

## A Comparative Study of Classifiers in French and Myanmar Languages

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### Abstract

This paper studies classifiers in French and Myanmar languages through Comparative Method by collecting data from publications on classifiers in Myanmar and French by scholars including those on French vocabulary, Myanmar grammar and French grammar, and dictionaries in French. In this comparative study similarities and differences between classifiers in Myanmar and French languages were found. It is hoped that this study will contribute to both the teachers and the learners of French in teaching and learning French language to Myanmar students.

**Key words:** classifiers in Myanmar and French.

### Introduction

In French and Myanmar, particles which serve to qualify nouns and pronouns are termed noun particles. There are nine types of noun particles in Myanmar: classifiers, gender particles, numerical particles, noun affixes, particles of metaphors, particles of similies, particles of forms of address, affix particles, and mathematical particles. Among them, classifiers existing in French and Myanmar will be focused on in this paper.

### Aim

This research was conducted to find similarities and differences between classifiers of French and Myanmar languages.

### Literature Review

The book on Myanmar Grammar published in 2016 mentions the fact that particles which serve to qualify nouns and pronouns are termed as noun particles. There are nine types of noun particles in Myanmar and classifiers are included in the nine types of noun particles. A numerical particles in terms of forms and types of animate beings and inanimate things are termed as classifiers.

The author Maung Khin Min (Danubyu) in his book on “A mosaic of language and literature” published in 2013 mentioned the fact that Sayagyi Dr. Hla Pe, an authority on Myanmar language and literature, systematically did research on classifiers in Myanmar, wrote a research paper on A Re-examination of Classifiers in Burmese, put it in the publication of *Lingua* published in 1965, and had it re-printed it in *JBR* (Vol. 2, No. 50). Sayagyi Dr. Hla Pe presented classifiers grouping them in three types: classifiers, extent words and duplicated words. According to Sayagyi Dr. Hla Pe, the first to reveal classifiers in Myanmar was Thomas Latta, who wrote a book on A Grammar of the Language of Burmah, Dr. A. Judson professionally described Myanmar classifiers in his book on A dictionary, Burmese and English published in 1852, and such scholars as J.E. Bridges, A.W. Lonsdale, J.A. Stewart, W.S. Cornyn, Mary Haas, R. Burling, and U Pe Maung Tin further studied Myanmar classifiers in various titles.

It is found that the author Maung Khin Min (Danubyu) in his book on “A Casual Study of the Myanmar Language” published in 2016 mentioned classifiers existing in the Myanmar language.

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It was found that Daw Kyi Kyi Sein from the Department of Myanmar, Mandalay University of Foreign Languages, in her paper on “Sophisticated Myanmar Language (Part 1)” of Research Journal (MUFL) Vol. 1, No. 1, (pg.33), wrote on the fact that Myanmar is rich in classifiers.

On page 5 of the book on References of PhD Dissertations in Myanmar (2010-2016) published by Department of Myanmar, Yangon University as a contribution to the development of disciplines and research, Daw Aye Aye Mon in her paper on Classifiers in Standard Myanmar revealed Myanmar classifiers found in stone inscriptions in which Myanmar writings were first discovered.

### Data and Method

The data required for this paper were collected from the publications in French and Myanmar including those on classifiers in Myanmar, vocabularies in French, Grammar of Myanmar, Grammar of French, and dictionaries in French. This research is conducted through the use of Comparative Method.

### Findings

#### Comparing classifiers in French and Myanmar

Classifiers in French and Myanmar will be separately presented as (1) numerical classifiers in terms of types of animate beings, (2) numerical classifiers in terms of forms of inanimate things, (3) classifiers non-indicative of forms of inanimate things, (4) collective classifiers, (5) abstract classifiers found in literary texts, (6) classifiers in general use, (7) binary classifiers, (8) temporal classifiers, (9) nouns used as classifiers (duplicated classifiers), (10) classifiers only used with nouns, and (11) extent classifiers.

