THE NOUN PHRASE IN JEH

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0. Introduction From a broad notional point of view the noun phrase (NP) in Jeh may be diagrammed as a constellation of elements as follows:

Quantification \[\begin{array}{c}
\text{Referential Core} \\
\text{Possession} \\
\end{array}\] Qualification \[\begin{array}{c}
\text{Orientation}
\end{array}\]

That is, semantically, the NP constitutes the expression of a reference of some type, the core of which is encoded as the noun head (NH) or its substitute. The full-orbed characterization of such a reference is achieved through its conventional association with four major categories of adjuncts as shown above.

Quantification (QN) involves general quantification (GQN) and numeral quantification (NQN). GQN may be cooccurrent with NQN (and in that order). Furthermore, quantified references automatically require the insertion of a syntactic constituent, classifier (CL), which specifies, for example, the type of measure being applied to the noun or the semantic/morphemic class to which the noun belongs.

Possession (POS) associates the main references with another referent and conveys the notion of ownership if the latter referent is human or part-whole relation if that referent is non-human.

Qualification (QL) amplifies a reference by associating with it certain events or qualities other than those of the main assertion. These backgrounded propositions are either one-termed ('adjectival') or multi-termed ('relative clausal') and the two types may cooccur.

Orientation (OR) or deixis locates the referent in relation to the major participants in the speech act, i.e. the speaker and addressee.

The linearization (surface structuring) of the semantic material described so far may be described in terms of the following string:

\[(\text{QN} + \text{NQN} + \text{CL}) + \text{NH} + (\text{dã+noun}) + (1\text{-termed} + \text{multi-termed}) + \text{deictic} + \text{pn}\]

Various constraints on reorderings will be specified in the appropriate sections below.

1. The referential core of a noun phrase consists of a simple noun and compound noun.
1.1 Simple Nouns. "The central constituent in the noun phrase is the noun itself, which establishes the core semantic material which may be optionally elaborated or specified by the peripheral constituents which cooccur with it" (Gregerson 1971: page 183). There are three types of single nouns in Jeh: count nouns, mass nouns, and proper nouns.

1.11 Count Nouns. There are two types of count nouns, classifiable and non-classifiable.

a. The classifiable count nouns are those nouns which take specific classifiers such as:

- mën̄ ǹg 'cross bow' classified by sî
- mák 'bushhook' classified by tong
- prok 'squirrel' classified by pom
- mōngai 'people' classified by nau
- tap 'egg' classified by klong

(For a more complete list of nouns and their classifiers see 2.42 below.)

b. There are certain non-classifiable nouns which can be quantified without any further classification.

- măng 'night'
- ngay 'day'
- rûh 'time/turn'
- khei 'month'
- hnám 'year'
- liàn 'money, piastre'

Example: čn chû bal ngay 'he went two days'

Note that except for liàn 'money, piastre' all the forms are time units. The fact that no separate measure classifiers occur with these is perhaps explained by the fact that they are themselves intrinsically measures (See 2.43).

1.12 Mass Nouns. Mass nouns take measure classifiers when numerated. In this way more or less conventionalized modes of division or apportionment are applied to material which are perceived as possessing no natural unitary shape or boundary.

- dak 'water'
- mau 'rice in the field'
- phiè 'husked rice'
- pol 'cooked rice'
- nnah 'wine'
- mah 'gold'

The following mass nouns take only general modification:
The Noun Phrase in JEH

koyal  'wind'
prial  'hail'
mrlah  'rain'

Example: kódrăm dak 'much water'
ku klök dak
one CL/glass water
ku 'wiā koyal
one/a little wind

1.13 Proper Nouns. We will consider 3 kinds of proper nouns:

a. Place names:

Tráp, Gou, Pêng-Sâl-Pêng, Tük, Jâk, Bôm, all names of
villages. These take obligatory preceding generic nouns like dak
'village (lit. 'water') or plây 'village'
Example: môngai dak Tráp chlu reng juai
people village Tráp go hunt deer
'the Tráp villagers went deer hunting'

b. Ethnic names:

Jeh, Idang, 'Sedang', Hnal 'Bahnar', Yuan, 'Vietnamese'
Pôhlang 'French' also take obligatory preceding generic nouns such as
môngai 'people' when referring to them as people or mèng 'region'
when designating their living area.

