

Obviate me (not): Obviation effects in Serbian main and complement clauses

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ABSTRACT

In Serbian, complements of directive and desiderative predicates can be finite clauses headed by DA. DA-clauses also serve as matrix clauses conveying directives or expressing wishes. Unlike subjunctive complements in Romance, Slovenian, or Hungarian, embedded DA-clauses do not show obviation effects, i.e., they allow for coreference between matrix and embedded subject. However, overt embedded pronominal subjects are banned in this case. We argue that this ban is a reflex of obviative modality in a particular complement type and disambiguation towards this type by an overt subject. The obviative construction also underlies the directive or desiderative matrix DA-clauses, where obviation surfaces as a restriction on what conversational participants the subject can refer to.

KEYWORDS obviation · complement clause · modality · mood · pronouns

1 INTRODUCTION

A variety of languages realize the complements of directive or desiderative attitude predicates with an alternation between infinitival and finite subjunctive complements. The latter can display obviation effects, that is, restrictions on coreference between matrix and embedded subjects (e.g. Romance, Hungarian; see Quer 2006 for discussion). In Serbian, the complements of these verbs can all be realized as finite indicative clauses, headed by DA. These are acceptable regardless of whether matrix and embedded subject co-refer. However, Zec (1987) and Farkas (1992) observe a restriction on whether embedded subject pronouns can be overt, which appears to follow the distinction between obviative and non-obviative constellations.

In this paper, we argue that the ban on overt pronouns in DA-complements in obviating constellations (i.e., when matrix subject and embedded subject co-refer) results from disambiguation in favor of an obviating modal construction. To this point, we argue that Serbian finite complement DA-clauses come in three types: (a) those that cannot have an overt subject, instead containing PRO (optionally replaced by infinitivals); they are not obviative, (b) those that encode prioritizing modality and are obviative similarly to Romance or Hungarian subjunctives, and (c) those that convey epistemic or reportative modality (making them suitable to appear under assertive, but not directive/desiderative matrix predicates); they are not obviative.¹ Our arguments for this account build on two sets of observations: (i) restrictions on the behavior of standalone DA-clauses in directive use (§3.2), and (ii) the readings available for clauses embedded under verbs like *say* that can report both assertive and directive utterances (§4.2). We begin with a discussion of obviation effects elsewhere and in Serbian (§2), explore modally read DA-clauses in the

¹An anonymous reviewer suggests that the obviative complement type (b) could be considered a subjunctive. We follow Portner (2018) in reserving 'subjunctive' for a morphological category which constitutes one of many options of realizing the notional category of mood (including certain occurrences of modals in English or our obviative DA-clauses).

context of a notion of obviation that applies also to matrix clauses (*generalized subject obviation*) in §3, and develop the syntactic and the semantic side of our account in §4 and §5, respectively. In §6, we discuss apparent exceptions to the obviation pattern in matrix clauses. §7 concludes.

2 CLASSICAL SUBJECT OBVIATION AND SERBIAN

CLASSICAL SUBJECT OBVIATION (CSO), as familiar from Romance languages, is a constraint against sameness in reference of matrix subject and embedded subject in bi-clausal structures (Picallo Soler 1985, Ruwet 1984):

- (1) [MATRIXSUBJECT_i {*want, hope, insist, ...*} [EMBEDDEDSUBJECT_{j,*i...} VERB_{Subjunctive...}]]

Typical instances involve subjunctive complements of directive or desiderative predicates.

Example (2) shows that the subjunctive is unacceptable when matrix subject and embedded subject are co-referential. This is independent of the person feature.

- (2) a. *Je veux que je parte.
I want that I leave.SBJV
intended: 'I want to leave.'
- b. Pierre_i veut qu'il_{*i,j} parte.
P. wants that=he leave.SBJV
'Pierre wants that he (≠ Pierre) leave.' French, Ruwet 1984

Kempchinsky's (2009) Spanish example in (3) emphasizes that the restriction involves the matrix subject. Coreference can occur between the matrix object and the embedded subject, as in (3-a). However, as soon as the matrix object and matrix subject co-refer (thereby making the matrix and the embedded subject co-refer), the example becomes ungrammatical (3-b).

