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On the Rise of the Classifier System in Newar

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On the Rise of the Classifier System in Newar

Kazuyuki Kiryu
Mimasaka University

1. Introduction
   1.1 Numeral Classifiers
2. A Typology of Numeral Classifiers in Other TB Languages in Nepal
3. Classifiers in Newar Varieties
   3.1 Kathmandu Newar
   3.2 Dolakhā Newar
   3.3 Pahari
4. Kiranti Languages
5. Meche
6. Classifiers in Classical Nepāl Bhāṣā
   6.1 Numeral Classifiers in Old Manuscripts
   6.2 Word Order of Classifier and Numeral in *GV*
7. A Possible Scenario for the Development of the Classifier System in Newar
8. Conclusion

1. Introduction

This paper presents the first results of a study on numeral classifiers in Tibeto-Burman languages in Nepal in the context of searching for the origin of the numeral classifier system in Newar. Numeral classifiers are sometimes considered to be one of the common features of Tibeto-Burman languages, but in fact, as Noonan (2003) points out, numeral classifiers are entirely absent from the Bodic languages. Among the western TB languages in Nepal and North-East India there are many TB languages with numeral classifiers. In Nepal, Newar is one of the languages with a rich system of numeral classifiers. Weidert (1984: 185) claims that "on Nepalese territory there are two languages with a full-fledged development of numeral classifiers: Newari and Meche." Kansakar (2005) also mentions the peculiarity of Newar's being the only numeral classifier language among its neighbors.

The other Tibeto-Burman languages which are immediate linguistic neighbors of Newar such as Lhasa Tibetan, Sherpa, Chepang, Kagate, etc. do not seem

to have even the simplest forms of the numeral classifier constructions (Kansakar 2005: 110).

In this paper I will discuss the typological features of numeral classifier systems in selected languages of the Himalayan region and, based on actual historical materials, I will present a possible hypothesis for the development of the numeral classifier system in Newar.

1.1 Numeral Classifiers

Basically two types of numeral classifiers are distinguished: sortal and mensural numeral classifiers. A sortal numeral classifier is "the one which individuates whatever it refers to in terms of the kind of entity that it is" (Lyons 1977: 463). A mensural numeral classifier is "the one which individuates in terms of quantity" (Lyons 1977: 463). Another important type of word used for counting is quantifiers. Quantifiers are also called measure words, but they are different from classifiers. Both mensural classifiers and quantifiers are similar to each other in that they have a direct function in the quantification of nouns. On the other hand, the basis of categorization in sortal classifier systems is more semantic, such as animacy, shape, and consistency (Aikhenvald 2000: 115). Thus, unlike mensural classifiers and quantifiers, sortal classifiers are not relevant so much to quantification as to noun categorization. The numeral classifiers treated in this study are limited to the sortal numeral type.

2. A Typology of Numeral Classifiers in Other TB Languages in Nepal

In Nepal, the TB languages that have classifiers are the dialects of Newar, some Kiranti languages, and Meche. Nepali, though an Indo-Aryan language, also has a classifier system which is simply based on the distinction between human and non-human nouns.

Some Kiranti languages (Thangmi, Dumi, Hayu, Camling, Jero, Wambule, etc.) have numeral classifiers, but Limbu, and some dialects of Magar and Chepang do not. Noonan (2003) assumes that those Kirnati languages lacking classifiers have lost them with their native numerals. Even in the Kiranti languages with numeral classifiers, as Ebert (1994) and Noonan (2003) point out, the use of classifiers is not obligatory and the number of classifiers is limited.

Meche is a language spoken in the Jhapa District of eastern Nepal, and in West Bengal in India. It belongs to the Bodo-Garo subgroup.[1)] Like other languages in the Bodo-Garo subgroup, it has a rich repertoire of numeral classifiers.

In Table 1, I indicate the richness of numeral classifiers and the order of the numeral classifier vis-à-vis the numeral in three linguistic groups.

3. Classifiers in Newar Varieties

The Newar are an indigenous people of the Kathmandu Valley. Their origin is not yet clear. Some scholars consider that the original inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley were Kiranti people and that peoples of Indic origin later came into the valley to rule the indigenous people.

Table 1 Typology of classifiers in TB languages between Kathmandu and West Bengal

GROUP	LANGUAGES	NUM CL	ORDER OF CL	SOURCE
Newaric	Kathmandu Newar	rich	NUM–CL	Kiryu (2004)
	Dolakha Newar	rich	NUM–CL	Genetti (2007)
	Pahari Newar	rich	NUM–CL	Shakya (1990)
Kiranti	Limbu	NIL		Noonan (2003)
	Thangmi	rich	NUM–CL	Turin (2004)
	Dumi	restricted	NUM–CL	van Driem (1993)
	Thulung Rai	restricted	NUM–CL	Lahaussois (2003)
	Wambule	restricted	NUM–CL	Opgenort (2004)
Bodo	Meche	rich	CL–NUM	Kiryu (2008)
	Boro	rich	CL–NUM	Bhattacharia (1977)
	Rabha	rich	CL–NUM	Joseph (2007)

Eventually the peoples from India merged into the local people and the ethnic people called Newar was established.

