A DICTIONARY-BASED COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CHINESE "个 (GÈ)" AND THE MALAY "BUAH" NUMERAL CLASSIFIERS

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ABSTRACT

Classifiers are used for categorising nouns according to animacy, form, shape, and size. As one of the Austronesian languages, Malay is said to have an extensive numeral classifier system. Past studies have classified these two classifiers as general classifiers; however, an extensive study comparing the use of these two classifiers have not been attempted. This study aims to highlight the similarities and differences by comparing the Chinese classifier "个 (gè)" and the Malay "buah" using evidence from reference classifier dictionaries of the two languages. The findings show that while some similarities exist and both classifiers can be used interchangeably with some nouns, these classifiers are unique and have distinctive semantic usage. Both 个 (gè) and buah are used for organisation, products of nature, buildings and places, and artifacts (things created by humans). However, only 个 (gè) can be used for organs or body parts, humans, fruits and food, time, directions, and thought and intellectual products. In contrast, only buah is used for transportation, accessories, home furniture and appliances, publications, musical instruments, and performances.

Keywords: classifier; 个 (gè); buah; dictionary-based comparative study; semantic

Introduction

Classifiers constitute a grammatical system that demonstrates how countable objects are measured, quantified, and categorised by a particular speech community (Yamamoto & Keil, 2000). Classifiers are used for categorising nouns according to animacy, form, shape, and size. They do not provide information on quantity (Adams, 1986; Aikhenvald, 2000; Allan, 1977; Becker, 1975). Classifiers are used as a manifestation of human cognitive illustration of the shape and characteristics of objective things.

Classifiers classify nouns with perpetually conspicuous perceptual properties based on either physicality or function. For example, in Chinese: "一只鸡 *(yí zhì jī)*", "一本书 *(yì běn shū)*", and "一把刀 *(yì bǎ dāo)*"; Vietnamese: "*một con gà (mot con ga)*", "*một quyển sách (mot quyen sach)*", and "*một con dao (mot con dao)*"; Thai: "*ไก่ 1 ตัว (kai neung tuo)*", "*หนังสือ 1 เล่ม (nangsue nueng lem)*", and "*มีด 1 ด้าม (meed nueng dam)*"; Korean: "*닭한마리 (dak hanmari)*", "*책한권 (chak hangeon)*", and "*칼하자루 (kal hanzaru)*" mean "a chicken", "a book", and "a knife" respectively. Although languages such as English have no classifier with the characteristic of prominent object perception, there exists measure words or phrases: "a bowl of soup", "a loaf of bread", "a spoonful of sugar", and "a dash of salt". The word "a measure word" does not classify a noun. Instead, it only specifies the quantity of entities of things, plants, animals, and human beings quantified.

In Chinese, classifiers are essential (Aikhenvald, 2000; Li & Thompson, 1981; Zhang et al., 2002; Zhang, 2007; Zhang, 2013). Classifiers typically construct a constituent with a numeral (Aikhenvald, 2000). In Mandarin Chinese, a numeral is usually followed by a classifier or another kind of unit word (Zhang, 2019). A classifier is required to appear with a numeral [for example, 一 *(yī,* "one"), 二 *(èr,* "two"), 三 *(sān,* "three")] and/or a determiner [for example, 这 *(zhè,* "this"), 那 *(nà,* "that")], or certain quantifiers [for example, 几 *(jǐ,* "how many"), 每 *(měi,* "every")] before a noun. In Chinese, this construction is defined as "量词短语 *(liàngcí duǎnyǔ,* "classifier phrase"). The following schema demonstrates its basic structure: (DETERMINER) + NUMERAL + CLASSIFIER + NOUN.

In Chinese and Austroasiatic languages, numerals require classifiers (Aikhenvald, 2000). Malay is also a classifier language. In classifier typology, Malay classifiers are included in the numeral classifier system. Malay classifiers are always almost seen in the context of quantification and typically appear with a number or a quantifier. This means that a classifier must be introduced between the noun and the numeral to construct a grammatical expression (Liaw, 1999). In Minangkabau (a Western Austronesian language), numeral classifiers are required for numbers one to three (Marnita, 1996). As with the Chinese classifier phrase, Malay also uses the basic classifier phrase structure NUMBER + CLASSIFIER + NOUN. Although a noun occasionally precedes the classifier phrase in Malay or Chinese [for example, "*bunga sekuntum*", "花一朵 *(huā yìduǒ)*"], both languages use the common dominant order of NUMBER + CLASSIFIER + NOUN. In Malay, the number "*satu* (one)" can be written

as "*se*" and is used as an "*imbuhan*" or affix (Awang, 2015) to the classifier (CL) as shown in 1(a) and 1(b).

> 1(a) *Seekor   harimau*
> 　　*一只　老虎*
> 　　*Yìzhī   lǎohǔ*
> 　　One CL tiger

> 1(b) *Seekor   arnab*
> 　　*一只　兔子*
> 　　*Yìzhī   tùzi*
> 　　One CL   rabbit

According to statistics by Chen et al. (1988), He (2008), and Guo (2002), the modern Chinese language includes more than 600 classifiers, including verbal classifiers. To date, there is no statistical proof of the precise number of classifiers in Malay. Nevertheless, it is estimated that the modern Malay language uses more than hundreds of classifiers, which can be traced by the number of classifiers found in Malay classifier dictionaries. The *Kamus Penjodoh Bilangan Daya* (Ridhwan & Lai, 2008) contains 132 classifiers while the *Kamus Penjodoh Bilangan* (Zainuddin, 2020) lists 100 classifiers. Nonetheless, the two dictionaries only include numeral classifiers and not verbal classifiers. This is because there are "no verbal classifiers in the languages of African or Eurasian or the Austronesia family" (Aikhenvald, 2000, p. 171).

