

Quantifiers in Thai
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Thai linguists (Savetamalaya 1989, Stein 1991, Deephuengton 1992) have looked into words semantically denoting quantities in Thai and found that these words appear within a noun phrase. Let us take a look at the following example.

náŋsǎ	ʔik	kwêe	sǎamsǐp	lêm	thâwnán
book	more	only	thirty	CL (for books)	only
‘Only another thirty books’					

The words *ʔik* ‘more’, *kwêe* ‘only’ and *sǎamsǐp* ‘thirty’ precede a classifier noun while the word *thâwnán* ‘only’ follows *lêm*, the classifier for books, in the above example. These words were semantically identified as quantifiers in previous analyses (Savetamalaya 1989, Deephuengton 1992). Both Savetamalaya (1989) and Deephuengton (1992) agreed that quantifiers appear in a noun phrase in which a classifier is head. However, quantifiers were not classified as a word class in Thai (Cf. Upakitsilapasan 1995, Savetamalaya 1989, Starosta 1994, and Indrambarya 1994). Linguists have different views about the word category of the words expressing quantities in Thai. In many cases, they were unsystematically classified either as adjectives or as adverbs. Deephuengton (1992) considered both *ʔik* ‘more’ and *thâwnán* ‘only’, as in above example, to be adverbs. Savetamalaya (1989), on the other hand, considered *ʔik* ‘more’ and *sǎamsǐp* ‘thirty’ to be adjectives preceding the classifier noun *lêm* ‘a classifier for books’, and considered both *kwêe* ‘only’ and *thâwnán* ‘only’ to be adverbs despite different positions.

Following Prasithrathsint (2009) who proposed that a quantifier is a separate word class in Thai, this paper identifies the syntactic characteristics of quantifiers as different from other word classes. The study reveals that quantifiers appear within a noun phrase in which a numeral functions as head. Only words denoting quantities which precede a noun are identified as quantifiers in Thai. Post-nominal words are adjectives. Quantifiers in Thai may co-occur sequentially and can be subclassified. Thai quantifiers are, for example, *lǎay* ‘several’, *ʔik* ‘more’, *kwêe* ‘only’, *thûk* ‘every’, and *kâp* ‘almost’.

Examples of Thai quantifiers

- (1) **baaŋ** bân
 some house
 ‘some house’
- (2) **ŋiik** praden nŋ
 more point one
 ‘another point’
- (3) náŋsǎ **lǎay** rǒy lêm
 book several hundred Classifier for books
 ‘hundreds of books’

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