrases. All adjectives (except dimensional) take general classifiers which depend upon the animacy of nouns, while the dimensional adjectives take all types of inanimate classifiers except the borrowed measuring unit terms. The adjectival predicate construction does not require general classifiers. However, the attributive adjectives take the general and the specific classifiers.

When general classifiers occur with the pronominals, they code possession of animate or inanimate nouns. They can also be suffixed to the nouns, but they occur only after suffixing the genitive marker to the

noun. The general classifiers also occur with the verb phrase, and function as the nominalizers. They are suffixed to the inflected finite verb forms.

Finally the classifiers can be suffixed to a subordinate clause functioning as the complement to the main clause, or in order to relativize and attribute the head noun of the main clause. This is a specific feature of general classifiers in Nepal Bhasa. A detailed study on these features of classifiers in Nepal Bhasa syntax would be an excellent field for further research. In terms of overall study of the Nepal Bhasa classifier system, Hale and Shresthacharya (1973), and Bhaskar Rao and Joshi (1984) have shown the features of classifying languages and semantics of Nepal Bhasa classifiers. I have shown how Nepal Bhasa is similar to other classifier languages, and how the native speakers of Nepal Bhasa conceptualize the nouns in order to select the right classifier and how they function in Nepal Bhasa syntax. It is also noteworthy to remember that Hale and Shrestha (1992) have presented some evidence based on a narrative discourse that the animate general classifier /-mha/ is used with kinship terms and to demonstrate the indefinite sense with a numeral and verb base (pg 4). This needs to be verified with more narrative discourses. As a native speaker I assume that the general classifier is also used to demonstrate the definiteness in one of the clause combining processes. This also needs to be examined.

#### Appendix: Inventory of Classifiers in Nepal Bhasa

-gu	inanimate object	-khā	a subject of matter
-mha	animate beings	-phuti	drop
-pu	long thin	-tiki	drop
-pA	flat	-pA	pair
-pA:	flat sheet	-ku:	piece
-ga	round	-mhu:	fist
-gwa:	spherical	-thu	timing
-twA:	a section of long	-bo	feast
-thu:	hollow object	-tA	item
-phwa:	flower	-mhicA	sack
-dhi	frozen object	-pi:	field
-pwA:	hole	-tā	step
-pu:	layer	-jhA:	short timing
-tyA:	solid long	-ta	a floor of a building
-gwArA	solid large round	-tu	scoop
-dhi	frozen	-tA	item
-dhA:	spherical liquid	-co:	apex
-pā	stack	-mA	plant
-dwā	heap	-bhe	a portion
-ba:	layer	-bhi	a section of orange
-bhe:	pouch		
-bhu:	layer		
-cA:	circular		
-hAka:	length		
-tA:	timing		
-dho:	line		
-phi	thickness		
-kale	bunch		
-pwaè	handful of hair		
-pAè	lump		
-jo:	pair		
-ju	pair		
-ku	load		
-pe	handful of meal		
-bhWA:	handful of food tossed into the mouth		

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## नेवा: विज्ञान Newaa Vijñaana

A Journal of Newarology  
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### Announcement

It is a pleasure to announce that in view of the growing interest of studies on Newars, we are planning to bring out a unique journal named, **Newaa Vijñaana** (Newarology). One of the objectives of bringing out this journal is to accumulate information on Newar Studies and promote research among Newars. Therefore, we request you to send us any information regarding Newar Studies that have been going on in your department or to pass on this message to interested individuals.