General Classifier "个 *(gè)*"

The numeral classifiers "个 *(gè)*" and "*buah*" are widely used in Chinese and Malay, respectively. Both numeral classifiers can be used or collocated with most nouns. Li and Thompson, 1981, p. 112) propose that there may be one general classifier that can be used with any—or almost any—noun, substituting other more specific classifiers. This occurs with 个 *(gè)* in Mandarin, which can substitute specific classifiers for quite a few speakers.

The *Xiandai Hanyu Liangci Guifan Cidian* (2010) states that 个 *(gè)* is used for: 1) nouns without a specific classifier [for example, 一个人 (*yígè rén*, "one person"), 一个句子 (*yígè jùzi*, "one sentence"), 三个合同 (*sāngè hétong*, "three contracts")]; and 2) nouns with a specific classifier [for example, 一个箱子 (*yígè xiāngzi*, "a box"), 两个篮子 (*liánggè lánzi*, "two baskets"), 三个鸡蛋 (*sāngè jīdàn*, "three eggs")]. Furthermore, 个 *(gè)* is also used for abstract nouns [for example, 一个因素 (*yígè yīnsù*, "one factor")], 一个借口 (*yígè jièkǒu*, "one excuse"), 三个步骤 (*sāngè bùzhòu*, "three steps")].

The word 个 *(gè)* is a special classifier. Its diachronic development is long, originating at the end of the Han Dynasty. In terms of scope of application, 个 *(gè)* is the most widely used classifier, and some refer to it as 万能量词 (*wànnéng liàngcí*),

a universal classifier (He, 2008). In the reputable Chinese grammar book *Xiandai Hanyu Babaici*, the well-known Chinese linguist-scholar Lv (1981/2012) describes 个 *(gè)* as a general classifier. The word 个 *(gè)* can be used for things with no specific classifier, covering almost all noun types.

In cross-linguistic comparison, He (2008) argues that 个 *(gè)* has a wide selection of nouns and noun phrases. According He, some studies have compared 个 *(gè)* with the English classifier "piece", which is generally denoted as a general classifier for both languages. In fact, "piece" is far from comparable to 个 *(gè)*, as "piece" has a limited classifying or quantifying function. "Piece" cannot quantify abstract things and is limited to measuring concrete things. The word 个 *(gè)* has its own particularity compared with the Indo-European "piece". Clearly, 个 *(gè)* is the common classifier with practical meaning.

General Classifier "*Buah*"

The *Kamus Penjodoh Bilangan Daya* (Ridhwan & Lai, 2008) states that *buah* is used for counting large objects, buildings, places, and vehicles. The *Kamus Dewan* (2002), a prestigious Malay dictionary often used as the definitive reference for the Malay language, states that *buah* is a classifier for relatively large objects or large objects of definite shape and type (such as furniture, houses, and vehicles).

Chung (2010) states that *buah* not only has a semantic role but also plays a cultural role. Furthermore, *buah* is frequently metaphorically related to "products" (for example, artifacts, products of telecommunication, products of nature, products of thoughts). Chung concludes on the connotation of *buah* via corpus-based analysis and suggests two possible mechanisms for its selection: that *buah* plays a semantic role in Malay culture and involves a metaphorical link that can be related with a product.

Contrary to the classifier function in general, *buah* seems to be able to appear in other continuums, where it can categorise "small round objects in general" in Minangkabau (Marnita, 1996, p. 104). *Buah* can also be used for categorising "things whose shape and type are uncertain" [as defined in *Kamus Dewan*, 2002, p. 546]. Salehuddin and Winskel (2011) state that *buah* is used for classifying inanimate large-shape and-size three-dimensional objects (for example, buses).

According to *Kamus Penjodoh Bilangan Daya* (Ridhwan & Lai, 2008), there are 485 nouns that match with *buah*, which shows *that buah* has the widest usage coverage among the 132 Malay classifiers. Compared with the classifier *orang* whose usage coverage is second to it, there are only 173 nouns that match with it. Although 个 *(gè)* and *buah* are widely used in both languages respectively and have comparatively analogous functions, there are also important differences between them. These differences tend to confuse Malay students who learn Chinese as a second language or foreign language and vice-versa. For example, nouns can be collocated with *buah* in Malay but may require a different classifier in Chinese, and vice versa. To date, no study has provided guidance and shed light on the use of 个 *(gè)* and *buah* although they are both frequently used in daily life. This

study aims to aid better and more effective mastery of both classifiers by students learning Malay or Chinese as a second language or foreign language.

This paper describes the similarities and differences of the number pairings of 个 *(gè)* and *buah* from the perspective of semantics and usage.