Example: gh môngai Idang 'way pa Dak To
PL people Sedang live at Dak To
'the Sedang live at Dak To'

c. Personal names:

Jeh personal names have the interesting feature of being marked
for gender. The prefix Y- marks female names as in Y-Tök, Y-Thuân,
Y-Yu, Y-Dri, while A- marks male names such as A-Rôk, A-Bôu,
A-Yuan. While it is not especially common, neither is it inappropriate
to call men and women by the same basic names with the appropriate
prefix to distinguish their sex.

"Proper names being characteristically definite and unique in
reference are not usually quantified or classified. However in the case
of an emphatic singular reference noun phrases such as the following
occur" (Gregerson 1971 page 184):

A-Bôu ku 'nau bîh
Bôu one CL himself
'Bôu by himself, or all by himself'

1.2 Noun Compounds. In addition to simple or single nouns, there
occur in Jeh close-knit sequences of nouns which may be described as
subordinate and coordinate compounds.
Subordinate compounds may be described by the formula: NH=principal noun + attributive noun. Consider the following examples:

- **play Bôm**  
  'Bôm village'
- **dak Gou**  
  'Gou village'
- **chal nhlat**  
  'yard'
- **yard house**
- **play prlat**  
  'banana fruit'
- **fruit banana**
- **'long prlat**  
  'banana tree'
- **tree banana**

In coordinate compounds neither of the nouns can be said to be attributive to the other. The nouns refer literally to specifics but the compound as a whole makes a more general reference e.g.:

- **pling tō’neh**  
  'universe'
- **sky earth**
- **brî dak**  
  'region'
- **forest water**
- **hmăn ao**  
  'clothes'
- **pants shirt**
- **māt mūh**  
  'face'
- **eye nose**
- **oh meē**  
  'relative'
- **younger, older sibling**
- **uū baă**  
  'parents'
- **mother father**
- **boō yā**  
  'grandparents'
- **grandfather grandmother**
- **tri kon**  
  'nuclear family'
- **wife child**

2. **Quantification.** A major process in delimiting nouns involves the use of general quantifiers (GQN), numeral quantifiers (NQN), and classifiers (CL).

2.1 **General Quantifiers.** The general quantifiers are:

- **tā sî**  
  'a little'
- **tūm**  
  'all/complete'
- **nī/nī nayh**  
  'all'
- **kodrám**  
  'many, much'
- **'wī'wīă**  
  'a few'

The position of the general quantifier in the noun phrase is syntactically before the numeral quantifier (NQN) as in:

\[
\text{au wā rūat nī pei pom chou 'I want to buy all three dogs'}
\]

Even in the case where NQN and CL are optionally permuted to the right of noun head, GQN's maintain a phrase initial position:
au wā rhat nř chou pei pom 'I want to buy all three dogs'
    I want buy all dog 3 CL

Some quantitative terms are conventionally applied to certain nouns. For example: lap 'many' may occur with môngai 'people', chōl 'pig', kōnei 'rat' where 100 would be thought of as a lot. On the other hand dūk 'few', the counterpart of lap above, is especially used with môngai, chōl, kōnei to denote scarceness.

In describing mass measure other quantifiers such as bing 'full', tìng dra 'half full', ggah/ndrah 'half', sūk kōdol 'less than half' are used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantifier</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bing ikā mau</td>
<td>'full basket measure of rice'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tìng dra ikā mau</td>
<td>'half basket measure of rice'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ggah kōdol dāk</td>
<td>'half glass of water'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sūk kōdol kōdol dāk</td>
<td>'less than half glass of water'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Numeral Quantification.