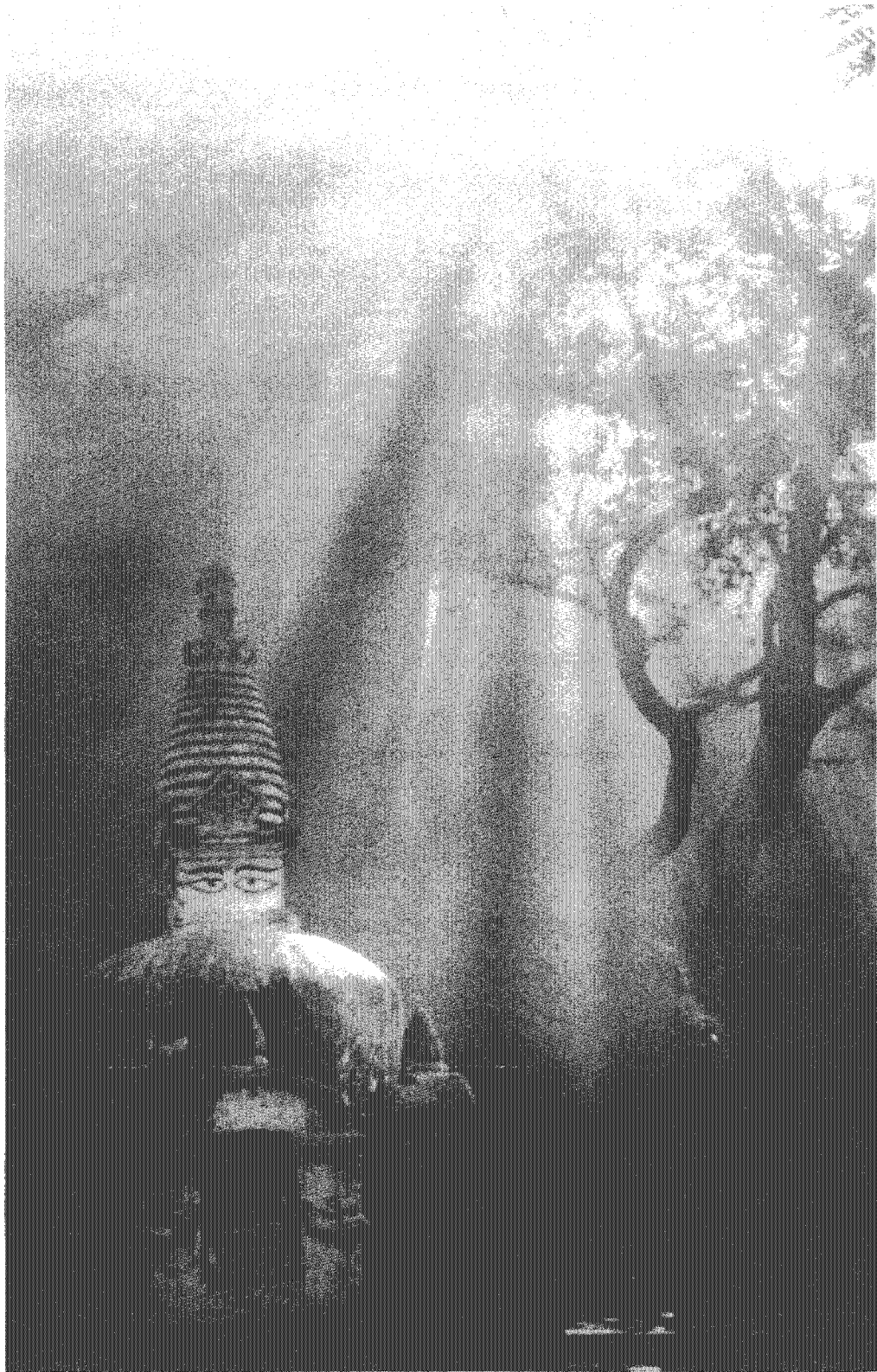
To emphasize the studies of Newars, I would like to request you to write us about your proficient area and cooperate with us by writing short paragraphs on the following questions:

1. How did you learn about Newars as the possible field of study for your research?
2. What distinctive feature did you find in Newars from your research?
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We Appreciate your response. Please send it to the editor by **August 31, 1997**.

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*Stupa at Swayambhu (photograph by Ter Ellingson)*