The Newar language was influenced by Sanskrit and Prakrits at different times in its history. The earliest extant chronicles of Newar history are all written in Sanskrit, and only some toponyms and hydronyms can be identified as non-Aryan. Scholars like Malla (1981) regard these words as reflecting an earlier form of Newar. However, other scholars like van Driem (2001) doubt this view, claiming that the etyma are locational words that are widespread among other Tibeto-Burman languages. Van Driem is careful in claiming that "one possible interpretation of the hydronymical evidence therefore is that prior to the Gorkhā conquest the Tibeto-Burman populations of Nepal had inhabited their present homelands for a great length of time" (2001: 740).

Van Driem further assumes a link between the Newar and the Kiranti. A 14th century Newar chronicle of the Gopāla kings, *Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī*, records that the original inhabitants of the valley before the rule of the Licchavī from India were Kirāta. His hypotheses are that either the original Kirāta were ancestral to the modern Kiranti, who were driven out of the valley by the Licchavī, or that the Kirāta were the direct ancestors of the Newar, whose language is closely affiliated with the Kiranti languages. If either hypothesis is correct, the language of the Kirāta must constitute a substratum of modern Newar.

The Newar have been known since long ago as active traders. They established their communities all over the country of Nepal in a diaspora which has led to variation in the Newar language. Varieties of Newar are divided into two groups based on their type of verb inflection. Kathmandu varieties, spoken in Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur have a conjunct/disjunct system. The varieties in the other group have a subject-verb agreement system. They are Dolakhā Newar (Genetti 2007) and Pahari Newar (Shakya 1990). In this section, I will summarize the sortal numeral classifiers in Dolakhā and Pahari varieties, comparing them to those of Kathmandu Newar.

3.1 Kathmandu Newar

Numeral classifiers in Kathmandu Newar have been studied by a number of scholars: Hale and Shresthacarya (1973), Malla (1985), Bhaskararao and Joshī (1985), Weidert (1984),

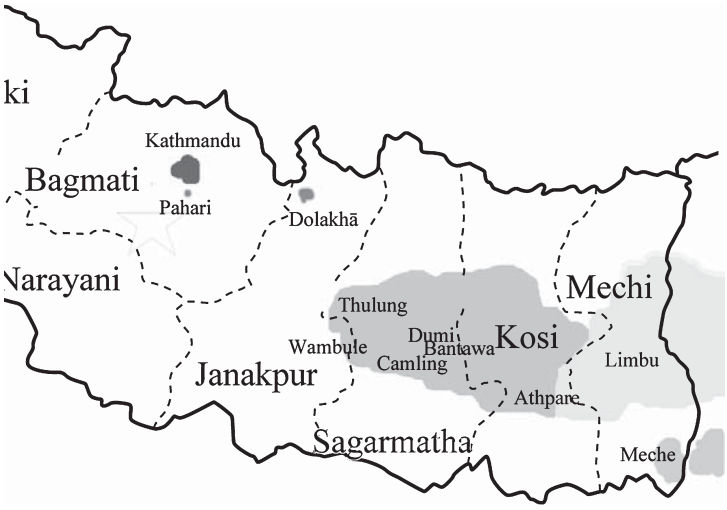

Figure 1 Map of Language Distribution

Kiryu (2004), Kansakar (2005), Hale and Shrestha (2006), etc. Kathmandu Newar has a rich assortment of classifiers. The categorization in the numeral classifiers in this variety is primarily based on animacy. The categorization of inanimate objects is based on dimensional characteristics. Table 2 is a list of some sortal classifiers in Kathmandu Newar.[2)]

There are some classifiers that uniquely pair with specific nouns. Table 3 is a list of such classifiers.

Hashimoto (1977) points out that one source of classifiers is noun reduplication.[3)] Aikhenvald (2000) calls such classifiers "echo classifiers" and Kathmandu Newar has a great number of such echo classifiers, for example, *gā: cha-gā:* [hole one-CL:ECHO] 'one large hole', *pau cha-pau* [letter one-CL:ECHO] 'one letter,' etc.

3.2 Dolakhā Newar

Genetti (2007: 220) lists 28 numeral classifiers in Dolakhā Newar, of which 16 are sortal. The list of sortal classifiers in Dolakha Newar is given in Table 4.

When compared to Kathmandu Newar, it is obvious that most of the numeral classifiers in Dolakhā appear to be cognate with those of Kathmandu Newar. One interesting feature to point out is that Kathmandu Newar has aspirated nasals such as /mh/ and /nh/ while Dolakhā does not. In turn, Kathmandu Newar has lost syllable final consonants, which are still retained and appear as stem formatives for ergative and locative cases in Dolakhā Newar.