- (3) a. Su padre le ordenó a Ana que dejara de hablar
Her father her.DAT order.PST to Ana that leave.3SG.IPFV.SBJV of talk
del asunto.
about.the issue
'Her father ordered Ana to stop talking about the matter.'
- b. *Ana se ordenó (a sí misma) que dejara de
Ana REFL order.PST (to REFL.3SG same.F) that leave.3SG.IPFV.SBJV of
pensar en el asunto.
think in the issue
intended: 'Ana ordered herself to stop thinking about the matter.'
- Spanish, Kempchinsky 2009

Serbian (the variety of BCMS spoken by two of the authors) realizes clausal complements of non-factive matrix predicates as finite clauses headed by an element DA:^{2,3}

- (4) a. Ana je { mislila / rekla } da pada kiša.
Ana be.3SG.PRS { thought / said } DA fall.3SG.PRS.IPFV rain.
'Ana {thought / said} that it was raining.'
- b. Ana je pokušala da opere prozore.
Ana be.3SG.PRS tried DA wash.3SG.PRS.PFV windows
'Ana tried to wash the windows.'

²This variety also has infinitivals, which can replace DA-clauses under some predicates; see §4.1 for discussion.

³While all Serbian present tense forms are marked for perfective or imperfective, we did not observe that obviation effects were sensitive to aspect. We indicate aspectual distinctions in our examples, but take them to be orthogonal to the phenomena under consideration.

- c. Marija je naredila Petru da opere prozore.
 Marija be.3SG.PRS ordered Peter.DAT DA wash.3SG.PRS.PFV windows
 ‘Marija ordered Peter to wash the windows.’
- d. Marija je zamolila Petra da opere prozore.
 Marija be.3SG.PRS asked Peter.ACC DA wash.3SG.PRS.PFV windows
 ‘Marija asked Peter to wash the windows.’

Note that Serbian is a subject *pro*-drop language: pronominal subjects need not be realized overtly, provided their referent is salient (see Jovović 2023, 2022 for detailed discussion).

- (5) Petar nam je bio u poseti. Oprao nam je prozore.
 Petar we.DAT be.3SG.PRS been in visit washed we.DAT be.3SG.PRS windows.
 ‘Petar came to visit us. He washed our windows.’

In contrast to what is observed in Romance, DA-clauses under desiderative (6-a) and directive (6-b) predicates do not appear to be subject to CSO:

- (6) a. Želim da odem.
 want.1SG.PRS.IPFV da leave.1SG.PRS.PFV
 ‘I want to leave.’
- b. Ana je naredila sebi da prestane da misli
 Ana be.3SG.PRS ordered self da stop.3SG.PRS.PFV DA think.3SG.PRS.IPFV
 o tome.
 about that
 ‘Ana ordered herself to stop thinking about that.’

Instead, they display sensitivity with respect to the realization of the embedded subject: if matrix and embedded subject co-refer, the embedded subject has to remain covert (Zec 1987, Vrzić 1996, Farkas 1992), as the contrast in (7-a) vs. (7-b) shows.^{4,5} We call this effect PRONOMINAL SUBJECT OBLIVATION (PSO):

- (7) a. Petar je želeo da dodje na vreme.
 Petar be.3SG.PRS wanted DA come.3SG.PRS.PFV on time
 ‘Peter wanted to come on time.’ co-reference: OK
 ‘Peter_i wanted him_j to come on time.’
- b. Petar_i je želeo da on_{*i,j} dodje na vreme.
 Petar be.3SG.PRS wanted DA he come.3SG.PRS.PFV on time
 cannot mean: ‘Peter wanted to come on time.’ co-reference: *
 ‘Peter_i wanted him_j to come on time.’

Crucially, complements of verbs of thinking or saying are not subject to PSO. Overt and covert pronouns can co-refer with the matrix subject *i* or refer to another salient individual *j*:⁶

⁴We will refine this generalization in §5.2: an embedded stressed pronominal is acceptable.