2.2.1 Cardinal Numbers. In Jeh the cardinal numbers are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>muih</td>
<td>'one'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bal</td>
<td>'two'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pei</td>
<td>'three'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puan</td>
<td>'four'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pōdām</td>
<td>'five'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reng</td>
<td>'hundreds'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mōn</td>
<td>'ten thousands'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tōdrąu</td>
<td>'six'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tōpeh</td>
<td>'seven'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tōham</td>
<td>'eight'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tōchīn</td>
<td>'nine'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jāt</td>
<td>'tens'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rōbāu</td>
<td>'thousands'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The form ku occurs with the meaning 'one' directly preceding classifiers and preceding the unit terms ten, hundred, thousand, ten thousand in compound numbers. The historically more basic muih 'one' is used in counting, ordinal constructions, and following unit terms like ten, hundred, etc in compound numbers. For example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ku</td>
<td>'nau pf tlh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>CL do big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ku</td>
<td>reng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngay</td>
<td>muih</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>day</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ku</td>
<td>jāt muih</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>ten one</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'one person rules'

'one hundred'

'first day'

'eleven'

Compound numbers are interpreted from right to left as digits, tens, hundreds, thousands, and ten thousands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pōdām</td>
<td>'five'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pōdām jāt pōdām</td>
<td>'55'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pōdām reng pōdām jāt pōdām</td>
<td>'555'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.22 Ordinal Numbers. The use of ordinals is not common in Jeh. In 150 occurrences of bal 'two' in folklore material (Cohen 1966) not once did the ordinal use occur. However, it can be formed for example, with ngay 'day' in formal dating:

ngay muih khei pei '1st day of 3rd month'
ngay ku jät muih '10th day of 7th month'
ngay bal jät muih '21st day'

There exists, however, a cultural system of reckoning days following one's return to the village after a period of absence. These expressions have an ordinal effect though they do not employ numerals exclusively.

ngay sèm-sèm '1st day' (beginning day)
ngay hlâng '2nd day' (next day; taboo to work in the field).
ngay bla '3rd day' (middle day)
ngay tòpuan '4th day' (taboo to work in the field).
ngay jät '10th day' (taboo to work in the field).

It should be noted that the ordinal form for 'four' is tòpuan whereas the cardinal form is puan. Also jät 'ten' occurs without a preceding ku 'one' only in this ordinal expression.

Kon 'child' occurs in still another type of ordinal expression. In enumerating children's place in the family one gets:

kon sèm-sèm '1st child'
kon bal-bal '2nd child'
kon pei-pei '3rd child'
kon süt-süt 'last child'
kon bla nay 'middle child' (of three).

Rùh 'time/occurrence' presents still another variety of ordinal reckoning such as:

rùh rol-rol '1st time/time before'
2.3 Classifiers. In common with other Southeast Asian languages, Jeh has an abundance of forms that characteristically occur with numerated nouns, for example:

\[ \text{ën tau bal pom ial } \quad \text{'he sees two chickens'} \]
\[ \text{he see two CL chicken} \]

That is, the occurrence of bal 'two' with ial 'chicken' requires an automatic insertion of a classifier (CL), which for an animal is necessarily pom. As for constituent ordering, numeral and CL may be optionally permuted to follow rather than precede the noun head:

\[ \text{ën tau ial bal pom } \quad \text{'he sees two chickens'} \]
\[ \text{he see chicken 2 CL} \]

When a reference has been established in a discourse or situation the noun head may be deleted leaving behind only its CL:

\[ \text{ën tau bal pom } \quad \text{'he sees two animals (=chickens)'} \]
\[ \text{he see two CL} \]

We may distinguish three types of classifiers as:

GENERAL CLASSIFIERS; SPECIFIC CLASSIFIERS; and
MEASURE CLASSIFIERS.

2.41 General Classifier. There is one general classifier si which is special in that the items it classifies have no unity or shape similarity other than that they are all inanimate objects. Sf occurs with nouns such as:

\[ \text{mohēng 'crossbow'} \quad \text{dīng 'bamboo container'} \]
\[ \text{kōih 'chair'} \quad \text{hlp 'suitcase'} \]
\[ \text{ao 'shirt'} \quad \text{jō 'arrow quiver'} \]
\[ \text{jōō 'watch/clock'} \quad \text{chuang 'axe'} \]

2.42 Specific classifiers in contrast to the general classifier si are typically associated with a set of nouns which reflect some common feature of shape or intrinsic nature.

