The Journal of Chinese Linguistics vol.52, no.2 (May 2024): 456-479 © 2024 by the Journal of Chinese Linguistics. ISSN 0091-3723/ On the distribution and origin of sortal classifiers in Altaic languages. (In Chinese) By Chen et al. All rights reserved.

# 阿尔泰语言中分类词的起源与分布 陈甚安1 唐威洋2 梁永平1 何万顺3,1

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<sup>3</sup> 东海大学,台中 摘要 分类词(个体量词)常见于东亚与东南亚语言,但在北亚至东欧地区的 阿尔泰语言中常被忽视。本文检视 65 个阿尔泰语言, 发现有 15 个是 分类词语言,但其分类词多半不发达且是选择性使用,因而推测其分 类词并非原生系统。依据"分类词单一起源假设": 欧亚地区仅汉语 之分类词为原生系统,本文推测阿尔泰语言中的分类词是与邻近的汉 语或波斯语接触产生的。本文首先确认这 15 个语言的分类词符合严谨 的定义,接着检视各语言中分类词的语意与语音,判断是否具有汉语 或波斯语分类词的特征。最后综合各语言的历史发展与地理位置,归 纳出以维吾尔语为界,以东之阿尔泰分类词语言受汉语影响,以西则 受波斯语影响、维吾尔语则同时受两者影响。假设波斯语的分类词亦 间接受汉语影响,则汉语为欧亚语言分类词单一起源的假设亦适用于 阿尔泰语言。

## 关键词

分类词 量词 阿尔泰语言 语言接触 分类词单一起源假设

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## ON THE DISTRIBUTION AND ORIGIN OF SORTAL CLASSIFIERS IN ALTAIC LANGUAGES

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The grammatical feature of sortal classifiers, common in East and Southeast Asian languages, is also found in 15 of the 65 Altaic languages we have examined, though the classifiers are far fewer and used optionally. These observations suggest that the Altaic classifier systems are not indigenous. Based on the Single Origin Hypothesis that Chinese is the only language with an indigenous classifier system in Eurasia, we propose that the rise of classifiers in Altaic is due to the influence of neighboring classifier languages. Having first confirmed that the putative classifiers in these 15 languages are genuine classifiers, we then examine the phonological and semantic characteristics of the classifiers identified in each language and detect the influence from either Chinese or Persian. Taking historical and geographical factors into consideration, we suggest that classifier languages east of Uvghur were influenced by Chinese, while those to the west are influenced by Persian; Uyghur itself was influenced by both. Assuming that Persian classifiers are not indigenous either, these findings suggest that the Single Origin Hypothesis is applicable to classifier languages in Altaic.

### KEYWORDS

Sortal classifier Mensural classifier Altaic languages Language contact Single Origin Hypothesis