Nominal structures in object position

(General Introduction to the properties w01 a/b/c(d)-w06 a/b/c).
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1. General introduction, organization of the property definition, definition of bare noun phrase, and how to proceed most efficiently.

The properties w01 to w06 probe for a particular set of phenomena related to nominal structures.

The properties are organized around the following variables:
1. indefinite vs. definite reading of noun phrases
2. generic reading of noun phrases
3. mass vs. count (singular vs. plural) nouns
4. syntactic position: object vs. subject (*only the* object *properties* have been posted so far (june 15, 2014 ; the subject properties are ready, and will be posted in mid July weeks.)

In particular, we are interested in whether a noun, according to each of the variables 1-4 above:
a) can be "bare" (i.e. lack an "article"), or
b) must have an "article", or
c) can have an "article" (i.e. can either be bare or occur with an article)

This gives rise to 18 different properties for objects, organized in the following fashion:
(w01_) Indefinite mass nouns in object position…
  a. …can be bare
  b. …must have an article
  c. …can have an article
(w02_) definite mass nouns in object position….
  A…can be bare
  b. …must have an article
  c. …can have an article
…and so forth.

These properties apply to:
- unmodified nouns (NO quantifiers, adjectives, possessors, relative clauses, adpositional complements …)
- objects in affirmative sentences (NO negative, interrogative, passive…)

Organization of each property definition.

- Definition of the property
- elicitation context(s) [use them]
- instructions [follow them]
- examples of languages on how the properties should be set. (read these!)

[Languages that exemplify certain
"Bare " nouns and "articles"
We need to define, for comparative purposes, what counts as "bare", and what counts (and what does not count) as an "article."
For the purposes of this set of properties, we define what counts as "bare" as follows (this is repeated and

slightly adjusted in each property definition):

A bare noun phrase….
(i) for languages with *definite/indefinite articles, specificity markers, definite/indefinite affixes…*): lacks an "article"
(ii) for languages without *articles* but with *classifiers, noun classes, case, adpositional endings …*): exhibits no structural alternation with noun phrases of a particular type (as defined and illustrated in each property definition)

How to proceed most efficiently.

Until we are ready to migrate to terraling, with a more friendly user interface, we have found learned from experience that the most efficient way to proceed for these properties is the following mixture of on-line and offline activities :

Preparation: Estimated time 20-30 minutes.
1. read each group of property definitions (a,b and c (d)) [on line or if you have difficult access to the net in the off-line pdf document: INSERT LINK, which is harder to read]
2. for each, construct the relevant examples, glosses, translations: type these off-line.

An excel sheet has been prepared for this purpose: it can be found on line. ++PASTE LINK
(or in a word/text/pdf able document: make sure fonts will show up correctly, test it out)

3. decide the property values, (in excel sheet)
4. add comments, where necessary and informative (in excel sheet)

Entering the data into the database:
5. Login and enter all the property values from your excel file into the sswl site: *max 5 minutes*

(you can do this after each group of a,b,c) or after all properties)
6. Add your examples (cut and paste) into the database. *(approx 30 seconds per example).*

If you have done the task, but have trouble entering the data by yourself, or get frustrated (the interface in Teraling will be very user friendly), please ask us for help: we will try to take care of it in your name.

Comments, feedback, improvements, suggestions for further follow up questions, all welcome.

Best wishes,

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