Methodology

To compare the classifiers 个 *(gè)* and *buah*, data were collected from the following classifier dictionaries:

1) Guo (2002/2008). *Xiandai Hanyu Liangci Yongfa Cidian* (Second Edition). Beijing: Yuwen Chubanshe;
2) Liu (1989). A Dictionary of Collocations of Nouns and Measure Words in Modern Chinese. Zhejiang: Zhejiang Jiaoyu Chubanshe;
3) Ridhwan et al. (2008). *Kamus Penjodoh Bilangan Daya* . Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Minda (M) Sdn. Bhd.;
4) Zainuddin, Dirin. (2020). *Kamus Penjodoh Bilangan*. Petaling Jaya: Oxford Fajar Sdn. Bhd.

Out of 8,000 entries, 个 *(gè)* was collocated with more than 3700 nouns in the Dictionary of Collocations of Nouns and Measure Words in Modern Chinese (1989). Out of 1,500 entries in the Malay dictionaries, a total of 486 nouns in the *Kamus Penjodoh Bilangan* (Zainuddin, 2020) and 485 nouns in the *Kamus Penjodoh Bilangan Daya* (Ridhwan & Lai, 2008) were collocated with *buah*. In short, more than one-third (30%) of the total entries for nouns in the dictionaries examined used 个 *(gè)* and *buah*. Both 个 *(gè)* and *buah* were the classifiers with the highest collocation rates among the nouns.

Croft (1994) stressed that each classifier type is associated with semantic and pragmatic roles. To compare the two classifiers, we referred to the definitions elaborated by the *Xiandai Hanyu Liangci Yongfa Cidian* (2002/2008) for 个 *(gè)* and the *Kamus Penjodoh Bilangan* (Zainuddin, 2020) for *buah*.
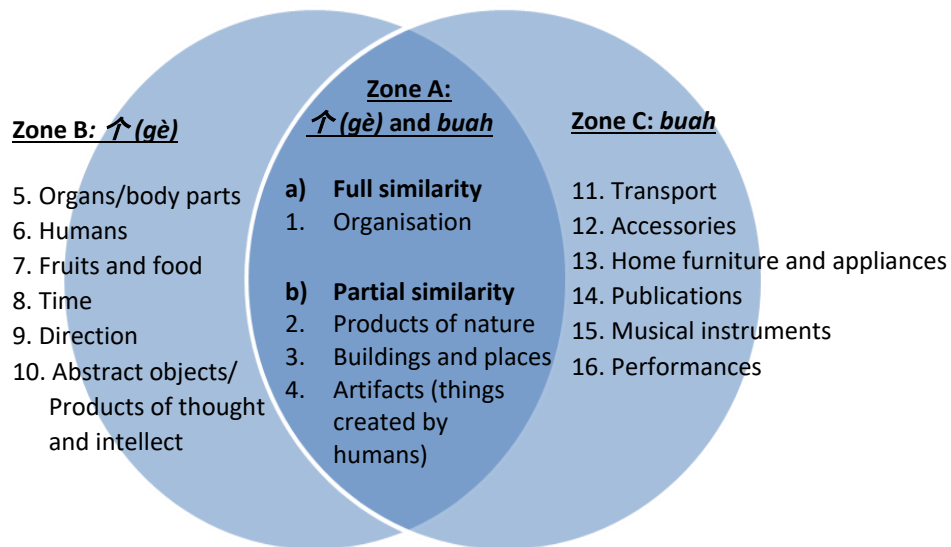
Results and Discussion

Following the comparative analysis, the findings can be summarised into three zones, with Zone A as the overlapping space between Zone B and C. Zone B encompasses categories of nouns that only collocate with 个*(gè)* while Zone C involves categories of nouns that collocate with *buah*. Zone A is further divided into those showing full similarity, and partial similarity. All findings are based on the comparison of the data collected from the four dictionaries mentioned above.

Zone A: Similarity

Zone A contains four noun categories (hence 4 lists of examples, Lists 1-4) and is further divided into List 1 for full similarity and Lists 2-4 for partial similarity. Only one list of examples is presented for nouns that collocate with both 个 *(gè)* and *buah*, and these nouns all denote meanings related to an organisation.

Figure 1

Comparison of 个 (gè) and Buah

Zone B: 个 (gè)

5. Organs/body parts
6. Humans
7. Fruits and food
8. Time
9. Direction
10. Abstract objects/
    Products of thought
    and intellect

Zone A:
个 (gè) and buah

a) **Full similarity**
1. Organisation

b) **Partial similarity**
2. Products of nature
3. Buildings and places
4. Artifacts (things created by humans)

Zone C: buah

11. Transport
12. Accessories
13. Home furniture and appliances
14. Publications
15. Musical instruments
16. Performances

Organisation

1) *Sebuah kerajaan*
   一个政府
   Yígè zhèngfǔ
   One CL government

2) *Sebuah negara*
   一个国家
   Yígè guójiā
   One CL country

A second category of nouns were identified in Zone A, which is referred to as nouns with partial similarity. In this category, the similarity correspondence is not completely bidirectional; nouns under the categories that use 个 *(gè)* can all be collocated with *buah*, but only certain nouns under these categories use 个 *(gè)* can be collocated with *buah*. Hence, the term partial similarity is used for this category. This is because despite using 个 *(gè)*, these categories also include nouns that use classifiers other than 个 *(gè)*. Partial similarity encompasses three noun categories: products of nature (List 2), buildings and places (List 3), and artifacts (List 4).

