

A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION OF NUMERAL CLASSIFIERS IN ENGLISH

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Abstract: This article examines the semantic characteristics and classification of numeral classifiers in the English language. The relevance of the study lies in the necessity to identify the semantic system of lexical units expressing quantity and to determine their functional properties in English. The research employs descriptive, semantic, comparative, and statistical methods of analysis. As a result, English numeral classifiers were classified into several semantic categories, including measurement units, container units, partitive units, collective units, and temporal units. The analysis demonstrates that quantitative expressions in English form a diverse and functionally flexible semantic system.

Keywords: numeral classifiers, expression of quantity, semantic analysis, semantic classification, numeral units, partitive constructions, measurement units, collective units, English language semantics

INTRODUCTION. Quantification is a fundamental aspect of human language, and it plays a crucial role in how speakers categorize and interpret the world around them. Although English is not traditionally considered a numeral classifier language, it features numerous lexical expressions that function similarly to classifiers in other languages. Numeral classifiers are lexical units that help specify the quantity or unit of counting when numerals are used with nouns. They often indicate the way objects are grouped, measured, or conceptualized in language [1]. These constructions allow speakers to quantify nouns by associating them with intermediate lexical units that convey semantic information, such as shape, measure, collectivity, or abstraction. For example, expressions like *a piece of advice*, *a loaf of bread*, or *a herd of cattle* demonstrate how English speakers employ semantic mechanisms to structure and communicate quantity [5]. This study aims to explore numeral classifiers in English by identifying, categorizing, and analyzing their semantic functions. It seeks to answer the following research questions: How can English numeral classifiers be grouped semantically? What conceptual domains underlie their use? How do these constructions contribute to the expression of quantity and classification in English?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach combined with semantic analysis. The study is primarily analytical, drawing on examples from standard English grammar references, dictionaries, and common usage. The methodology involves three key stages:

First, a descriptive linguistic method was used to examine the structural and semantic characteristics of numeral classifiers in English. This method allowed the researcher to describe how classifiers function in combination with numerals and nouns and how they contribute to the expression of quantity, measurement, grouping, and categorization. Descriptive analysis made it possible to identify the semantic relationships between numerals and classifiers as well as their role in organizing lexical units [2]. Second, a semantic analysis method was applied to classify numeral classifiers according to their meanings and functional domains. In this stage, lexical units associated with numerals were examined and grouped into several semantic fields. Semantic classification is widely used in linguistic studies to group lexical items according to shared conceptual features and functional similarities [3]. These fields include measurement units, collective nouns, container-based expressions, and temporal or spatial classifiers. Through this classification, the study identifies the semantic range of numeral expressions and demonstrates how different classifiers contribute to the representation of quantity in English. Functional interpretation - Each semantic category was analyzed in terms of cognitive motivation, cultural significance, and linguistic productivity [4].

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS. The analysis was conducted by examining lexical constructions in which numerals combine with nouns through intermediary lexical units. In many cases, these intermediary elements function as classifiers because they categorize the counted object according to its shape, structure, quantity, or conceptual grouping [5]. Examples include expressions such as *a piece of advice*, *a slice of bread*, *a herd of cattle*, and *a bottle of water*. In these constructions, the classifier specifies the unit by which the object is conceptualized and counted. Based on semantic characteristics, the collected examples were grouped into several semantic categories. Each category represents a conceptual domain in which classifiers function to organize lexical meaning. The classification process identified the following major semantic fields: measurement classifiers, container classifiers, partitive classifiers, collective classifiers, and temporal classifiers. Based on semantic characteristics, the collected examples were grouped into several semantic categories. Each category represents a conceptual domain in which classifiers function to organize lexical meaning. The classification process identified the following major semantic fields: measurement classifiers, container classifiers, partitive classifiers, collective classifiers, and temporal classifiers. Measurement classifiers refer to lexical units that indicate the quantitative or physical measurement of an entity. These

include expressions such as a kilo of rice, a liter of milk, and a meter of cloth. In these constructions, the classifier represents a standard unit of measurement that allows abstract or mass nouns to be quantified. Container classifiers describe the quantity of an item according to the container in which it is held. For example, expressions such as a bottle of water, a cup of tea, and a box of chocolates belong to this category. In these constructions, the container itself becomes the counting unit, which reflects a conceptual association between physical storage and quantity. Partitive classifiers represent portions or fragments of a whole object. Examples include a piece of information, a slice of bread, a chunk of wood, and a drop of water. Partitive constructions function as semantic classifiers that allow speakers to quantify mass nouns and abstract concepts. These expressions allow speakers to quantify substances or abstract entities that cannot normally be counted directly. Collective classifiers refer to groups of objects or living beings that are conceptualized as a single unit. Examples include a herd of cattle, a flock of birds, and a bunch of flowers. These lexical units function as grouping markers that represent multiple items as a collective entity. Temporal classifiers represent units of time or duration, such as a moment, a second, or a period. Although these expressions are not always classified as traditional numeral classifiers, they function similarly because they serve as measurable units within quantitative expressions. The semantic classification of the analyzed data is summarized in the following table.