Another point worth mentioning is that Dolakhā distinguishes two types of long objects in terms of degree of flexibility. Kathmandu Newar does not have such a distinction, although there are two classifiers for long objects, *pu* and *kā*. *Pu* is used for long thin objects, and *kā* is used for a short path, hands, and wood. The latter form is cognate with *kã̄* in Dolakhā Newar. Wood is classified by *kã̄* in Dolakhā as well, but has been extended as a categorical classifier for other two-dimensional long objects. The Kathmandu Newar's *kā* is more specific,

Table 2 Sortal Numeral Classifiers in Kathmandu Newar

CLASSIFIERS	CATEGORIES
-mha	animate beings (humans, animals, insects, germs), human-shaped dolls and bread, god and supernatural entities
-mā	plants
-ga:/gwa:	round objects, containers, house parts, vehicles with engines
-cā:	circular objects
-pā:	flat objects
-pā	flat bread, bricks; paired objects
-pu	long thin objects
-pwa:	flower-like objects (flower, bud, clove, diamond); objects that are located on the top of long objects (tap, lock, button)
-gu:	generic classifier

Table 3 Unique Numeral Classifiers in Kathmandu Newar

CLASSIFIERS	ITEMS
-khā	house
-kā	firewood, toothpick, hands, short path
pwā:	light, lighted candles
tā	pastry
-duwā	gate, entrance
-ti	arrows

referring to only those three items, which are two dimensionally similar, that is, short long objects.

The classifier *pānā* in Dolakhā Newar is actually a Nepali word, which means 'page'. The Kathmandu Newar *pā:* is originally *pāt(a)*, which is cognate with *pat* in Dolakhā.

3.3 Pahari

Pahari Newar is spoken in Badikhel, Lalitpur District (Shakya 1990). The Pahari dialect, although located in the Valley, is different from the Kathmandu-Patan-Bhaktapur varieties of Newar in that it has a subject-verb agreement system like Dolakha Newar. Based on Shakya (1990), I list some sortal classifiers in Pahari Newar in Table 5.

Many of the numeral classifiers in Table 5 appear to be cognate with those in Kathmandu Newar. Like Dolakhā Newar, Pahari also uses a Nepali loan word for classifying pages.

Unlike in Kathmandu Newar, there are two types of human classifiers in Pahari Newar. *Sā* is used to count humans up to ten while *mā*, which is exactly the same as the Dolakhā *mā*, is used to count more than ten humans. This kind of distinction is not found in either the Kathmandu or the Dolakhā varieties. Unlike in Dolkhā Newar, it seems to be the case that Pahari Newar also has lost syllable final consonants. The old form of the classifier for flat objects in Classical Newar is *pāt(a)*. This form changed into *pā:* in the Kathmandu varieties and into *pā* in Pahari, losing the final consonant /t/ in both, while Dolakhā still retains the final consonant. The Pahari classifier for year, *ro*, has obviously undergone a phonological reduction from *dā:*, with the apical coronal initial consonant /d/ changing into an apical rhotic /r/.

Table 4 Sortal Numeral Classifiers in Dolakhā Newar

DOLAKHA	CATEGORY	KATHMANDU NEWAR
mā	animate beings	*mha*
gar	roundish objects	*gwa:, ga:*
pu	long flexible objects	*pu*
kã̄	long solid objects	*pu*
pā	parts of other things, limbs, extensions	
pta	clothes (particularly for men)	*pā:*
twāk	clothes (particularly for women)	*pā:*
gur	general classifier	*gu:*
pānā	(pieces of) paper	*pā:*
pat	leaves	*pā:*
ḍē	ears of corn	dhi:
bācā	oaths	
oti	words	*ga:*
nu	days	*nhu*
cā	nights	*cā*
lā	months	*lā*
da	years	*dā:*

Table 5 Sortal Numeral Classifiers in Pahari Newar

PAHARI	CATEGORY	KTM'S CL
sā	humans (up to ten)	*mha*
mā	humans (over eleven), animals; tree	*mha; mā*
pā	flat objects	*pā:*
pānā	pages	*pā:*
bā	long objects; meetings, stories, news, noses	*pu*, etc.
pu	cigarettes	*pu*
gu	oranges, marbles	*gwa:, ga:*
o	round objects	*gwa:*
kā/gā	houses	*khā*
ru	containers	*ga:*
nhu	days	*nhu*
ro	years	*dā:*

4. Kiranti languages

Kiranti languages are spoken in the eastern part of Nepal, located between the Newar and the Bodo-Garo linguistic areas. However, compared to Newar and Meche, their classifier systems are not rich.

Ebert (1994: 79–80) describes the use of numeral classifiers in Kiranti languages as follows:

> Classifiers do not play a prominent role in Kiranti languages. Even in Camling, where I found three noun classes, *-ra*, occurs with all sorts of nouns. Rai (1985: 166) mentions that the older generation of Bantawa speakers make use of the classifiers *-bop*, *-pok* for human beings, but they are not used by the younger generation. Thulung lost the old classifiers, like *bop* for round objects, *söl* for long objects (cf. Allen 1975: 113f). Thulung and Khaling numbers as well as Limbu and Athpare *thik* "one" can be used without a classifier.

Table 6 Sortal Numeral Classifiers in Kiranti Languages (Ebert 1994)

	Limbu	Athpare	Bantawa	Camling	Thulung	Khaling
human	(-phu)	-paŋ	phaŋ, phop	-po	-ŋ	-pu, -bâ
round				-li		
general	-si		-tat, -tak	-ra	-le	-le

Ebert compares six Kiranti languages regarding numerals and classifiers.