⁵Note also that Romance-style CSO arises regardless of whether the embedded subject is overt or covert, e.g., (3) with covert subjects.

⁶As in any Spanish-style *pro*-drop language, the realization of unstressed overt pronouns is restricted by information structural constraints: roughly, they cannot be topical (Jovović 2023, 2022). Consider (i-a) for a context in which the unstressed coreferential overt pronoun in (8) is felicitous, and (i-b) for a context in which it is not:

- (i) a. Who thinks they might stand a chance?
 b. What about Jovana? Any chance she will win the competition?

Controlling for these information structural properties does not improve the examples with directive or desiderative predicates.

- (8) Jovana_i misli da (ona_{i,j}) vodi na listi.
 Jovana think.3SG.PRS.IPFV DA she lead.3SG.PRS.IPFV on list
 ‘Jovana_i thinks she_{i,j} is leading in the competition.’ co-reference: OK

The possibility of overtly realizing the embedded subject in (8) even when the attitude is held *de se* (i.e., when the attitude holder is aware the content is about them) suggests that PSO cannot be reduced to the well-known preference for realizing *de se*-pronouns in attitude reports covertly (Patel-Grosz 2020). The referential possibilities for embedded subjects are summarized in Table 1.

	<i>want</i> -verbs		<i>think</i> -verbs	
	Matrix subject	Other individual	Matrix subject	Other individual
Covert subject	✓	✓	✓	✓
Overt subject	*	✓	✓	✓
	PSO no CSO detectable		(no obviation expected)	

Table 1: The referential possibilities for embedded subjects

3 MODALITY AND ‘DA’

3.1 MATRIX ‘DA’-CLAUSES CONVEYING PRIORITIZING MODALITY

DA-clauses also appear in matrix position with directive or desiderative use (Browne & Alt 2004, Vrzić 1996), standing in for canonical imperatives used to express commands or wishes:⁷

- (9) a. Da čitaš ovu knjigu! / Čitaj ovu knjigu!
 DA read.2SG.PRS.IPFV this book / read.IMP this book
 ‘Read this book (already)!’ COMMAND
- b. Da brzo ozdraviš! / Ozdravi brzo!
 DA fast become-healthy.2SG.PRS.PFV / become-healthy.IMP fast
 ‘Get well soon!’ WISH

In the directive matrix uses, DA-clauses are STRONG DIRECTIVES (von Fintel & Iatridou 2017); they cannot replace canonical morphosyntactic imperatives in uses for disinterested advice, invitations, concessions, or acquiescence (cf. (10)–(13)):

- (10) A: Kako da stignem do Harlema?
 how DA arrive.1SG.PRS.PFV to Harlem
 ‘How do I get to Harlem?’
 B: { #Da ideš / Idi } A linijom.
 DA go.2SG.PRS.IPFV go.IMP A line.INSTR
 ‘Take the A-train.’ ADVICE
- (11) { #Da sedneš. / Sedi. }
 DA sit.2SG.PRS.PFV sit.IMP
 ‘Have a seat.’ INVITATION
- (12) Onda { #da ideš / idi } na tu tupavu žurku.
 then DA go.2SG.PRS.PFV go.IMP on that stupid party
 ‘Ok, then go to that stupid party.’ CONCESSION

⁷For discussion of matrix uses of clauses bearing complement clause marking, see e.g., Truckenbrodt (2006) or Grosz (2012).

- (13) A: Can I open the window? – B: (Go ahead),...
 { #Da otvoriš. / Otvori. }
 DA open.2SG.PRS.PFV open.IMP
 ‘Go ahead, open it.’ ACQUIESCENCE

Matrix DA-clauses retain their prioritizing⁸ flavor in interrogatives (Vrzić 1996):⁹

