Classifiers

Hmong	English	Hmong	English
cov noog	the birds (*cov = many*)	**haiv** neeg	a nation, a nationality
daim ntawv	*a piece of* paper	**kob** nag	*a batch of* rain
kab ntawv	*a line of* letters	**nthwv** cua	a *gust of* wind
leej muam	a sister (*tus* muam)	**qais** plaub hau	a *skein* of hair
lub paj	a flower	**rooj** plaub	a matter or problem
ntiv tes	*digit of* hand (a *finger*)	**sob ntses**	a *school* of fish
ntsiav pob kws	*a piece of* corn kernel	**tauv** paj	a flower, *bud* of flowers
ntu kev	*segment of* road	**tee** dej	a drop of water
pab neeg	*a group of* people	**tsob** ntoo	a tree
phau ntawv	a book	**tus** tsov	a tiger
qhov chaw	an area, the area	**txhais** tes	a hand
rab riam	a knife	**txoj** hlua	a rope
zaj dabneeg	a story	**yav** qws	*a piece of* stick/rod.

Cov can be used as follows: *cov neeg, cov tsiaj, cov pob kws* etc... More or less similar to the English "*the, those*", i.e., *the* people, *the* animals, *the* corn etc... **Daim** is mostly used to identify *flat* or *arealike* objects, i.e., *daim teb, daim ntoo, daim nqaij*. **Kab** is used to identify a *linelike* patterns, i.e., *kab tes, kab npua (palm lines, path of pigs)*. **Leej** is used to identify mostly human beings, i.e., *Koj muaj pes tsawg **leej** me nyuam?* How many children do you have? **Lub** is perhaps the most common classifier of all, i.e., *lub paj, lub zos, lub tebchaws, lub tsev, lub txaj, lub teeb, lub cev, lub siab, lub pas dej, lub qhov, lub zes, lub ntiajteb, lub plawv, lub qhov ncauj etc*... **Rab** is commonly used to identify *toollike* objects, i.e., *rab riam, rab rauj, rab taus, rab pas etc*... The last one I want to cover is "**tus**." **Tus** is mostly used to identify animals, human beings, rivers and any *standing* entities. For example, *tus tsov, tus liab, tus dej loj, tus neeg zoo, tus Huabtais, tus ntoo qhuav, tus Vajtswv etc*...

Just think of the Hmong classifiers as the **nounlike** adjectives in English. For example:

Ib daim ntawv.	**Ib lub tsev.**	**Ib pab neeg tuaj.**
One piecelike paper.	*One roundlike house.*	*One grouplike people come.*
*One piece **of** paper.*	*One house.*	*One group **of** people come.*
Yog kuv tus poj niam.	**Koj lub tsev.**	**Koj tsev neeg.**
It is my a wife.	*Your a house.*	*Your house people.*
It is my wife.	*Your house.*	*Your family.*

To ask questions, you can simply say: **Pes tsawg leej me nyuam?** *How many children?*

Answer: **Coob leej**. *Many children.* **Ob leeg** = *2 children*

Lub tsev tov yog leej twg *li?* *Whose house is over there?*

Tus npua no yog leej twg *tus?* *Whose pig is this?*

So the only word that was missing in the Hmong language is the word "**of**", and perhaps for a *classified reason.* Let's look at some more examples.

No	Hmong	English transliterated	Better English
1	Kuv muaj **ib** *pab* nyuj.	I have **one** *herd* cow.	I have **one** *herd* **of** cows.
2	Kuv muaj **ib** *tug* nyuj.	I have **one** cow.	I have **one** cow.
3	Kuv muaj **coob** *tug* nyuj.	I have **many** a cow.	I have **many** cows.
4	Kuv muaj **ib** *tiaj* nyuj.	I have **one** *field* cow.	I have **a** *field* **of** cows.
5	Kuv muaj **ib** *vaj* txiv ntoo.	I have **one** *fenced* fruit trees.	I have an enclosed fence **of** fruit trees.

Here are some more examples:

Hmong: Kuv muaj ib **tsheb** nyuj.   **Hmong**: Kuv pom ib pab neeg tuaj.
English: *I have   a **car** of cows.*   **English**: *I see a group of people come.*

No	Classifier	Equivalent English Word Classification
1	*tsob*	plants, trees and things that grow from the ground
2	*res*	bunch or a stem *of flowers*
3	*rab**	items with short length and/or **tools with handles.**
4	*tus, tug**	humans, animals, and/or parts of such entities.
5	*leeg, leej*	human, person
6	*pab*	group, herd, flock, team, school (*of fish, for example*)
7	*pawg*	group but more for a *pile-like, flock, school* entities, i.e., ib *pawg* neeg
8	*lub*	plate, house, building, heart, egg, country, boat – round-like entities
9	*phau*	book
10	*daim*	piece, land, leaf, blanket, farm, field, sheet. Objects with flat surface.
11	*txoj*	rope-like items, road, path, way, line etc...
12	*ntiv*	digits, fingers, toes, tip. *Ib ntiv qhiav – a piece of ginger.*
13	*txhais/sab*	hand, foot, shoe. Generally means half or one side of. *Sab = half of, side of.*
14	*koog*	grove, cluster, tract, forest
15	*sob*	school (*of fish, for example*)
16	*pob*	bunch, clump, lump, bundle.
17	*thooj*	a piece round-like objects, ib thooj mov. Usually a smaller amount than "pob"
18	*tauv*	bunch (*of grapes or flowers, for example*)