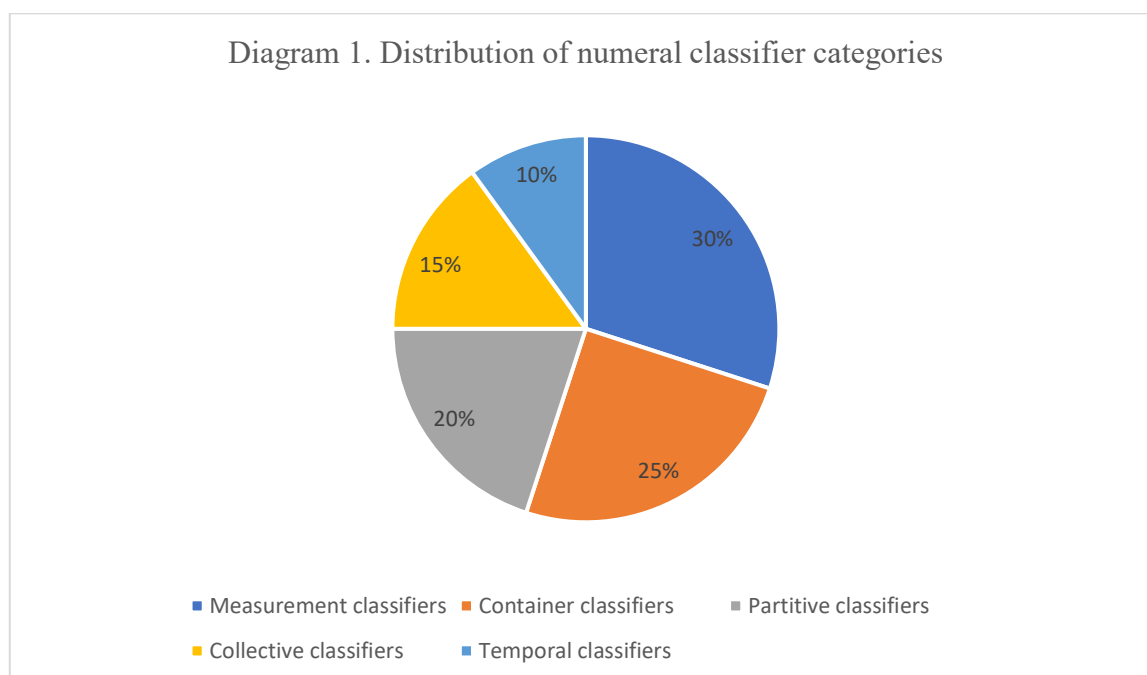
Table 1.

Semantic classification of numeral classifiers in English.

Semantic category	Examples	Number of units	Percentage
Measurement classifiers	kilo, liter, meter, pound	12	30%
Container classifiers	bottle, cup, box, glass	10	25%
Partitive classifiers	piece, slice, drop, chunk	8	20%
Collective classifiers	herd, flock, bunch, group	6	15%
Temporal classifiers	moment, second, period	4	10%
Total		40	100%

The statistical distribution presented in the table shows that measurement classifiers constitute the largest group, accounting for 30 percent of the analyzed examples. This indicates that the concept of quantitative measurement plays a central role in the organization of numeral expressions in English. Container classifiers represent the second most frequent category with 25 percent of occurrences. Their relatively high frequency reflects the everyday conceptualization of quantity through physical containers such as bottles, cups, and boxes. Partitive classifiers account for 20 percent of the examples and are especially important when referring to abstract or

uncountable nouns. The distribution of semantic categories can also be represented visually. The following diagram illustrates the relative proportion of classifier types in the dataset.



The results of the analysis demonstrate that numeral classifiers in English primarily function as semantic mediators between numerals and nouns. They provide conceptual frameworks that allow speakers to quantify objects according to measurement, containment, partitive division, or collective grouping. These patterns show that even in languages without rigid classifier systems, semantic classification still plays a crucial role in the expression of quantity.

CONCLUSION. The present study investigated the semantic characteristics and classification of numeral classifiers in English. Although English is not traditionally considered a classifier language, the analysis demonstrated that it contains a considerable number of lexical units that function similarly to classifiers in quantitative expressions. These units play an important role in structuring the relationship between numerals and nouns and in organizing the conceptualization of quantity in everyday language. The research identified several major semantic categories of numeral classifiers, including measurement classifiers, container classifiers, partitive classifiers, collective classifiers, and temporal classifiers. Overall, the research confirms that numeral classifiers in English represent an important semantic mechanism for organizing quantitative meaning. The classification and statistical analysis conducted in this study provide a clearer understanding of how these lexical units function within the language system. Future research may further expand this analysis by examining larger corpora, comparing classifier usage across different genres of discourse, or conducting contrastive studies between English and other languages that possess more developed classifier systems.

Such investigations would contribute to a deeper understanding of the linguistic and cognitive principles underlying quantitative expressions and would further clarify the role of classifiers in shaping the semantic structure of language.

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