1 Introduction

In a series of studies, Bošković (e.g. 2008, 2012, 2013) proposes a linguistic typology based on a posited dichotomy between languages whose “traditional” NPs are actually DPs and languages where the relevant projection does not go beyond the level of NP. (This would challenge, among others, the proposal in Abney (1987), according to which all languages have DPs.) One immediate clue for the relevant type of a language in this respect would be whether it has articles or not. More interestingly, Bošković proposes additional properties which a language would or would not exhibit, depending on whether it is an “NP-” or a “DP-” language (e.g. NP-languages disallow clause-mate NPI licensing under Neg-Raising (NR), and DP-languages allow it; only DP-languages allow the majority superlative reading; inverse scope is unavailable in NP-languages).

In a related study, Bošković & Şener (2014) claim that Turkish is an NP-language, and that it therefore exhibits the properties which Bošković’s system would ascribe to it. They further posit a structure of the NP from which the relevant properties of Turkish would follow.

In this paper, I shall challenge both some of the details proposed for the Turkish NP and the posited correlation between the NP/DP “typology” and the properties which are claimed to be found in “DP-” versus “NP-” languages, and illustrate my criticism via examples mainly from Turkish, but also from German and English.

2 NP/DP Generalizations

In this section, I discuss some of the generalizations proposed in work by Bošković (2012, 2013) and by Bošković & Şener (2014) with respect to properties of “NP-” versus “DP-languages”. I start with an observation concerning NPI licensing:
2.1 Article-less (=NP-) LanguagesDisallow Clause-Mate NPI Licensing under NR; Article (=DP-) Languages Allow It

Bošković & Şener (2014:103), based on prior work by Bošković, claim that languages that don't have articles (which they view as "NP-languages") disallow clause-mate NPI licensing under Neg-Raising (NR), while "DP-languages" (i.e. languages with articles) allow such licensing. Let us start by looking at some of their examples in English:

(1) John hasn't/*has visited her in at least two years.

(2) *John doesn't claim [that Mary has visited her [NPI in at least two years]]

(3) John doesn't believe [that Mary has visited her [NPI in at least two years]]

cf. Bošković & Şener (2014:103), examples (1)–(3)

(1) is fine with the negated auxiliary, while it is ill-formed when the auxiliary is not negated. The explanation proposed is as follows: The temporal expression "in at least two years" is a negative polarity item (NPI). The NPI requires a clause-mate Neg. This explanation is also proposed for the other two examples: (2) is ill-formed, given that the Neg element is not a clause-mate of the NPI. In (3), Neg is a clause-mate of the embedded NPI, before Neg undergoes NR. In (2), NR would not have been possible, because the matrix verb claim is not an NR-verb, while believe in (3) is an NR-verb.

Turkish: Bošković & Şener (2014) claim that Turkish clause-mate NPIs cannot be licensed long-distance, even under typical raising verbs like san- ‘think/believe’. They further claim that Turkish thus patterns with NP languages in this respect:

(4) a. Pelin Mete-yi en az iki yıl-dır ziyaret
   Pelin (NOM) Mete-ACC at least two year-for visit
do-NEG-PAST/do-PAST
   ‘Pelin hasn't/*has visited Mete in at least two years.’

(5) a. Mete [Pelin-Ø/-i (*en az iki yıl-dir) Timbuktu-ya git-ti]
   Mete Pelin-NOM/ACC at least two year-for Timbuktu-DAT go-PAST
   think-NEG-PRES.PROG
   ‘Mete doesn't think Pelin went to Timbuktu in at least two years.’