Product of Nature

3) *Sebuah muara*
   一个河口
   Yígè hékǒu
   One CL estuary

4) *Sebuah semenanjung*
   一个半岛
   Yígè bàndǎo
   One CL peninsula

In Chinese, there are products of nature that do not use 个 *(gè)* but require the use of other classifiers as shown in the examples 5-8. In Malay, *buah* can be used for all products of nature. Nonetheless, in Chinese, certain products of nature do not use 个 *(gè)* but "片 *(piàn)*", "道 *(dào)*", "条 *(tiáo)*", and "座 *(zuò)*". The word 片 *(piàn)* can be used for classifying larger areas, such as the mainland, fields, desert, and forest. The word 道 *(dào)* is used for classifying long things and things that move in a flow or stream. The word 条 *(tiáo)* shares some features with 道 *(dào)* but 条 *(tiáo)* tends to be collocated with smaller-scale nouns, such as drain, creek and river while 道 *(dào)* tends to be collocated with bigger-scale nouns, such as straight. The word 座 *(zuò)* is typically used for huge things, such as mountains, hills, or buildings.

5) *Sebuah gurun*
   一片沙漠
   Yípiàn shāmò
   One CL desert

6) *Sebuah selat*
   一道海峡
   Yídào hǎixiá
   One CL straight

7) *Sebuah jeram*
   一条激流
   Yìtiáo jìliú
   One CL torrent

8) *Sebuah bukit*
   一座山
   Yízuò shān
   One CL hill

Buah can be used for buildings and place as shown in examples 9-14 in List 3. However, in Chinese, there are also buildings and places that usually do not use 个 *(gè)* but that use other classifiers as shown in examples 10– 14.

Building & Place

9) *Sebuah kampung*
   一个农村
   Yígè nóngchūn
   One CL village

10) *Sebuah rumah*
    一间房子
    Yìjiān fángzi
    One CL house

11) *Sebuah bank*
    一家银行
    Yìjiā yínháng
    One CL bank

12) *Sebuah universiti*
    一所大学
    Yìsuǒ dàxué
    One CL university

13) *Sebuah wisma*
    一栋大厦
    Yídòng dàshào
    One CL wisma

14) *Sebuah wat*
    一座佛庙
    Yízòu fómiào
    One CL temple

Furthermore, in Chinese, certain buildings and places use not only 个 *(gè)* but also "间 *(jiān)*", "家 *(jiā)*", "所 *(suǒ)*", "栋 *(dòng)*", and "座 (zuò)". Notably, 间 *(jiān)*, 家 *(jiā)*, 所 *(suǒ)*, 栋 *(dòng)*, and 座 *(zuò)* share certain characteristics where they overlap and can be used for classifying buildings. Nevertheless, they have differing scopes of meaning and usage. The word 间 (jiān) is the smallest unit for classifying a room or a house. For example, "这家酒楼，楼上楼下共有六间房 [*zhè jiā* (CL) *jiǔlóu, lóushàng lóuxià gòngyǒu liù jiān* (CL) *fáng*, "this restaurant has six rooms from both floors, upstairs and downstairs"]. On the other hand, the noun 家 *(jiā)* itself originally refers to the meaning of the operation of certain industries. For example,

"店家 (*diànjiā*, store)" and "厂家 (*chǎngjiā*, manufacturer)". When the noun 家 *(jiā)* is used as a classifier, it can therefore be used for classifying certain enterprises and institutions, such as "一家银行 [*yìjiā* (CL) *yínháng*, a bank]", "一家公司 [*yìjiā* (CL) *gōngsī*, a company]", and 一家超级市场 [*yìjiā* (CL) *chāojí shìchǎng*, a supermarket]". The word 所 *(suǒ)* also refers to enterprises and institutions but also includes housing construction and personnel organisation. For example, "一所大学 [*yìsuǒ* (CL) *dàxué*, a university]" and "一所医院 [*yìsuǒ* (CL) *yīyuàn*, a hospital]". The words 栋 *(dòng)* and 座 *(zuò)* can also be used for classifying buildings. Nevertheless, 栋 (dòng) has a narrower scope of meaning than 座 *(zuò)*. Other than classifying buildings, 座 *(zuò)* can also be used for artifacts, mountains, and forests. For example, "一座佛庙 [*yízuò* (CL) *fómiào*, a Buddhist temple]", "一座大桥 [*yízuò* (CL)] *dàqiáo*, a bridge]", "一座高山 [*yízuò* (CL) *gāoshān*, a mountain]", and "一座森林 [*yízuò* (CL) *sēnlín*, a forest]". 所 *(suǒ)* and 座 *(zuò)* have a broader scope of meaning than 栋 *(dòng)*.

The examples 15-20 in List 4 presents examples where *buah* is used for nouns denoting artifacts, things that are created by human. Some artifacts in Chinese, however, do not use 个 *(gè)* but use other classifiers as shown in examples 16-20.