\[ \text{'nau: 'person'} \quad \text{occurs with mōngai 'people', yang 'spirit',} \]
\[ \text{kōmēm 'ghost', kon 'child', dri-dri 'female',} \]
\[ \text{lōu-lōu 'male'.} \]

\[ \text{pom: 'animal'} \quad \text{occurs with rōk 'cattle', ial 'chicken',} \]
\[ \text{ka 'fish', kōpēl 'water-buffalo', būbi 'goat',} \]
\[ \text{se 'vehicle'.} \]

\[ \text{tōng: 'instrument'} \quad \text{occurs with sē may 'bicycle', phaō 'rifle',} \]
\[ \text{chāngh 'knife', māk 'bushhook', māy 'radio',} \]
\[ \text{klong/hlong: 'round things'} \quad \text{occurs with gēt 'gourd', anōm} \]
'back basket', jep 'shoulder bag', tap 'egg', tômou 'stone', pung 'cucumber', play 'fruit', priat 'banana', sêm 'wine jar'.

sîgư/frû: 'string' occurs with sei 'thread' (made from tree bark), kôsei 'string, rope, wire', la 'leaf'.

nhâl: 'long lengths of wood' occurs with long 'wood, tree'.

âl: 'short pieces of wood' occurs with long 'wood, tree'.

dêsô/kôôh: 'sheets' occurs with lâm-al 'paper, book', tîl 'metal roofing', gong 'gong'.

błah: 'flat flexible things' occurs with mûk 'blanket', drông 'sleeping mats'.

pôm: 'cob' occurs with bîl 'corn'.

bûam: 'tuber' occurs with lôu 'sweet potato', gân 'taro root'.

hla: classifies jîak 'field'.

châû: 'bunch' occurs with mèîh 'vegetables', ya 'tobacco'.

hûn: classifies tû 'pile'.

nah: 'side' occurs with paired body parts such as tî 'hand', jong 'foot', pât 'ear', peng 'shoulder', tâi 'buttocks', mat 'eye'. Not surprisingly numeration is limited in this case to the number 'two'.

2.43 Measure Classifier. T'sou (1973:25) states that "units of measure such as those of weight and volume are not used with classifiers because they themselves are "classifiers..." Mass nouns do not take specific classifiers. Rather these nouns take measure classifiers. Mass nouns are such as dak 'water', mau 'field rice', nnâh 'wine'. (For a more complete list of mass nouns see 1.12 above.) These mass nouns can be quantified by general quantifiers such as kôôdrâm 'much', wiûâ 'few', tâ sî 'a little' in which case a measure classifier is optional. Nearly all of these mass nouns can, however, be further measured (kôyal 'wind', priât 'rain' excepted) by numerals plus measure forms such as kôôk 'glass' or ikâ 'basket (ful).'

kôôdrâm dak 'a lot of water'
peî kôôk dak 'three glasses of water'
tâ sî mau 'a little rice'
bàl ikâ mau 'two baskets (ful) of rice'

Jeh basket measures provide an illustration of the extent of standardization based on culturally familiar artifacts:

ikâ 'approximately 2 bushel size basket'
ïka tel '1'
nîrôh '3'
lông '1 1/2'
sang '3/4'
îdeng '2 meter wide flat drying basket'
îdong '1 meter wide flat drying basket'
bèh '3 quart dry measure size basket' (used in harvesting rice).
chùng bùng '4 quart dry measure size basket' (used for plant-
ing rice).
trop 'large 10 bushel rice storage basket'
mang/hmang 'cooked rice measure' (a meal's worth)

Other types of containers which function as measures but which have no exact size are:

khang 'one drink's worth from the wine jar'
klök 'glass'
düi 'bowl'

Some borrowed terms for exact measure are:

kľ 'kilogram' (VN kg, French kilogramme)
ñosák '100 kilogram sack' (French sac)
thuk 'meter' (VN thước)
ñosư 'kilometer' (VN cây số)

Time measure terms take no further classification when quant-
tified. As pointed out by T'sou 1973, they are themselves inherently classifiers, or put another way, they represent a conflation of noun and measure in one form.

măng 'night' rух 'time/occurrence'
ngay 'day' kheī 'month'
ђö 'hour' hnăm 'year'

3. Possession. The association of the noun head (NH) of the NP with another noun or pronoun expresses the familiar notion of possession (POSS). The construction may be summarized as:

NH (dă) noun/pronoun

The possessive marker dă may be deleted if the NH is realized in surface structure, but must be present if the NH itself is absent and only the classifier is expressed. (cf. c and d).