#### Numerical Classifiers in terms of types of animate beings

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Nouns
beḥbuḥ + i q; + yg; monk + five + classifier <i>pa:</i>	cinq + moines
vḥ + 1/2 p + a, muḥ people + eight + classifier <i>jau'</i>	huit + hommes
trḥ + orḥ + wpl + 0ḥ woman + one + classifier <i>u:</i>	une + femme
riḥ om; + wpl + yg; prince + one + classifier <i>pa:</i>	un + prince
riḥ om; + wpl + a, muḥ prince + one + classifier <i>jau'</i>	un + acteur
riḥ om; + wpl + vuḥ prince + one + classifier <i>le'</i>	un + danseur de concert
qiḥ + ajc muḥ + aumif elephants + six + classifier <i>kaun</i>	six + éléphants
yiḥ ul + Epḥ + aumif spiders + two + classifier <i>kaun</i>	deux + araignées

### Numerical Classifiers in terms of forms and types of inanimate things

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Nouns
abmVh + wpl + Vh ball + one + classifier <i>loun</i> :	un + ballon
Vupyl + wpl + ulf ring + one + classifier <i>kwin</i> :	une + bague
cwh + O + acmif pencils + three + classifier <i>chaun</i> :	trois + crayons
aq; + cepf + jym; pills + seven + classifier <i>pja</i> :	sept + comprimés
zm + ul + csl mats + nine + classifier <i>cha'</i>	neuf + nattes
phU&ul + wpl + Vyl cigarette + one + classifier <i>lei'</i>	une + cigarette

### Classifiers non-indicative of forms of inanimate things

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Nouns
jrefmbmompum; emrf+uef*Pef+rsljy	jyi fopfbmompum; uef*Pef+emrf
apwV + wpl + ql temple + one + classifier <i>hsu</i>	un + temple
xrif + wpl + eyf cooked rice + one + classifier <i>na'</i>	un + repas
pm + wpl + apmif letter + one + classifier <i>saun</i>	une + lettre
xV + wpl + Vuf umbrella + one + classifier <i>le'</i>	un + parapluie
tff + wpl + aqmif house + one + classifier <i>hsaun</i>	une + maison

### Collective Classifiers

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Classifiers + Postpositional Markers + Nouns
jrefmbmompum; emrf+uef*Pef+rsljy	jyi fopfbmompum; uef*Pef+rsljy+Olowf+emrf
Vl + wpl + pk people + one + classifier <i>su</i> .	un + groupe + de + personnes
Oli, csif + wpl + pk friends + one + classifier <i>su</i> .	un + bande + d' + amis
abmVhtoif + wpl + oif football team + one + classifier <i>thin</i> :	une + équipe + de + football
Vql + wpl + Oluf bandits + one + classifier <i>thai'</i>	un + groupe + de + bandits

<p>jrefmbompum; emrf+uef,*Pef+rđjy <b>Myanmar</b> <b>Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers</b></p>	<p>jyi fopfbompum; uef,*Pef+rđjy+Obwf+emrf <b>French</b> <b>Numbers + Classifiers + Postpositional Markers + Nouns</b></p>
<p>ođ + wpl + tđy sheep + one + classifier <i>ou'</i></p>	<p>un + troupeau + de + moutons</p>
<p>pypf + wpl + wđ grapes + one + classifier <i>twe:</i></p>	<p>une + grappe + de + rasins</p>
<p>iđaym + wpl + cđf bananas + one + classifier <i>khain</i></p>	<p>un + régime + de + bananes</p>
<p>yef + wpl + prđf flowers + one + <i>si:</i></p>	<p>un + bouquet + de + fleurs</p>

### Abstract Classifiers found in literary texts

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French
cEm + ig; + yg; aggregates of body + five + classifier <i>pa:</i>	-
tyg, f + av; + yg; nether worlds + four + classifier <i>pa:</i>	-

### Classifiers in general use

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Nouns
ar;cđf + ođ + ck questions + three + classifier <i>khu.</i>	trois + questions
tawđ + wpl + ck thought + one + classifier <i>khu.</i>	une + idée
pum;yđ + Eđf + ck proverbs + two + classifier <i>khu.</i>	two + proverbes

### Binary Classifiers

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Classifiers + Postpositional Markers + Nouns
zđyđ + wpl + &đf footwears + one + classifier <i>jan</i>	une + <b>paire</b> + de + chaussures
vuffđwđ + wpl + pđ gloves + one + classifier <i>soun</i>	une + <b>paire</b> + de + gants
rsurđf + wpl + vuf spectacles + one + classifier <i>le'</i>	une + <b>paire</b> + de + lunettes