Artifact (Things Created by Human)

15) *Sebuah empangan*
一个水坝
Yígè shuǐbà
One CL dam

16) *Sebuah jejambat*
一座天桥
Yízuò tiānqiáo
One CL flyover

17) *Sebuah terewong*
一条隧道
Yìtiáo suìdào
One CL tunnel

18) *Sebuah tembok*
一道围墙
Yídào wéiqiáng
One CL fence

19) *Sebuah mesin*
一台机械
Yìtái jīxiè
One CL machine

20) *Sebuah telaga*
一口井
Yìkǒujǐng
One CL well

Buah can be used for artifacts but in Chinese, certain artifacts do not use 个 *(gè)*, but "座 *(zuò)*", "条 *(tiáo)*", "道 *(dào)*", "台 *(tái)*", and "口 *(kǒu)*". As mentioned above, "道 *(dào)*" can be used for classifying things that are long and that move in a flow or stream but can also be used for classifying blocks of things such as a door or wall. For example, "一道围墙 [*yídào* (CL) *wéiqiáng*, a fence]" and "一道大门 [*yídào* (CL) *dàmén*, a big gate]". The word 台 *(tái)* is used for classifying machines, equipment, and infrastructure. For example, "一台机械 [*yìtái* (CL) *jīxiè*, a machine]" and "一台印刷机 [*yìtái* (CL) *yìnshuàjī*, a printer]". For 口 *(kǒu)*, the noun itself originally means "mouth". Therefore, when used as a classifier, 口 *(kǒu)* is used for classifying objects with a mouth or a blade. For example, "一口井 [*yìkǒu* (CL) *jǐng*, a well]", 一口棺材 [*yìkǒu* (CL) *guāncái*, a coffin], and "一口剑 [*yìkǒu* (CL) *jiàn*, a sword]".

Zone B: Differences - 个 *(gè)*

In this section, the differences found in the use of 个 *(gè)* and *buah* are presented with examples shown in Lists 5-10 for organ/body parts, human, fruits and food, time, direction, abstract objects or products of thought and intellect. The use of *buah* for these noun categories are not grammatical in Malay. Either a different classifier is required or no classifier is permissible in Malay as shown in examples in Lists 5-10.

Organ/ Body Parts

21) 一个脑袋
Yígè nǎodài
One CL head
*Sebuah kepala/ otak (Sebiji kepala/ otak)

22) 一个鼻子
Yígè bízi
One CL nose
*Sebuah hidung (Satu hidung)

The word 个 *(gè)* can be used for organs or body parts in Chinese but this is not the case in Malay. For nouns under the "organs or body parts" category, Malay uses classifiers that match the shape of the object. For example, *biji* rather than *buah* is used for "*otak* (head)" and "*mata* (eyes)". As *biji* is used for round and small objects, it collocates with "*otak* (head)", "*mata* (eyes)", and "*buah dada* (breasts)".

Human

23) 一个学生
    Yígè xuéshēng
    One CL student
    **sebuah pelajar (seorang pelajar)*

24) 一个姑娘
    Yígè gūniang
    One CL lady
    **sebuah perempuan (seorang perempuan)*

The word 个 *(gè)* can also be used for humans. Nonetheless, Malay uses "*orang* (person)" rather than *buah* for classifying nouns under the "human" category. Human classification content differs between systems (Aikhenvald, 2000). Western Austronesian languages such as Malay, Minangkabau, Acehnese, or Bahasa Indonesia have only a single overall term for "person", for example, the Minangkabau "*urang*" (Aikhenvald, 2000).

For humans, 个 *(gè)* is used without emotional implications or personal judgement towards the person. Nevertheless, a noun classifier system perpetually expresses social status (Aikhenvald, 2000). When classifying humans or persons, a few classifiers other than 个 *(gè)*, such as "位 *(wèi)*", "名 *(míng)*", "条 *(tiáo)*", and "口 *(kǒu)*" can be collocated with nouns under the "human or person" category. The word 位 *(wèi)* is specifically used for people of high social status and when presenting a positive image. The use of 位 *(wèi)* also indicates respect for a highly esteemed person. For example, "一位医生 [*yíwèi* (CL) *yīshēng*, a doctor]", "一位教授 [*yíwèi* (CL) *jiàoshòu*, a professor]", and "一位老人 [*yíwèi* (CL) *lǎorén*, a senior citizen]".

In contrast, 名 *(míng)* is mostly used for describing an occupation or a measure of people. For example, "一名演员 [*yìmíng* (CL) *yǎnyuán*, an actor]" and "招收 20 名职工 [*zhāoshōu* 20 *míng* (CL) *zhìgōng*, recruit 20 employees]". The word 条 *(tiáo)* has a unique meaning and usage. It is used for classifying things that are long and that move in a flow or stream, such as a river or ditch. It can also be used for humans and refers specifically to a hero or man. For example, "一条好汉 [*yìtiáo* (CL) *hǎohàn*, a hero]" and "一条光棍 [*yìtiáo* (CL) *guānggùn*, a bachelor]". On the other hand, 口 *(kǒu)* is only used for counting the people in a family or a village. For example, "三口人 [*sānkǒu* (CL) *rén*, three people]" and "一家四口 [*yìjiā sìkǒu* (CL), four in the family]".

Fruits and Food

25) 一个西瓜
   Yígè xīguā
   One CL watermelon
   *Sebuah tembikai (sebiji tembikai)

26) 一个鸡蛋
   Yígè jīdàn
   One CL egg
   *Sebuah telur (sebiji telur)

The word 个 *(gè)* can also be used for small fruits and food. Nevertheless, *biji* rather *buah* is used for nouns under this category in Malay. According to Zainuddin (2000), *biji* is used for small fruits and things, usually round.

The word 个 *(gè)* can also be used for nouns without specific classifiers, such as those under the "time" and "direction" categories. However, for such noun categories in Malay, the use of classifier is prohibited for nouns denoting time (List 8) and Directions (List 9). A similar situation is also found with nouns denoting abstract objects or product of thought and intellectual activities (List 10). Accordingly, the basic classifier phrase structure is changed from NUMBER + CLASSIFIER + NOUN to NUMBER + NOUN.