Ebert's data suggest that although a classifier for round objects *-li* is attested only in Camling, there was probably such a classifier in the other Kiranti languages.

Turin (2004) summarizes numeral classifiers in extant Kiranti languages, especially referring to Thulung's old classifier *bop*, which denotes round objects. He argues that this form is widely attested in Kiranti languages in the form of a numeral fused with it, for instance, in Camling *sumboʔ*, which etymologically consists of a numeral *sum* 'three' and a classifier *boʔ* (*ibid.:*106).

Following Turin's observation, we may say that Kiranti languages used to have numeral classifiers that are based on three categorical distinctions among humans, round objects and the rest.

Citing Allen (1975), Turin mentions that the classifier system in Thulung was beginning to break down even in Hodgson's time. He also notes that the classifiers attested in Kiranti languages have little in common with those attested in Newar.

As far as the types of categorization are concerned, the numeral classifiers in Kiranti languages are very simple. Taking Turin's observations into account, chances are that Kiranti languages developed some basic classifiers but started losing them before they developed rich classifier systems such as that of Newar.

5. Meche

Meche is a language spoken in Jhapa District of eastern Nepal. It belongs to the Bodo-Garo group and is quite similar to Boro spoken in Assam, India. Meche speakers are also found in India, where they are known as Mech or Mechi. As Weidert (1984) notes in passing, Meche has a full-fledged system of classifiers. Actually, languages in the Bodo-Garo group, such as Meche, Boro, Rabha, Tiwa, Garo, etc, spoken in the Bhramaputra river area, all have numeral classifiers. Based on Kiryu (2008), the sortal classifiers of Meche are listed in Table 7.

Meche has a few unique classifiers that refer to a particular object, but the categorization is quite various. Animate beings are divided into humans and non-humans. Inanimate objects are classified in terms of dimensional characteristics. The two classifiers *goŋ* and *dəŋ* both refer to long objects, but the difference between them is that the former refers to solid long objects while the latter refers to soft long objects. This distinction in the categorization of long objects is similar to that of Dolakha Newar, in which the classifier *kã̃* refers to solid long objects and *pu* to soft long objects.

Table 7 Sortal Numeral Classifiers in Meche (Kiryu 2008)

CLASSIFIER	CATEGORY
mən	a generic classifier
sa	human beings
ma	animals
tho	cylindrical objects such as bamboo, ears of corn
gaŋ	flat objects such as shirts, plates, paper, sheets
goŋ	arrows, bows, bamboo traps for catching fish
dəŋ	objects with a string or rope: ropes, strings, garlands, necklaces
goːt	grains, small seeds
dap	places
khuŋ	rivers
phaːt	directions
khoŋ	songs
noʔ	houses
phaŋ	plants
thai	large seeds, stomachs, eyes

The division between human and non-human is not observed in Kathmandu and Dolakha Newar. As shown in Table 5, Pahari has a quite similar pattern of distinctions, and furthermore, the lexemes are exactly the same. Both Pahari Newar and Meche have a classifier for humans, *sā* [sa] and *sa* [sa] respectively, and one for non-humans, *mā* [ma] and *ma* [ma] respectively.[4] Is this just a mere coincidence? Or does it suggest a link between Meche and Newar, especially, Pahari Newar?

Now let us turn to Classical Newar's numeral classifiers to find out if there is a link between the two languages.

6. Classifiers in Classical Nepāl Bhāṣā

In this section, I summarize the sortal numeral classifiers found in Classical Newar. As stated in the introduction of *A Dictionary of Classical Newari*, the term "Classical Newari" is only a convenient cover term to subsume the older forms of the language used in manuscripts, and is mainly used in contrast with the term Contemporary or Colloquial Newar.

Here are some classifiers that were in use in Nepāl Bhāṣā between the 14th and the 18th centuries. The major source is *A Dictionary of Classical Newari: Compiled from Manuscripts Sources* and *A Catalogue of National Archives of Nepāl Bhāṣā/Newari in Nepal*.[5]

The following are some examples taken from a story, *kāpare wa hansa yāupākhyāna* (The story of a turtle and a goose) written in A.D. 1518 (adapted from Shakya 1991).[6] The use of numeral classifiers in this period seems to be as productive as in modern Newar.