### Temporal Classifiers

Myanmar Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Classifiers
wpl + &uf one + classifier <i>je'</i>	un + <b>jour</b>
Epf + ywf two + classifier <i>pa'</i>	deux + <b>semaines</b>
Oh + V three + classifier <i>la.</i>	trois + <b>mois</b>
aV; + Epf four + classifier <i>hni'</i>	quatre + <b>ans</b>
ig; + em&D five + classifier <i>naji</i>	cinq + <b>heures</b>
ajcmuf + repf six + classifier <i>mi.ni'</i>	six + <b>minutes</b>

### Nouns used as classifiers (duplicated classifiers)

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Nouns
tff + wpl + tff house + one + classifier <i>ein</i>	une + maison
aumif + Epf + aumif school + two + classifier <i>kjaun:</i>	deux + écoles

### Classifiers only used with nouns

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Classifiers + Postpositional Markers + Nouns
acmuvuf + wpl + wff chocolate + one + classifier <i>toun:</i>	une + carré + de + chocolat
acmuvuf + wpl + jym; chocolate + one + classifier <i>pja:</i>	une + tablette + de + chocolat
acmuvuf + wpl + awmi h chocolate + one + classifier <i>taun.</i>	une + barre + de + chocolat

## Extent Classifiers

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Classifiers + Postpositional Markers + Nouns
a& + wpl + puŋ water + one + classifier <i>se'</i>	une + goutte + d' + eau
csif + wpl + wuf ginger + one + classifier <i>te'</i>	un + morceau + de + gingembre
uŋwreŋ + wpl + wŋ cake + one + classifier <i>toun:</i>	un + morceau + de + gâteau
reŋ + wpl + zh snack + one + classifier <i>hpe.</i>	une + part + de + tarte
aumzD + wpl + cluf coffee + one + classifier <i>khwe'</i>	une tasse + de + café
a& + wpl + cluf water + one + classifier <i>khwe'</i>	un + verre + d' + eau
a& + wpl + u&m; water + one + classifier <i>kaja:</i>	une + carafe + d' + eau
oŋf + wpl + yk/it wine + one + classifier <i>palin:</i>	une + bouteille + de + vin
qel + wpl + tŋ rice + one + classifier <i>ei'</i>	un + paquet + de + riz
bpuŋ + wpl + x/ŋ biscuits + one + classifier <i>hou'</i>	un + paquet + de + biscuits
oŋum; + wpl + tŋ (tŋuav;) sugar + one + classifier <i>ei'</i> ( <i>ei' kalei:</i> )	un + sachet + de + sucre
yŋm + wpl + cŋ pizza + one + classifier <i>cha'</i>	une + tranche + de + pizza
ouftacmiŋ + wpl + acmiŋ sausage + one + classifier <i>chaun:</i>	une + rondelle + de + saucisson
tŋvŋtallumf + wpl + x/ŋ fried potatoes + one + classifier <i>htou'</i>	une + cornet + de + frites
i g; aowŋ + wpl + bŋ (av; axmiŋ bŋ? zmiŋ aowŋ) canned fish + one + classifier <i>bu:</i>	une + boîte + de + sardines
axmywf + wpl + bŋ butter + one + classifier <i>bu:</i>	une + plaquette + de + beurre
[ itcsyef uel + wpl + vŋ soup bowl + one + classifier <i>loun:</i>	un + bol + de + soupe
a&arŋ + wpl + yk/it (yk/itav;) perfume + one + classifier <i>palin:</i>	un + flacon + de + parfum
pŋu&uf + wpl + bŋ cigarettes + one + classifier <i>bu:</i>	une + cartouche + de + cigarettes
oŋvŋ(bŋ) + wpl + bŋ (tŋous, yk/it? bŋ? tŋ) olives + one + classifier <i>bu:</i> ( <i>ou:</i> )	un + bocal + d' + olives
oŋum; vŋ + vŋwplqŋpm a handful of + sweets	une + poignée + de + bonbons