Time

27) 一个小时
   Yígè xiǎoshí
   One CL hour
   *Sebuah jam (satu jam)

28) 一个月
   Yígè yuè
   One CL month
   *Sebuah bulan (satu bulan)

29) 一个世纪
   Yígè shìjì
   One CL century
   *Sebuah dekad (satu dekad)

Direction

30) 一个方向
   Yígè fāngxiàng
   One CL direction
   *Sebuah arah (satu arah)

Abstract Objects/ Product of Thought and Intellectual

31) 一个条件
    Yígè tiáojiàn
    One CL requirement
    Sebuah kriteria (satu kriteria)

32) 一个传统
    Yígè chuántóng
    One CL tradition
    Sebuah tradisi (satu tradisi)

As shown in the examples in List 10, the word 个 *(gè)* can be used for quantifying actual as well as abstract things (Chen, 2002). It can also be used for nouns under the "abstract objects or products of thought and intellect" category. By contrast, this category omits Malay classifiers for nouns, as do the "time" and "direction" categories. Therefore, the basic classifier phrase structure is changed from NUMBER + CLASSIFIER + NOUN to NUMBER + NOUN. For example, "satu tradisi (a tradition)" and "*satu keputusan* (a decision)".

Zone C: Differences – *Buah*

The important difference between *buah* and 个 *(gè)* is that *buah* can be used for transportation, costumes, publications in book form, music instruments, kitchen utensils or gadgets, and fishing or agricultural equipment as shown in examples in List 11 to List 16.

Transport

Land.

33) *Sebuah kereta*
    One CL car
    *一个汽车 （一辆汽车）
    * Yígè qìchē (Yíliàng qìchē)*

34) *Sebuah keretapi*
    One CL train
    *一个火车（一列火车）
    * Yígè huǒchē (Yíliè huǒchē)*

35) *Sebuah lori*
    One CL lorry
    *一个卡车 （一部卡车）
    * Yígè kǎchē (Yíbù kǎchē)*

36) *Sebuah kren*
   One CL crane
   一个吊车（一架吊车）
   * *Yígè diàochē (Yíjià diàochē)*

Sea.

37) *Sebuah feri*
   One CL ferry
   一个渡轮（一艘渡轮）
   * *Yígè dùlún (Yìsōu dùlún)*

38) *Sebuah kapal*
   One CL boat
   一个船（一条船）
   * *Yígè chuán (Yìtiáo chuán)*

39) *Sebuah sampan*
   One CL sampan/boat
   一个舢舨 （一只舢舨）
   * *Yígè shānbǎn (Yìzhī shānbǎn)*

40) *Sebuah biduk*
   One CL boat
   一个扁舟（一片扁舟）
   * *Yígè piǎnzhōu (Yípiàn piǎnzhōu)*

41) *Sebuah kincir*
   One CL windmill
   一个水车 （一架水车）
   * *Yígè shuǐchē (Yíjià shuǐchē)*

Air.

42) *Sebuah kapal terbang*
   One CL airplane
   一个飞机 （一架飞机）
   * *Yígè fēijī (Yíjià fēijī)*

43) *Sebuah roket*
   One CL rocket
   一个火箭（一枚火箭）
   * *Yígè huǒjiàn (Yìméi huǒjiàn)*

Means of transport, clothing, and housing frequently have classifiers (Aikhenvald, 2000). In Malay, nouns under the "transport", *buah* is commonly used. According to

Ridhwan and Lai (2008), "*buah* is used to count large objects, buildings, places and vehicles" (p. 49). The nouns under the "transport" category include that for sea, land, and air transportation. Comparatively, nouns under the "transport" category in Chinese do not adopt 个 *(gè)*, but use "辆 *(liàng)*", "列 *(liè)*", "部 *(bù)*", "架 *(jià)*", "艘 *(sōu)*", "条 *(tiáo)*", "只 *(zhī)*", "片 *(piàn)*", and "枚 *(méi)*".

In Chinese, most nouns under the "land transportation" category collocate with 辆 *(liàng)*, except train, which collocates only with 列 *(liè)*, as the noun itself, 列 *(liè)*, means "row". As a train has rows of carriages, "train" therefore collocates with 列 *(liè)*. Although some land transportation uses 部 *(bù)*, 部 *(bù)* and 辆 *(liàng)* have slightly different scopes of usage. The word 辆 *(liàng)* has been used as the classifier for transportation by the ancient Chinese until today. Meanwhile, 部 *(bù)* is derived from the literal meaning "parts". As the noun 部 (*bù*, parts) can be configured, vehicles and machines are therefore assembled from parts, explaining why they are classified using 部 (*bù*, parts). Furthermore, 辆 *(liàng)* is applied more to written language while 部 *(bù)* is applied more to spoken language (colloquial). The word 架 *(jià)* is used for classifying transport or big machines with supports and stands. Hence, airplanes, helicopters, jets, and cranes, which share the same features, fall under the same category. The word 台 *(tái)* is used for classifying machines and equipment. The important difference between 架 *(jià)* and 台 *(tái)* is that 架 *(jià)* is used not only for machines, but also for transport or vehicles. In contrast, 台 *(tái)* is used for classifying only machines and equipment but not means of transport. Thus, "机器 *(jīqì)* (machine)" can be collocated with 架 *(jià)* and 台 *(tái)*, such as "一架机器 [*yìjià* (CL) *jīqì*, a machine]" and "一台机器 [*yìtái* (CL) *jīqì*, a machine]". However, "飞机 *(fēijī*, airplane)" can only be collocated with 架 *(jià)* but not 台 *(tái)*, for example, "一架飞机 [*yìjià* (CL) *fēijī*, an airplane]" and "*一台飞机 [*yìtái* (CL) *fēijī*, an airplane]". The word 枚 *(méi)* is used solely for the air transport "rocket".