(1) *siṃ* **cha-pu**
twig one-CL
'a piece of twig'

Table 8 Sortal Numeral Classifiers in Classical Newar

CLASSICAL NEWAR	MODERN FORM	CATEGORY
hmaṃ (mhaṃ), hma (mha), hmā (mha), ma	*mha*	living beings
gvarha (var. gvaḍa)	*gwaː/gaː*	round objects
gola	*gwaː*	round objects
guḍi (var. gula, gudi)	*guː*	round objects
kā	*kā*	denoting hands
kū	*kuː*	pieces
guri	*guː*	places
gurī	*?*	inanimate bodies
guli	*guː*	general objects
gvala	*gaː*	letters of the alphabet
ju	*ju*	pair
pu	*gaː*	vessels
pu	*pu*	stanzas, long round objects
pā	*pāː*	flat objects
pāta	*pāː*	flat objects
phola	*phwaː*	flowers
nhu	*nhu*	days
lā	*lā*	months
daṃ	*dāː*	years
tā	*tā*	kinds
bo	*bwa*?	parts, divisions
tvāka	?	pieces of cloth

(2) a. *haṃsa* **ne-mha-syaṃ** *bo-y-a-kaṃ ya-le bacana*
duck two-CL-ERG fly-STEM-INF-CAUS take-TEMP utterence
lhā-t-o-la-na kāpare tāka theṃ tāya ya-wa kha
speak-STEM-PDF-TEMP turtle die CON die happen-HAB COP(EVID)
'like the turtle who was taken away by two ducks, and died when he spoke'

b. *thwa siṃ* **nye-mhaṃ** *hansa-na twātha-na kā-ṇa-na*
DEM twig two-CL duck-ERG beak-INST hold-CAUS-NF
'both the ducks hold the twig with their beak'

There is also found an instance in which a numeral directly precedes the noun, as in (3), but the numeral is a large number.

(3) a. *dwala-chi me thu-l-a nāga rājā-syeṃ ma-phu.*
thousand-one tongue possess-STM-CL serpant [*sic*] king-ERG NEG-able.HAB
'a serpent who possesses a thousand tongues can not explain it.'

The use of numeral classifiers in this period is exactly the same as that in modern Kathmandu Newar: the numeral precedes the classifier, the classifier phrase can be case-marked, both orders (NP-[Num–CL] and [Num–CL]-NP) are allowed.

6.1 Numeral Classifiers in Old Manuscripts

Most Newar scholars agree that early Classical Newar had not developed a classifier system yet. Kansakar (2005) is an article on the historical development of the classifier system in Newar. Although he does not provide any examples from old manuscripts, he claims as follows:

> The origin and historical development of noun and verb classifiers in Newar is obscure. The classical Newar texts dating back to the early 11th century do not provide evidence of a fully developed numeral classifier system in the language. (Kansakar 2005: 110)

The claim by Newar scholars about the classifier system being less developed in medieval Newar seems to be valid to some extent. In old manuscripts, there are instances of numerals directly attached to the noun that is the target of counting. The oldest manuscript written in Newar is a palm leaf of *Tāḍapatra* (Rudravarṇṇa Vihāra tāḍapatra, Ukhu-bāhā, Patan, NS 235 (AD 1115)). Malla claims that Newar at this time had not "developed any classifier system for enumeration of nominals" (Malla 1990: 17), which is quite right. When I examined the transliteration of the palm leaf manuscript given in his paper, I found seven instances of enumeration, among which there are no sortal classifiers.

A close examination of the palm leaves leads to two interesting facts. First there is one instance where a native numeral is followed by a quantifier (measure word): *vā ne-paṃ* [field two-Q] 'two paddies'.[7] Second, there is an instance where a quantifier is followed by a numeral, as in *luṃ maṃsa triya* [gold Q three] '3 *māṣas* of gold', *vā māni 3* [field Q 3] 'three *manikas* field'. Although the modern style of word order is found, the pattern of the opposite word order is also found. This manuscript consists of only four palm leaves and as such is a rather small sample.

Another old Newar manuscript that is available to me is a chronicle of the Gopāla kings, *Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī* (henceforth *GV*).[8] This palm leaf manuscript is a chronicle that contains an account of some 332 years from 1057 to 1389. The languages used in these manuscripts are Sanskrit and Newar. "In the first half of the manuscript (Folios 17a-30b), the language is a corrupt and ungrammatical form of Sanskrit. In the second half, it is mediaeval Newari, with a very high percentage of Indo-Aryan loan words" (Vajrācārya and Malla 1985: i). To verify their claim, I picked instances of counted beings and counted things from the manuscript.

Unlike *Tāḍapatra*, this manuscript contains a large number of words, and contains a number of numeral classifiers. The number of sortal classifiers in *the GV* is 10 instances (in nine sentences) out of 27 instances of counting (in sixteen sentences). The ten instances are counts of human beings (six tokens in five different folios), buffaloes (three tokens in three different sentences), and horse (only one token). On the other hand, there are eight instances of counts of humans (in two different folios), seven instances of counts of inanimate items (in three different sentences), and two instances of counts of animals (in the same sentence) all without any classifiers. The total percentage of the instances with classifiers is about 37%. However, if they are counted based on the appearance of classifiers per sentence, there are ten

sentences that contain sortal classifiers while there are four sentences that do not contain any classifiers. Therefore, the percentage of sentences that contain classifiers is 71.4%, hence in *the GV* the use of sortal classifier, although not yet obligatory, was active.

Interestingly, there is no instance found where an inanimate item is counted with a classifier. All the instances of classifiers in *the GV* are in counts of animate beings.

6.2 Word Order of Classifier and Numeral in *GV*

As found in *Tāḍapatra*, two different orders of numeral with respect to classifiers are found in the *GV* as well: Num–CL and CL–Num. As we have seen before, all the modern Newar dialects allow only the Num–CL order. In them it is not possible to place the classifier before the numeral.