- (14) a. Da Vesna pročita ovu knjigu?
 DA Vesna read.3SG.PRS.PFV this book
 ‘Should Vesna read this book?’ Vrzić 1996: (2a)
- b. Da li da Vesna pročita ovu knjigu?
 Q DA Vesna read.3SG.PRS.PFV this book
 ‘Should Vesna read this book?’ Vrzić 1996: (2b)
- c. Koju knjigu da Vesna pročita?
 which book DA Vesna read.3SG.PRS.PFV
 ‘Which book should Vesna read?’ Vrzić 1996:(fn. 8:i)

3.2 PERSON RESTRICTION IN MATRIX ‘DA’-CLAUSES

Directive main DA-clauses can contain second or third, but not first person subjects (shown for the singular; in the plural, only first person exclusive is blocked):¹⁰

- (15) a. Da pročitaš ovu knjigu!
 DA read.2SG.PRS.PFV this book
 ‘Read this book (already)!’
- b. Da Vesna pročita ovu knjigu.
 DA Vesna read.3SG.PRS.PFV this book
 roughly: ‘Vesna should really read this book!’
 ‘See to it that Vesna reads this book.’
- c. *Da pročitam ovu knjigu!
 DA read.1SG.PRS.PFV this book
 intended: ‘I really have to read this book.’
 ‘See to it that I read this book.’

Regardless of the subject, standalone DA-clauses express prioritizing modality that has to be performative – they aim to influence the future course of events or express preferences; they cannot be used for truth-evaluable assertions of what the relevant agent (you, Vesna, I) is supposed to do, i.e., they cannot describe what the world is like in this respect.

In unmarked information seeking interrogatives (speaker unbiased, addressee presumed to know, answer expected) about what should happen, the person pattern shifts: first and third person subjects are available, while second person subjects are not.

- (16) Da { pročitam / pročita / #pročitaš } ovu knjigu?
 DA read.1SG.PRS.PFV read.3SG.PRS.PFV read.2SG.PRS.PFV this book
 ‘Should { I / (s)he / #you } read this book?’
- (17) Da { pročitamo / pročitaju / #pročitajte } ovu knjigu?
 DA read.1PL.PRS.PFV read.3PL.PRS.PFV read.2PL.PRS.PFV this book
 ‘Should { we / they / #you } read this book?’

⁸Portner (2007) introduces “priority modality” as a cover term for deontic, bouletic, and teleological modality, which relies on PRIORITIZING CONVERSATIONAL BACKGROUNDS. We employ prioritizing modality/modals throughout.

⁹Da li in (14-b) is a non-clitic counterpart of a question particle *li* (Browne 1975, i.a.). The focus of this paper is the lower DA.

¹⁰Desiderative main DA-clauses appear to follow the same pattern, but involve additional complications that we discuss in §6.

Second person is confined to suggestions (biased questions as used for tentative advice, cf. (18)) and echo questions (cf. (19)).¹¹

(18) [Context for tentative advice:] *To a fellow student struggling in the class:*

A da (možda) pročitaš ovu knjigu?
 (but) DA (maybe) read.2SG.PRS.PFV this book
 ‘You should maybe read this book?’

(19) [Context for echo questions:] *To a fellow student who mentioned what book the professor wants him to read:*

- a. Da pročitaš OVU KNJIGU?
 DA read.2SG.PRS.PFV this book?
 b. Jel OVU KNJIGU da pročitaš?
 Q this book DA read.2SG.PRS.PFV
 ‘You have to read THIS BOOK?!’ (...*Pa on nije normalan*. ‘He’s crazy.’)

Unbiased information seeking questions, which are infelicitous with second person subjects in DA-clauses, can be realized with a modal verb instead (e.g. *treba* in (20-b)):

(20) [Context for unbiased information seeking:] *Talking to a fellow student, wanting to find out about their reading list.*

- a. #Da li da pročitaš ovu knjigu?
 Q DA read.2SG.PRS.PFV this book
 b. Da li treba da pročitaš ovu knjigu?
 Q must DA read.2SG.PRS.PFV this book
 ‘Do you have to read this book?’/‘Are you required to read this book?’

Setting aside non-information seeking questions, we thus obtain the paradigm in (21):

(21) Person restriction for matrix DA-clauses conveying prioritizing modality:

Environment	Blocked subjects	
Commitment	Speaker (1pExcl)	(*‘I should...!’)
Information seeking question	Addressee (2p)	(*‘Should you...?’)