Nouns under the "sea transport" category, such as ships and boats, take the classifiers "艘 *(sōu)*", "条 *(tiáo)*", and "只 *(zhī)*", especially 艘 *(sōu)* is the more commonly used classifier among the three. Nonetheless, there are some differences among the three classifiers. 艘 *(sōu)* is used for huge ships, which are motorised vessels. While 条 *(tiáo)* is used for long objects, and it can also be used for classifying normal boats, such fishing boats, sailboats, and dragon boats. Nevertheless, 条 *(tiáo)* is never collocated with "小舟 (*xiǎozhōu*, *sampan*, little wooden boat)". In general, most sea transport can be collocated with 只 *(zhī)* regardless of size, but rarely so for cruisers, giant ships, battleships, and aircraft carriers, as they are more likely to be collocated with 艘 *(sōu)*. Moreover, 艘 *(sōu)* is more applicable to written language while 条 *(tiáo)* and 只 *(zhī)* are more applicable to both written or spoken language. From the noun itself, 片 *(piàn)* means "slice". Therefore, 片 *(piàn)* is used for classifying "扁舟 (*piǎnzhōu*, a type of river fishing boat)", which is small, flat, and thin.

Accessories

44) *Sebuah tengkolok*
One CL head (a traditional Malay headdress worn by men)
*一个男子头巾（一条男子头巾）
* Yígè nánzitóujīng (Yìtiáo nánzitóujīng)

45) *Sebuah topi*
One CL hat
*一个西式帽（一项西式帽）
* Yígè xīshìmào (Yìdǐng xīshìmào)

46) *Sebuah gogal*
One CL google
*一个护目镜（一副护目镜）
* Yígè hùmùjìng (Yífù hùmùjìng)

47) *Sebuah jam tangan*
One CL watch
*一个表（一块表）
*Yígè biǎo (Yíkuài biǎo)

48) *Sebuah roset*
One CL rosette
*一个玫瑰花饰 （一枚玫瑰花饰）
*Yígè méiguìhuāshì (Yìméi méiguìhuāshì)

In Malay, nouns under the "accessories", *buah* is commonly used. In comparison, in Chinese, nouns under the "accessories" category do not adopt 个 *(gè)*. Rather, "条 *(tiáo)*", "顶 *(dǐng)*", "副 *(fù)*", "块 *(kuài)*", and "枚 *(méi)*" are used based on the noun with which they are collocated. 条 *(tiáo)* can be used for the traditional male Malay headdress, towels, necklaces, and neckties. The word 顶 *(dǐng)* is used for hats while 副 *(fù)* is used for items that come in pairs or sets, such as goggles, spectacles, chess, and dentures. The word 块 *(kuài)* is used for things in blocks or pieces, such as watches, handkerchiefs, and mirrors. As mentioned earlier, 枚 *(méi)* is used for rockets. Nevertheless, for "accessories" nouns, 枚 *(méi)* is used for classifying small shiny items, such as rosettes, medals, buttons, and rings.

Home Furniture & Appliances

49) *Sebuah katil*
One CL bed
*一个床（一张床）
*Yígè chuáng (Yìzhāng chuáng)

50) *Sebuah kerusi*
One CL chair
一个椅子（一把椅子）
* *Yígè yǐzi (Yìbǎ yǐzi)*

51) *Sebuah bangku*
One CL bench
一个板凳（一条板凳）
* *Yígè bǎndèng (Yìtiǎo bǎndèng)*

52) *Sebuah kipas*
One CL fan
一个风扇（一台风扇）
* *Yígè fēngshàn (Yìtái fēngshàn)*

53) *Sebuah lampu*
One CL lamp
一个灯（一盏灯）
* *Yígè dēng (Yìzhǎn dēng)*

In Malay, nouns under the "home furniture and appliances", *buah* is commonly used. In Chinese, such nouns do not adopt 个 *(gè)*. Rather, "张 *(zhāng)*", "把 *(bǎ)*", "条 *(tiǎo)*", "台 *(tái)*", and "盏 *(zhǎn)*" are used based on the noun with which they are collocated. The word 张 *(zhāng)* is used for classifying things with flat surfaces, such as desks, tables, and beds. It can also be collocated with chairs but most of the time 把 *(bǎ)* is more commonly used for classifying chairs. This is because 把 *(bǎ)* is used for classifying things with handles, such as chairs, axes, brooms, and scissors. The word 条 *(tiǎo)* can be used for classifying many different things as mentioned earlier. The word 条 *(tiǎo)* can be used for classifying human specially to a hero or a man; thing that move in flow or stream, such as drain, creek and river; things in long shape and can be bended, such as traditional male Malay headdress, towels, necklaces, and neckties. Besides, 条 *(tiǎo)* can also be used for classifying things that is long but hard, such as a bench. As mentioned earlier, 台 *(tái)* is used for classifying machines and equipment, which includes electric fans, while 盏 *(zhǎn)* is specifically used for classifying lights or lamps.