(4) *N CL–Num*

a. *śikva saṃkśā hmaṃ 50*
died ? CL 50
'All together 50 persons were killed.' (*GV*41b.04)

b. *ḍoya mvaṇḍa ḍyaṅā hma 7 tyaṃkhodvala hha 3*
Doyas beheaded cut.CP CL 7 Tyankhodvala CL 3
'Seven Doyas were slaughtered. Three were killed in Tyankhadvala' (*GV*41b.02)

(5) *(N) Num–CL (N)*

a. *thva ṅa-hmaṃ mī-ṃ*
this five-CL people-ERG
'These five people ..' (*GV*43a.05)

b. *gvāṭha ne-ma bhvāṅa mesa smasta lisyaṃ hayā*
cowherd 2-CL ? buffalo all back bring
'the two herdsmen who brought back all the buffaloes' (*GV*57a.02)

As discussed in §3.1, modern Newar only has the Num–CL order. There are only three instances of Num–CL order in *GV* against seven instances of CL–Num order, but when it comes to counting days, only Num–CL order is found.

In (6), a line from the *GV* records an event that occurred in 1377AD. Since the last date in the *GV* is 1389AD, it is plausible to conclude that the Newar text in it was written in the late 14th century. The line in (6) has two instances of numeral classifiers. *Gu-nhu* 'nine days' is one and *mesa mha khu* 'six buffaloes' is the other. Close examination of the last half of the manuscript reveals that the classifier used for counting days, *nhu*, appears very often with a numeral before it.[9)]

(6) **guṃ-nhu-liva** *deghuripujā bijyā-ṇā, smastavu mesa* **hmaṃ khu** *ña-yā*
9-day-later Deghuri.ritual go.HON-CP all buffalo CL 6 eat-CP
dhā-va-ma-do.
say-NL-NEG-exist.

'Nine days later, the newly-married couple went for *Degurī Pujā*. Six buffaloes were killed.' (*GV*029b.03)

In other instances, the word *dina* 'day' is used and it is followed by the numearl as in (7).

(7) *dina 22 ma-cālva.*
day 22 NEG-open.ST
'(He) didn't open (the town) for 22 days.' (*GV*46a.03)

There is no instance of *dina* preceded by numeral, but the word *nhu* 'day' is always preceded by numeral.[10)]

Then, what is the difference between the two orders, CL–Num and Num–CL? Careful observation indicates that the Num–CL order is often used in counting days, and also in counting humans that are subjects of transitive verbs. On the other hand, the CL–Num order seems to be used when the counted nouns are objects of verbs of killing or giving, or subjects of the verbs that mean *die*.

Furthermore, the CL–Num order is used in the context of listing items. In later classical Newar as well, the CL–Num order is often seen in lists of items. The following is found in a standard folding manuscript, *nṛtya pūjāpañjikā* (1714AD in Bhaktapur), which lists the expenditures incurred in welcoming Banalali Pyākhan of Kathmandu to Bhaktapur.

(8) *omistā biyā mo 1 dakṣṇā, phaṃ 4 baji, mhaṁ 12 stā, gwa 2*
to.them gave unit.of.money 1 money CL 4 beaten.rice CL:ANIMATE 12 DAT CL 2
mādhekāśi, śuki 2, yayā dwari mha 2 nayā vava, pvā 1 masyāna
bread.tray 25.paisa 2 Katmandu.people gatekeeper CL 2 eat.CP come.PD CL 1 NEG.ache
balanhi juyāva sayakala choyā ...
strong become learn.PURP send
'They were given 1 coin of money, 4 cups of beaten rice, and to 12 people two bread trays were given. Two gatekeepers were fed and left. One of them who had a stomach-ache recovered and was sent to learn ...'

In modern day Newar, it is no longer possible to use the CL–Num order in counting, with one exception. The use of the CL–Num order was brought to my attention by my consultant.[11)] He says that the CL–Num order is found in writing invitation cards. On an invitation card, there is a list that gives the number of people who are invited. I didn't get to see an actual invitation card that has this style, but the phrasing should be as in (9).

(9) *mha: 2*
CL:HUMAN two
'No. of people: 2'

In a Newar invitation card, there is a space to be filled in with the name of an invited person. Before this space, titles like "Mr/Mrs" are written, and depending on the sex of the person, one of them is crossed out with a line. However, when none of them are crossed out, it means the person whose name is written and his wife are both invited. In this case, following the date and place, information like (9) is written and read as *mha ni-mha*.

7. A Possible Scenario for the Development of the Classifier System in Newar

What is the significance of the CL–NUM word order? As shown in §5., the order of the numeral with respect to the classifier in Bodo-Garo languages is CL–NUM. However, in the Kiranti languages that are located between the linguistic areas of Newar and that of Meche, the numeral comes first and the classifier comes after it.

As mentioned before, Weidert (1984) and Kansakar (2005) discuss the historical background and possible paths of development of the Newar numeral classifier system. Kansakar's discussion is based mainly on Weidert's, so I will focus here on Weidert's argument. Weidert discusses the development of a classifier system in terms of areal diffusion, taking two factors into account.