This is exactly the matrix part of GENERALIZED SUBJECT OBVIATION (GSO), a pattern that Stegovec (2019) establishes for imperatives and directive subjunctives in Slovenian. Slovenian has imperative forms for 2p, and 1p inclusive. Stegovec notes that directive *naj* subjunctives can be used for directives with person values that lack imperative forms, see (22).¹²

(22) Directive *naj*-subjunctives and inflectionally marked imperatives:

¹¹Whether these questions will be interpreted as biased or echo questions depends partly on the interrogative form type: rising intonation allows both (19-20a), but second person DA-interrogatives formed with question particle *jel* constitute echo questions (20b). We leave a more detailed investigation of different interrogative strategies in Serbian and their interaction with modal DA-clauses for future research.

¹²Where imperative forms exist, *naj* subjunctives appear to be blocked (Stegovec 2019). Moreover, unlike Serbian, Slovenian marks dual forms, which for all purposes relevant to our investigation behave exactly like plurals and are thus omitted.

Person	Sg	Pl
1 (Excl)	naj pomaga-m I should help	naj pomaga-mo we.EXCL should help
1+2	–	pomaga-j-mo (we.INCL) let's help
2	pomaga-j (you.SG) help!	pomaga-j-te (you.PL) help!
3	naj pomaga (s)he should help	naj pomag-jo they should help

He then shows that the felicitous use of the forms in (22) is subject to the GSO restriction displayed in (23): matrix directives are constrained against coreference with speaker and addressee, respectively, depending on clause type (the pattern familiar from Serbian, see (21)), while the subjects of embedded directives cannot co-refer with the matrix subject (the familiar CSO effect).¹³

(23) GSO restriction on Slovenian directives/imperatives:

	Environment	Blocked subject
Matrix	Commitment	Speaker (1pExcl) (*'I...')
	Information seeking question	Addressee (2p) (*'you ...')
Embedded		Matrix subject (*'α _i says/orders/... that α _i ...')

As Stegovec points out, the GSO-effect's variation over Speaker/Addressee/Matrix Subject reflects a pattern of PERSPECTIVE SENSITIVITY familiar from elsewhere in grammar. Similar variation is observed with epistemic modals, evidentials, 'speaker' adverbials, taste predicates, a. o. (Speas & Tenny 2003); in this literature, the matrix switch from Speaker (in declarative/commitment case) to Addressee (in information seeking questions) is discussed as INTERROGATIVE FLIP. Moreover, the pattern matches that of conjunct-disjunct agreement in languages like Newari, where the verbal agreement for *self*-referring subjects differs from the verbal agreement with other subjects (Hale 1980, Zu 2018).

Serbian poses the following puzzle: while it has the matrix part of GSO (a.k.a. classical subject obviation, CSO), it appears to lack the embedded part of it. Instead, we find what looks like a language-specific effect, namely PSO (pronominal subject obviation).¹⁴

In the following, we will argue that Serbian displays the full GSO pattern after all, but that the embedded part (classical CSO) is masked by an ambiguity between two different DA-clause complements under directive or desiderative (i.e., non-reportative) predicates, only one of which is obviative. The parse as the non-obviating construction, however, is available only in the absence of an overt subject. Therefore, the presence of an overt subject disambiguates in favor of the obviating construction, which results in the pattern of PSO.

¹³The connection between the lack of canonical first person imperatives and CSO is noted by Quer (1998) and Kempchinsky (2009) (who proposes an account in terms of antilogophoric binding). They do not consider interrogatives.

¹⁴An anonymous reviewer asks if CSO should not then be considered equally language specific to Romance languages. As we argue, PSO is an epiphenomenon of the combination of GSO with occurrence restrictions on overt subjects. Moreover, it remains to be seen which of the forms studied for CSO extend to a full GSO paradigm (see e.g., Szabolcsi 2021 for Hungarian, a non-Romance language originally studied for CSO).