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Classifiers + Postpositional Markers + Nouns
qm; + wpl + wll salt + one + classifier <i>tou</i> .	une + pincée + de + sel
opb)azm&nf + wpl + bt (av;axmi)bt) fruit juice + one + classifier <i>bu</i> :	une + brique + de + jus
Eh;Eh + wpl + bt (za, mi)pu)bt) milk + one + classifier <i>bu</i> :	un + carton + de + lait
tww + wpl + yll bricks + one + classifier <i>poun</i>	une + pile + de + briques
ulmuvvm + wpl + bt (ow)bt) coca cola + one + classifier <i>bu</i> :	une + canette + de + coca
a& + wpl + i)bm water + one + classifier <i>ngounza</i>	une + gorgée + d' + eau
aygi)rel + wpl + v)kvpbm bread + one + classifier <i>lou'sa</i>	une + bouchée + de + pain
, ll + wpl + Z)et)pm jam + one + classifier <i>zun:za</i>	une + cuillère + de + confiture
[ i)fo) [ i)fo)uf + wpl + jcit ^ awmit vegetables + one + classifier <i>chin: / taun:</i>	un + panier + de + légumes
" et) + wpl + yet)uel cheese + one + classifier <i>pagan</i>	une + assiette + de + fromages
" et) + wpl + Aet) cheese + one + classifier <i>ban :</i>	un + plateau + de + fromage
acsmuvuf + wpl + wll chocolate + one + classifier <i>toun:</i>	une + carré + de + chocolat
acsmuvuf + wpl + jym; chocolate + one + classifier <i>pja:</i>	une + tablette + de + chocolat
acsmuvuf + wpl + awmi)h chocolate + one + classifier <i>taun.</i>	une + barre + de + chocolat
pawm)lo, &d) + wpl + bt strawberry + one + classifier <i>bu</i> :	une + barquette + de + fraises
un)w + wpl + pnt) kind of asparagus + one + classifier <i>si:</i>	une + botte + d' + asperges
oh;w)l)h)q; + wpl + bt tooth paste + one + classifier <i>bu</i> :	un + tube + de + dentifrice
ym;&nf + wpl + tll honey + one + classifier <i>ou:</i>	un + pot + du + miel
opb) + oh + aowm) (ys)csy)rm;jzi)h t)l)ur)l;2)l)ux)m;aom aowm) ^ xi)l;2)aowm) fruits + three + classifier <i>thi'ta</i>	un + cageot + de + fruits
w)k)ve)el)h + wpl + pnt) Chinese coriander + one + classifier <i>si:</i>	un + bouquet + de + persil
pypf + wpl + wll grapes + one + classifier <i>twe:</i>	une + grappe + de + rasins

Myanmar Nouns + Numbers + Classifiers	French Numbers + Classifiers + Postpositional Markers + Nouns
၂၁၂၁၂၁ + ဘဝါ + ကျိ bananas + one + classifier <i>khain</i>	un + régime + de + bananes
၂၁၂၁ + ဘဝါ + ယူ firewood + one + classifier <i>poun</i>	un + tas + de + bois
၂၁၂၁၂၁ + ဘဝါ + ဘေ wasted rubbish + one + classifier <i>tan</i>	une + tonne + de + déchets
၂၁၂၁ + ဘဝါ + လိ milk + one + classifier <i>lita</i>	un + litre + d' + lait
၂၁၂၁၂၁၂၁ + ငါး + ဘဝါ vinegar + five hundred + classifier <i>gajan</i>	un + demi-litre(500grammes) + de + vinaigre
၂၁၂၁ + ဘဝါ + ကိလူ potatoes + one + classifier <i>ki lou</i>	un + kilo + de + pommes de terre
၂၁၂၁ + ဘဝါ + သဉ် duck eggs + one + classifier <i>dazin</i>	une + douzaine + d' + œufs
၂၁၂၁၂၁၂၁ + ဘဝါ + ဘေ butter + one + classifier <i>paun</i> / butter + five hundred + classifier <i>gajan</i>	une + livre (500g) + de + beurre
၂၁၂၁၂၁၂၁ + ဘဝါ + ငါး + ဘဝါ tomatoes + two hundred and fifty + classifier <i>gajan</i>	une + demi- livre + de + tomates
၂၁၂၁ + ဘဝါ + ငါး wheat + one + classifier <i>gajan</i>	cent + grammes + de + farine