External factor: the strength of stimulus diffusion created through political, economical and cultural contacts.

Internal factor: the sound structure and grammatical structure of the recipient language.

Based on this, Weidert explains that the classifier system in Assamese developed due to the influence of Ahom, a Northwestern Thai language. Since Ahom was a prestige language for a long time in Assam, it served as an external factor. Also in Assamese the mass noun construction is structually identical to the enumerated noun construction. In Assamese, the order of noun with respect to numeral and quantifier is N Num-Q, for example *cāul 7 purā* [husked.rice 7 basket] 'seven baskets of husked rice'. This order serves as an internal factor for the acceptance of the classifiers in the third slot. Since this word order is the same as the classifier construction in Ahom, N Num–CL, and this may have made it easier for Assamese to borrow the classifier system from Ahom.

Weidert assumes that without *stimulus diffusion* it would take a language thousands of years to develop a full-fledged classifier system, but that such a development would be possible in much a shorter period of time if there is stimulus diffusion.

> ..., periods of less than 500 years are quite sufficient for the development of a classifier system if structural innovation or stimulus diffusion is strong enough to spread into adjacent areas, regardless of whether the affected languages are genetically or even structurally related or not to the diffusing language (Weidert 1984: 194).

Weidert also assumes that the origin and development of Newar's classifier system can be attributed mainly to the sociolects of trade and commerce (Weidert 1984: 194). Weidert suspects a Chinese influence in the development of the Newar classifier system, perhaps via trade and commerce with China through Tibet. However, I do not consider this to be possible. Rather I suspect a link with other TB languages in the East, especially Barish languages.

Although I haven't found any historical accounts regarding Newar traders in North-East India, I would like to point out that there is an interesting mention of the Pahari Newar in the *Linguistic Survey of India*, which I presume suggests a link of Newar speakers with North-East India:

(10) At the last Census of 1901, 245 speakers of Paharī and 23 speakers of Pahī were returned from Assam.
(*Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. III, 227.)

Actually, there are sizable communities of Newar in Sikkim, West Bengal and Bhutan. As cited in Weidert (1984), Hodgson suggests that they maintained commercial intercourse between the plains of India on one hand and the high plains of Tibet on the other.

Considering the fact that Tibetan should have been more influenced by Chinese but has not developed classifiers at all, the possibility of Chinese influence on Newar seems remote. Rather, some influence from the Indian side sounds more plausible. Furthermore, in Archaic Chinese, the order of classifier with respect to numeral was Num–CL, but the entire numeral phrase follows the noun, that is, N Num–CL, and therefore, this word order does not serve as an internal factor for classifier diffusion into Newar.

In Newar, as seen in the old manuscripts discussed, the N-Q-Num order is attested in the 11th century. This order may be regarded as the standard order in Newar at that time. Assuming the validity of Weidert's internal/external factors, this order must have functioned as an internal factor, when Newar borrowed the structure of classifier construction from some Barish language, which would have had a N–CL–Num order. Differently put, the position of the quantifier could be easily filled with a classifier due to the structural similarity of Newar's mass noun construction and the Barish enumerated noun construction. The external factor is, as already suggested, language contact with Bodo-Garo languages.

Dryer (2008: 58) shows a nice map of the distribution of languages in terms of the order of numeral phrase and noun.[12)] The map shows that all TB languages from the east to West Bengal have the N-NumP order. On the other hand, languages in Nepal are mixed with both orders, N-NumP and NumP-N, but more languages in the south have the NumP-N order while more languages in the north have the N-NumP order. This suggests that the NumP-N order in TB languages in Nepal is a result of language contact with Indo-Aryan languages which all have the NumP-N order.

Among the TB languages spoken in the area between West Bengal and Burma and Southern China, some languages have the Num–CL order and others have the CL–Num order.[13)] Languages spoken in areas closer to China and Thailand such as Burmese, Lolo, Lahu, Lisu, etc. have the former order. On the other hand, Pwa-Karen, Jinghpaw, and some languages spoken in the Bhramaputra Valley all have the latter order. This may suggest the strength of the influence of Chinese. In areas less influenced by Chinese, the older pattern may be still retained. Therefore, the CL–Num order may be considered to be the default word order in Tibeto-Burman.

Even before the conquest of the Newar kingdoms by the Gorkhās, whose mother tongue was an Indo-Aryan language, Nepali (or Gorkhali), in the late 18th century, the Newar language was heavily influenced by Indo-Aryan languages such as Sanskrit and Maithili. The Newar kings were in some way or other of Indo-Aryan origin, but they were eventually integrated into the native population who spoke Newar, which remained the prestige language in the valley. But after the conquest by the Shaha Dynasty, the situation changed. The flow of linguistic influence was reversed. Although Newar was the dominant language in the valley

before the conquest, Nepali has become the dominant language ever since. Until the 18th century, the CL–Num order was still seen in old manuscripts, but today it is totally impossible except for the fossilized invitation card example. Obviously the dominance of the Num–CL order was the result of the much stronger influence of the Nepali language as the prestige language.