4 THE SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE IN ‘DA’-CLAUSES

4.1 ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE SYNTAX OF ‘DA’-CLAUSES

We propose that Serbian DA-clauses, all realized with a verb that carries person agreement, come in three different structures. Matrix DA-clauses correspond to one of those structures, while all three structures appear as DA-complements. The standard assumption is that DA-complements fall into only two classes, *say*-type complements (DA₁) and *want*-type complements (DA₂).¹⁵ We follow Todorović & Wurmbrand (2015, 2020) in assuming a more fine-grained split into three types of DA-complements.

However, we assume that verbal predicates can be compatible with more than one type, under restrictions of (at least) semantic compatibility (a.o., Kratzer 2006, Moulton 2009; see Elliott 2020 for recent discussion).

The three different DA-clauses (DA_{CTR}, DA_{MOD}, DA_{DEC}) can be characterized as follows:¹⁶

1. DA_{CTR}-CLAUSES are complement clauses embedded under verbs of wanting, deciding, trying, or planning. They do not allow for an overt subject. The covert subject receives an interpretation of obligatory control, which is why we propose that they contain PRO.¹⁷ DA_{CTR}-clauses with finite verbs in the present tense can always be replaced with infinitival clauses (INF-clauses). The choice has no impact on the meaning, but the possibility for this replacement can serve as an indicator that a DA_{CTR}-clause can occur in a given environment.

(DA_{CTR}) [MP DA+M [ASPP Asp [vP PRO v [VP VERB_{present}]]]]

(INF) [MP M [ASPP Asp & [vP PRO v [VP VERB_{infinitive}]]]]

2. DA_{MOD}-CLAUSES can also appear as the complements of verbs of wanting, deciding or planning, but differ from DA_{CTR}-clauses in that they themselves contain a covert exponent of prioritizing modality, represented by $\overset{\text{Mod}}{\mathbb{N}^{\text{---}}}$ (covert prioritizing modal, “ghost modal”).¹⁸ They allow for covert or overt subjects and are obviative in nature (following the paradigm of generalized obviation, §3.2). As the only type of DA-clause that contains an exponent of prioritizing modality, DA_{MOD}-clauses can be detected by their interpretation in environments that do not already encode prioritizing modality; that is, in matrix clauses (see §3.1) or under illocutionarily underspecified *say*-predicates (see §4.2).

(DA_{MOD}) [TP { DP / pro } T [MP $\overset{\text{Mod}}{\mathbb{N}^{\text{---}}}$ [ASPP Asp [vP v [VP VERB_{present}]]]]]

¹⁵Cf. Ivić (1970), Browne (1986), Zec (1987), Progovac (1993b,a, 1994), Vrzić (1996), Bošković (1997), Stjepanović (2004), Todorović (2012), Veselinović (2019), a.o.

¹⁶Many of the details are orthogonal to the point we aim to make in this paper. We fill them in because there is no generally accepted three-way classification that reflects the specific modal meanings encoded and the connection with the status of the subject (for instance, Todorović & Wurmbrand 2015, 2020 assume the presence of mood features but do not distinguish between interrogative mood and prioritizing modality). The crucial difference is a split into three complement types, only two of which can realize complements of directive or desiderative predicates. Of these two, the one containing an exponent of prioritizing modality (our DA_{MOD}) can contain an overt subject, the other cannot and yields a control interpretation; see Fn. 26 for a related idea from Stegovec (2019). Throughout, we remain silent about the lexical status of DA, but tentatively assume that it is the same functional element merged in different functional heads, see also Todorović & Wurmbrand (2015, 2020).

¹⁷Note that PRO is merged within the vP, but it might very well be the case that it is located in a higher position in syntax. Nothing in our analysis hinges on this choice. Moreover, while we assume the subject to be realized as PRO, any account that captures that a control interpretation is obligatory and an overt subject cannot be realized will serve equally well for our purposes.

¹⁸The covert prioritizing modal is represented as a ghost because it is the culprit for the phenomena discussed without surfacing overtly. Note that our ghost modal has nothing to do with Kaplanian monsters (Kaplan 1989) as commonly blamed for indexical shifting (Deal 2020 for discussion).