Examples are:

a) kon eih 'his child'
    child he
b) mơněng dă au 'my own crossbow'
bow POS 1

c) bal pom ka boô Rđgap 'Grandpa Rđgap's two fish'
    2 CL fish grandpa R

d) bal pom dă boô Rđgap 'Grandpa Rđgap's two (fish)'
    2 CL POS grandpa R

e) jong chau ēn 'her grandchild's leg'
    leg grandchild her

Notice that the last example above (e) reflects the possibility of suc-
cessively embedding possessive nouns or pronouns.

POSS may occur directly following NH, but it may also be separated from NH by qualification constituents:

\[
\text{NH (QL) POSS (QL)}
\]

See section 4.1 below for effects of QL depending on whether it is positioned preceding or following POSS.

4. Qualification. Qualification (QL) refers to the encoding of backgrounded or non-focal predications as material subordinated to the noun head. Unlike the other major noun phrase constituents, QL introduces verb-centered modification of the noun and may be described in terms of one-termed and multi-termed subordinate structures.

4.1 One-termed Qualification. Jeh noun phrases may be qualified by "adjective-like" modifiers. These are considered cases of subordination of one-termed proposition containing a term which is coreferential with the head noun of the main phrase to which it is attached. Thus for example:

a) \[
\text{au tau bal pom koplú tobok}
\]
\[
\text{I see two CL buffalo white}
\]
\['I see two white water-buffaloes'

b) \[
\text{chôl thi bloh jî}
\]
\[
\text{pig big complete sick}
\]
\['the big pig is already sick'

c) \[
\text{bal pom chôl dā A-Bou thi-thí i bloh jî}
\]
\[
\text{two CL pig POS Bou big those complete sick}
\]
\['those two big pigs of Bou's are sick'

d) \[
\text{bal pom chôl thi dā A-Bou bloh jî}
\]
\[
\text{two CL pig big POS Bou complete sick}
\]
\['the two big pigs of Bou's are sick'

Sentence a) reflects the fact that the qualifiers follow rather than precede the main head.

Sentence b) expresses a main assertion \text{chôl bloh jî} 'pig is sick' and a backgrounded proposition \text{chôl thi} 'the pig is large'. We may diagram the relationship as:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{chôl} & \quad \text{bloh jî} \\
\text{pig} & \quad \text{complete sick}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(chôl)} & \quad \text{thi} \\
\text{pig} & \quad \text{big}
\end{align*}
\]

where \text{chôl} of the upper (matrix) clause is coreferential with \text{chôl} of the lower (imbedded) clause. Following the universal tendency to reduce overt repetitions of identical reference, only one occurrence of \text{chôl} appears in surface structure and sentence b) results. There is no relative pronoun like 'which', or 'that' to signal the subordinate
structure. Notice that in sentence c) a reduplicated one-termed qualifier ทิ้น-ทิ้น 'big' occurs following POSS, while a non-reduplicated ทิ้น occurs preceding POSS as in sentence d).

4.2 Multi-termed Qualification. Propositions with more than one term may also be subordinated to the noun in a main assertion. That is, Jeh has relative clauses in the traditional sense. Parallel to one-termed qualification they are simply juxtaposed following the noun head with no relative pronoun to signal the relationship. Consider the following example:

\[
\text{ช่อ} \text{อำนาจ} \text{ใน} \text{เพ็ง} \text{ความ} \text{ตาย} 'the pig (which) I shot died'
\]

The verb เพ็ง 'shoot' functions as a two-termed predicate; that is, it requires two referential constituents (nouns). Thus the subordinate clause has the logical structure:

\[
\text{อำนาจ} \text{ช่อ} \text{เพ็ง} \text{ใน} \text{ตาย} \text{ความ}
\]

This in turn is imbedded into the matrix clause ช่อ อำนาจ เพ็ง ความ ตาย.