Based on the argument so far, I think it is possible to assume the following.

(11)
- The Proto-Tibeto-Burman order of numeral and noun was N–NumP.
- The Proto-Tibeto-Burman order of numeral and quantifier was Num–Q.
- The NumP–N order in South Asia arose under the influence of Indo-Aryan.

As discussed in §4., although they are situated between Newar and Bodo-Garo languages, Kiranti languages have far fewer classifiers. So what made the classifier system in Newar so rich? It is not plausible to explain the development of Newar's classifiers system in terms of language contact alone.

Barz and Diller (1985) suggest semantic and sociolinguistic factors are more important in explaining classifier development. According to them, "stylistic norms and attitudinal factors exert pressures both for and against classifier use on given speech levels" (*ibid.* 155). In the Hindi varieties having classifiers such as Maithili (Bihari subgroup), the use of classifiers has been devalued, occurring now only in vernacular speech. On the other hand, in Thai and Burmese the use of classifiers is normatively valued and they are used both in the standard language and the spoken vernaculars. Although Newar was situated in an area where the influence from Sanskrit and Maithili was large, it developed a full-fledged classifier system. This may indicate that although Newar had been under strong influence from Indic languages, they may have had a more liberal attitude toward the use of classifiers.

The trading way of life may also have served as an impetus for active use and development of numeral classifiers. Even though Kiranti people are not traders, they also had developed numeral classifiers, but the continuous use of them was not as well motivated in this linguistic group as in the Newar languages.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed an areal typology of numeral classifiers in Nepal, and a possible development of the numeral classifier system in Newar. In the TB languages in Nepal, Bodic languages do not have classifiers at all while languages in the Newaric, Kiranti and Bodo subgroups do. However, Kiranti languages have far fewer classifiers than Newar varieties and Meche, and some Kiranti languages such as Limbu have even lost the system entirely. Based on some old manuscripts, the development of the classifier system in Newar can be considered to have taken place sometime between the 11th and 13th centuries by stimulus diffusion. The origin of the classifier system is assumed to have been motivated by an external factor such as trade and commerce with other Tibeto-Burman people in the east, whose languages have numeral classifiers, especially those in Bengal and Assam. The two types of human classifiers in Pahari Newar, which are exactly the same as those found in Meche, suggests

a link with the TB languages in these regions. Newar traders should have been in contact with peoples of Barish languages, and classifiers may have been borrowed from them. The original N-Q-Num order matches the N–CL–Num order in Barish languages, which may have been an internal factor resulting in Newar developing a system of numeral classifiers. Considering the fact that most of the numeral classifiers in each subgroup of TB languages having classifiers are cognate, at least in Newaric, Kiranti languages, and Barish, but that they are not cognate among the subgroups, the numeral classifier system appears to have developed in each subgroup at its proto-language stage.

Abbreviations

CAUS	causative	INF	infinitive
CL	classifiers	NEG	negative
COP	copula	NL	nominalizer
CP	connective participle	NUM	numeral
DAT	dative	PD	past disjunct
DEM	demonstrative	PURP	purposive
ERG	ergative	ST	stative
HAB	habitual	STEM	stem formative
HON	honorific	TEMP	temporal

Notes

1) For Bodo-Garo languages, Matisoff (1991) sets up a group called “Kamarupan” and van Driem (2001) “Bhramaputran”.
2) The Newar transliteration follows the following phonological correspondence: /ā/ and /a/ have phonological values of [a] and [ʌ/ə] respectively.
3) Hashimoto claims that the classifier constructions in Chinese and other Tibeto-Burman languages are based on a repeater structure, NOUN1+NUMERAL+NOUN1, and that the generalization of the second as an inherent class feature of a group lexemes led to the occurrence of classifiers.
4) Note that the pronunciations of the classifiers in Newar and Meche are exactly the same, although the phonological transliteration in Newar is different from that in Meche. *Ā* in Newar corresponds to *a* in Meche, both of which are pronounced as [a].
5) The transliteration is based on that used in the Classical Newari Dictionary.
6) Although Shakya (1991) notes that the story is taken from *Tantrākhyān khathā* (*The Fictions of the Tantra*), it seems to have been translated from the Sanskrit collection *Panchatantra* (Peter Hook, personal communication). The glosses in the examples are from the quoted original, although Shakya does not provide a list of abbreviations used in them.
7) According to Malla, *paṃ* is a measure unit for paddies. Q stands for quantifier.
8) Vajrācārya and Malla (1985) was provided to me thanks to the courtesy of Tej R. Kansakar.
9) This may be regarded as a headless classifier phrase, for *nhu* itself is not used as a free word and attached to a numeral (See Jøgensen 1941). The free form for ‘day’ is *nhi*.
10) The word *dina* is a noun borrowed from Sanskrit.

11) The consultant who provided me with this example is from Patan, and a friend of mine who is from Bhaktapur told me that this tradition is only found in Patan.
12) Dryer uses the term 'numeral' to refer to a numeral phrase, whether it includes a classifier or not.
13) I haven't done any substantial work yet, but my impression is that the dividing line seems to be the Arakan mountains.

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