

Some ‘NP Properties’ in Old Norse

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Bošković (2005, 2008, 2009, 2010) has proposed a macro-parameter by which languages may be categorized based on whether or not they have a definite determiner. A robust set of (both nominal and clausal) properties has been identified which sets ‘DP languages’ (with *bona fide* definite articles; e.g., Swedish, English, Lakhota) apart from ‘NP languages’ (without definite articles; e.g., Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Warlpiri). Bošković suggests these properties can be accounted for if nominal projections in NP languages lack a D-layer, while those in DP languages have a D-layer. Though important theoretical issues arise, our presentation sets theoretical considerations aside and concentrates on empirical and methodological aspects of this issue which have thus far not been explored much in work on the NP/DP parameter. Empirically speaking, we present novel data from Old Norse (including runic ON) suggesting that ON was an NP language. Methodologically, we suggest that a diachronic perspective on Bošković’s parameter is fruitful, specifically with regard to determiner grammaticalization. It is well known that the Old Germanic languages, of which Old Norse was one, did not inherit a definite article from Proto-Germanic but instead over time grammaticalized their definite determiners from various distal demonstratives. One would therefore predict that the history of, say, Scandinavian should be characterized by a shift from NP to DP status. We will show that this prediction is borne out, inasmuch as ON can be shown to display Bošković’s ‘NP properties’ (and modern Scandinavian displays ‘DP properties’). Apart from the absence of a genuine definite article, ON displays the following NP properties:

- ***NP languages have freer word order (tend to be ‘non-configurational’)*** Faarlund (1990; see also Harries & Börjars 2011) has suggested that ON was non-configurational (while Rögnvaldsson 1995 is skeptical of this). Consider in relation to this the range of available word orders in the ON NP – which, we might add, seems quite clearly linked to the ongoing process of definite article grammaticalization in ON (examples in (1) from/modeled on Barnes 1999, Faarlund 2004, Haugen 1981).

- (1)
- (a) maðr(-inn) hinn blindi
 - (b) maðr sá blindi
 - (c) maðr(-inn) sá hinn blindi
 - (d) sá maðr hinn blindi
 - (e) hinn blindi maðr(-inn)
 - (f) sá blindi maðr(-inn)
 - (g) sá hinn blindi maðr(-inn)
- that the blind man-the*

- ***NP languages allow syntactic discontinuities*** Syntactic discontinuities (both clausal (2) and nominal (3, 4)) are the hallmark of free word order languages. Such discontinuities are rather well known from non-runic ON; (3) and (4) are examples from runic ON.

- (2) [_{CP} þat er sagt [eitt vár]_i, [_{CP} at Óláfr lýsti *t_i* því fyrir Þorgerði, [_{CP} at hann ætlar útan]]]
- it is said one spring that O. announced that for Th. that he intends out*
- ‘It is said that one spring Olaf told Thorgerd that he intended to go abroad’
- (Faarlund 2004: 234)

- (3) **pau litu kubl raisa þisa**
 pau letu kumbl_i ræisa [þessa t_i] (U 735; Viking Age)
they let monument raise this
 ‘they had this monument erected’

- (4) **þorstain lit þina rita stain**
 Þorstæinn let þenna_i retta [t_i stæin] (Sö 61; Viking Age)
Th. let this raise stone
 ‘Th. had this stone raised’

• **NP languages lack clitic-doubling** We have so far not found any genuine examples of clitic-doubling in either the early runic inscriptions (Northwest Gmc) or Old Norse. Following Eythórsson (2010: 2) apparent cases of a first person subject doubled by the clitic *-eka/-ika* in NWGmc (5) can be reinterpreted as consisting of two separate clauses. Following Eythórsson (2002: 207-9), apparent examples of ON clitic-doubling or -tripling (6) should be seen as instances of agreement markers.

- (5) **ek erilaz sa wilagaz hat-eka**
 ek erilaz sa wilagaz hait-eka (NWGmc, DR 261; 375-570)
I erilaz the wily am.called-I
 ‘I [am] the *erilaz*. I am called the Wily’

- (6) **baug ek þik-k-a-k**
ring I accept-1SG-NEG-1SG
 ‘I do not accept the ring’ (Eythórsson 2002: 208)

• We will also present evidence for two more of Bošković’s NP properties in ON: ‘**No double adnominal genitive in NP languages**’ and (possibly) ‘**Radical pro-drop** is only possible in NP languages’.

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