Publication

54) *Sebuah komik*
One CL comic
一个漫画（一本漫画）
* *Yígè mànhuà (Yìběn mànhuà)*

55) *Sebuah majalah*
One CL magazine
*一个杂志（一份杂志）
* Yígè zázhì (Yìběn/ Yífèn zázhì)*

56) *Sebuah peta*
One CL map
*一个地图（一张地图）
* Yígè dìtú (Yìzhāng dìtú)*

57) *Sebuah rencana*
One CL article
*一个文章（一篇文章）
* Yígè wénzhāng (Yìpiān wénzhāng)*

In Malay, nouns denoting products of "publication", *buah* is commonly used. In Chinese, such nouns do not adopt 个 *(gè)*, but use "本 *(běn)*", "份 *(fèn)*", "张 *(zhāng)*", and "篇 *(piān)*" according to the collocated noun. The word 本 *(běn)* is used for classifying books, such as diaries, dictionaries, and comics while 份 *(fèn)* is used for classifying newspapers and magazines, files, and telegrams. The word 张 *(zhāng)* is used for classifying items with flat surfaces. In addition, 张 *zhāng* is also used for classifying objects that can be rolled up and stretched out (open like a book), such as paper, maps, notices, and straw mats. The word 篇 *(piān)* is used for classifying paper, book pages [one 篇 *(piān)* is equivalent to two pages], and articles.

Musical Instrument

58) *Sebuah gendang*
One CL drum
*一个鼓（一面鼓）
* Yígè gǔ (Yímiàn gǔ)*

59) *Sebuah viola*
One CL viola
*一个中提琴（一把中提琴）
* Yígè zhōngtíqíng (Yìbǎ zhōngtíqíng)*

60) *Sebuah rekorder*
One CL recorder
*一个直笛（一支直笛）
* Yígè zhídí (Yìzhī zhídí)*

In Malay, nouns under the "musical instruments", *buah* is commonly used. In Chinese, such nouns do not adopt 个 *(gè)*, but use "面 *(miàn)*", "把 *(bǎ)*", and "支 *(zhī)*". As a noun, 面 *(miàn)* means "face". As a classifier, 面 *(miàn)* is used for flat-

surface items such as drums, tambourines, little gongs, paper, mirror and wall. As stated in an earlier section, 把 *(bǎ)* is used for classifying objects with handles. Nevertheless, 把 *(bǎ)* can also be used for violas, violins, and xylophones. This is because these musical instruments share the features of objects with handles. The word 支 *(zhī)* is specifically used for classifying rod-shaped objects, such as recorders and flutes.

Performance

61) *Sebuah lagu*
One CL song
*一个歌（一首歌）
* *Yígè gē (Yìshǒu gē)*

62) *Sebuah tarian*
One CL dance
*一个舞（一支舞）
* *Yígè wǔ (Yìzhī wǔ)*

63) *Sebuah konsert*
One CL concert
*一个演唱会（一场演唱会）
* *Yígè yǎnchànghuì (Yìchǎng yǎnchànghuì)*

In Malay, "performance" nouns use no other classifiers but *buah*. In Chinese, such nouns do not use 个 *(gè)*, but use "首 *(shǒu)*", "支 *(zhī)*", and "场 *(chǎng)*" based on the noun to be collocated. The word 首 *(shǒu)* is used for classifying music or literature such as songs, or poems while 支 *(zhī)* can also be used for classifying songs but cannot be used for poems. Nonetheless, 支 *(zhī)* can be applied to dance or even orchestra. Furthermore, 首 *(shǒu)* is applied more to written language while 支 *(zhī)* is applied more to spoken language. On the other hand, 场 *(chǎng)* is specifically used for classifying stage performances such as dramas and pantomimes.

Conclusion

As conclusion, there are some similarities exist and both classifiers can be used interchangeably with some nouns, these classifiers are unique and have distinctive semantic usage. Both 个 *(gè)* and *buah* are used for organisation, products of nature, buildings and places, and artifacts (things created by humans). However, only 个 *(gè)* can be used for organs or body parts, humans, fruits and food, time, directions, and thought and intellectual products. In contrast, only *buah* is used for transportation, accessories, home furniture and appliances, publications, musical instruments, and performances.

The similarities found between the Chinese classifier 个 *(gè)* and the Malay classifier *buah* in this study show that two different languages share similar thought

and cognitive patterns regarding the same object. The differences between the two may due to cultural practices, historical influences, and societal norms unique to each linguistic community. For instance, in classifying nouns within the "human" category, Malay utilizes the classifier *orang*, whereas Chinese employs 个 *(gè)* which is without emotional implications or personal judgement towards the individual. Additional classifiers in Chinese, such as 位 *(wèi)*, 名 *(míng)*, 条 *(tiáo)*, and 口 *(kǒu)*, often convey nuances of social status. Consequently, while these classifiers share fundamental cognitive functions, their divergences reflect the diverse cultural perspectives embedded within language usage.

However, this study exclusively focuses on comparing the Chinese and Malay language classifiers documented in dictionaries. Therefore, it is recommended that future research endeavors involve an investigation into the proficiency of classifier usage in either language among Malaysians. This suggestion arises from previous studies indicating a gradual decline in proficiency across generations. Such inquiries would yield valuable insights into second language acquisition and pedagogy.

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