Again the relationship may be diagrammed as:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ช่อ} & \quad \text{เพ็ง} & \quad \text{ตาย} \\
\text{อำนาจ} & \quad \text{ความ} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Although both the main verb ความ 'die' and the subordinate verb เพ็ง 'shoot' logically requires ช่อ 'pig' as a term in their role structure, they do not both receive a separate syntactic realization of that shared reference. Suppression of the identical ช่อ in the subordinate clause yields the grammatical surface forms of the original sentence. Thus, one-termed and multi-termed qualification are a much more uniform process than say in English.

5. Orientation. Orientational material characteristically marks the outermost limits of the surface structure NP margin. Semantically, NP orientation functions to locate the noun's referent in relation to the participants in the speech act (speaker and addressee) or some other (usually) spatial reference point.

5.1 Deictic Orientation. Deictic or demonstrative forms serve specifically to make clear to the addressee in the speech act where a speaker's intended referent is in relation to the two of them. In Jeh the following morphemes fulfill this function:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{มุ่} & \quad \text{'this/here'} & \quad \text{(near the speaker)} \\
\text{kí} & \quad \text{'that/there'} & \quad \text{(away from the speaker)} \\
\text{là} & \quad \text{'that/there'} & \quad \text{(farther than kí)} \\
\text{hau} & \quad \text{'that/there'} & \quad \text{(farther than là)}
\end{align*}
\]
tâh  'down there'
ânong  'up there'

The following NP's illustrate some of them:

chal nhîah au mou  'this yard of mine'
yard  house  I here
pei pom se hau  'those three vehicles'
3  CL  vehicle  there
chôl thî kì bloh jî  'that big pig was sick'
pig  big  that  complete  sick
chôl au pêng i bloh kôchlat  'that pig I shot died'
pig I shoot  that  complete  die

5.2 Locative Orientation. In addition to speech act connected orientation, other location nouns may be linked to the NH by relaters such as pa 'at', mîh 'where, at', for example:
nhîah thî dà au pa Dak Pek liam  'my big house at Dak Pek
house  big  POS  I at Dak Pek  pretty  is  nice'

FOOTNOTES

1. I wish to acknowledge the collaboration of Mret and Thong who have taught me so much about the Jeh language. I also want to thank Kenneth Gregerson for suggestions on theory and data throughout this study.

2. The Jeh are a Mon-Khmer tribe of the North Bahnaric sub-group numbering about 10,000 speakers. They live on the border between Vietnam and Laos in northern Kontum province. Research on the Jeh language was carried out under the auspices of The Summer Institute of Linguistics from 1963 to 1973.

3. In Jeh lot casting (jûh mau 'count rice') is done as follows: the person being chosen selects one of three "numbers" i.e. lei 'one', hoh 'two', sidâl 'three'. Then another person picks up a handful of rice grains (twenty or so) and disposes of them three at a time until there remains one, two, or three grains. If the number of grains remaining coincide with the number selected then the person is chosen by lot. This highly restricted set of forms is difficult to relate to the cardinal-ordinal distinction. It rather simply designates a chance outcome such as "heads" or "tails" does in English, only there is a three-way possibility.

4. There are other numeral based forms with a tô- prefix which appear as conventional size measures such as:
tô'noi  'one finger's width' (cf. kd'noi  'finger')
tdmal 'two fingers' width' (cf. bal 'two')
tdpsei 'three fingers' width'
tdpuan 'four fingers' width'

For example:
chó1 ku pom yáu tdpuan 'pig about 4 fingers' width size'
pig one CL about 4 fingers' width

Other size measure conventions used among the Jeh are:
ku hnam 'five fingers' width' (one hand)(cf. pódām 'five')
tōping tī 'two hands' width'
ipol 'fist with extended thumb'
ibu/pru 'thumb tip to index finger tip'
ida/ku dda 'thumb tip to middle finger tip'
kāt 'inner elbow bone to tip of middle finger'
playh bī 'elbow to tip of ring finger'
playh tī chou 'elbow to knuckle of little finger'
playh kong 'elbow to wrist joint'
sra 'arm pit to finger tip'
lang dda 'half armspan' (mid-chest to finger tips)
pláih 'full armspan'

REFERENCES

Cohen, Patrick. 1966. Jeh Computer Concordance. Produced under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics through the University of Oklahoma under National Science foundation grant No. RS 00307.