It was found that in Myanmar, numerical classifiers in terms of types of animate beings are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, whereas in French, they are indicated in the form of numbers + nouns, without classifiers, for example, (tiger + one + classifier 'kaun') versus (un + tigre). In Myanmar, numerical classifiers in terms of forms and types of inanimate things are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, whereas in French, they are indicated in the form of numbers + nouns, without classifiers, for example, (apple + one + classifier 'loun:') versus (une + pomme). It was found that in Myanmar, classifiers non-indicative of forms of inanimate things are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, whereas in French, they are indicated in the form of numbers + nouns, without classifiers, for example, (rice + one + classifier 'na') versus (un + repas). In Myanmar, collective classifiers are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, whereas in French, they are indicated in the form of numbers + classifiers, postpositional markers + nouns, for example, (doctor + one + classifier 'hpwe.') versus (un + groupe + de + médecins).

It was found that in Myanmar, abstract classifiers found in literary texts are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, for example (nether worlds + four + classifier 'pa:'). In Myanmar, collective classifiers are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, whereas in French, they are indicated in the form of numbers + classifiers + postpositional markers + nouns, for example (doctors + one + classifier 'hpwe.') versus (un + groupe + de + médecins). It was found that in Myanmar, classifiers in general use are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, whereas in French, there are no such cases, for example, (job + one + classifier 'khu.') versus (un + travail). It was found that



in Myanmar, binary classifiers are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, whereas in French, they are indicated in the form of numbers + classifiers + postpositional markers + nouns, for example, (socks + one + classifier 'soun') versus (une+paire+de+chaussettes). It was found that both in Myanmar and French, temporal classifiers are indicated in the form of numbers + classifiers, for example, (one + second) versus (une+seconde). In Myanmar, nouns used as classifiers (duplicated classifiers) are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, whereas in French, there are no such cases, for example, (school + one + classifier 'kjaun:') versus (une+école).

In Myanmar, classifiers only used with nouns are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, whereas in French, they are indicated in the form of numbers + classifiers + postpositional markers + nouns, and there are such cases in French, for example, (chocolate + one + classifier 'taun:'), (chocolate + one + classifier 'toun:'), or (chocolate + one + classifier 'pja:') versus (une+barre +de + chocolat), (une + carré + de + chocolat), or (une + tablette + de + chocolat). It was found that in Myanmar, extent classifiers are indicated in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers, whereas in French, they are indicated in the form of numbers + classifiers + postpositional markers + nouns), for example, (wáter + one + classifier 'kaja:') versus (un+pichet+d' +eau).

### Overview

To present an overview, it is found that in Myanmar there are numerical classifiers in terms of types of living beings, numerical classifiers in terms of forms and types of inanimate things, classifiers non-indicative of forms of inanimate things, collective classifiers, abstract classifiers found in literary texts, classifiers in general use, binary classifiers, temporal classifiers, nouns as classifiers (duplicated classifiers), classifiers only used with nouns, and extent classifiers.

It was found that in French, there are collective classifiers, binary classifiers, temporal classifiers, classifiers only used with nouns, and extent classifiers.

To compare the classifiers in Myanmar and French, it was found that in Myanmar there are numerical classifiers in terms of types of animate beings, numerical classifiers in terms of forms and types of inanimate things, classifiers non-indicative of the forms of inanimate things, abstract classifiers found in literary texts, classifiers in general use, and nouns used as classifiers (duplicated classifiers), whereas in French, there are no such cases.

It was found that in Myanmar and French, there are 5 similar types of classifiers: collective classifiers, binary classifiers, temporal classifiers, classifiers only used with nouns, and extent classifiers.

It was found that in Myanmar, temporal classifiers are indicated in the form of numbers + nouns, and other remaining classifiers in the form of nouns + numbers + classifiers. It was found that in French, temporal classifiers are indicated in the form of numbers + nouns, and collective classifiers, binary classifiers, classifiers only used with nouns and extent classifiers in the form of numbers + classifiers, postpositional markers + nouns. The number of classifiers in Myanmar are found to be much more than the number of classifiers in French.

### Conclusion

In this paper, similarities and differences of classifiers in French and Myanmar can be obviously discerned. The knowledge of similar and different uses of classifiers in French and Myanmar is hoped to contribute to both the teachers and the learners of French. It is assumed that this paper will contribute to the teachers and the learners of French, and those who wish to further study the classifiers of Myanmar and other languages.

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