3. DA_{Dec} -CLAUSES are complement clauses embedded under verbs of thinking and saying. They contain covert or overt subjects, which are not subject to referential restrictions (they can, but need not, co-refer with the matrix subject).

(DA_{Dec}) [_{CP} DA [_{MP} M^{epi/rep} [_{TP} { DP/ pro } T [_{AspP} Asp [_{vP} v [_{VP} VERB_{present}]]]]]]]

Syntactic and semantic properties can allow us to detect specific DA -clauses. Overt subjects can occur only in DA_{Mod} - and DA_{Dec} -clauses. The appearance of overt subjects thus rules out a parse of a DA -clause as DA_{Ctr} . Consider first desiderative and directive predicates, such as *want*-verbs. Assuming that these predicates cannot combine with DA_{Dec} -complements (e.g. Todorović & Wurmbrand 2015, 2020), they either combine with DA_{Mod} or DA_{Ctr} . When their complements contain an overt subject, these can only instantiate a DA_{Mod} -clause. These structures are correctly predicted to show obviation effects. Next, only DA_{Mod} -clauses express prioritizing modality themselves. The standalone matrix occurrences of DA -clauses discussed in §3 can thus only be instances of DA_{Mod} and are thereby also correctly predicted to show obviation effects (in this case as restrictions on what conversational participant the subject can refer to, see §3.2). Finally, complements of verbs of saying can convey prioritizing modality, which also indicates a construal as DA_{Mod} , and these cases are thus also predicted to be obviative (see §4.2).

Note that, on the syntactic side, the classification raises a couple of important questions which we set aside as orthogonal to our current investigation. First, PRO occurs in a finite complement that is smaller than CP (see Terzi 1992, Bošković 1997, Sundaresan & McFadden 2009, Sundaresan 2014 for supporting arguments). Second, NPI-types, clitic climbing, and topicalization (Progovac 1993a, Stjepanović 2004) identify DA_{Ctr} as smaller than DA_{Mod} and DA_{Dec} ; without deep commitment, we treat the former as M(od)P and both DA_{Mod} and DA_{Dec} as CPs. Third, our representation assumes that all three clause-types contain modality. DA_{Ctr} expresses temporal forward shift in connection with e.g., a metaphysical modal, cf. Abusch (1985), Condoravdi (2002), Abusch (2004), Wurmbrand (2014), DA_{Dec} contains an epistemic or reportative modal (anchoring to an attitude of belief or knowledge or an assertive speech event in the matrix clause), (Kratzer 2016).¹⁹

Crucially, only $\overset{Mod}{\mathcal{N}^{=}}$ in DA_{Mod} is an obviative prioritizing modal.²⁰ These syntactic choices relate back to our analysis with one specific prediction: if a structure without a subject on the surface can be shown to be larger than DA_{Ctr} by independent tests (but cannot be DA_{Dec} for semantic reasons), we would predict it to be an instantiation of DA_{Mod} and thus display an obviation effect even with a covert subject. We leave it to further research to evaluate this prediction.

4.2 TRACKING MOD IN THE INTERPRETATION

We assume that $\overset{Mod}{\mathcal{N}^{=}}$ expresses prioritizing necessity. In clauses under desiderative and directive matrix verbs it behaves as a HARMONIC MODAL (Kratzer 2016, Moltmann 2020), which means that it feels semantically invisible as it just picks up the modality expressed by the matrix verb. The effect is shown for English in (24-a), in which omitting

¹⁹If DA_{Dec} contains reportative or epistemic modality, we might expect standalone usages of this type of DA -clause as reportative subjunctives. This seems borne out, compare (i):

- (i) Rekao je svašta nešto. Da je Marija u Nemačkoj, da Petar
said be.3SG.PRS everything something. DA be.3SG.PRS Marija in Germany, DA Petar
živi u Sloveniji...
live.3SG.PRS.IPFV in Slovenia...
'He said a lot of things. Mary is in Germany, Peter lives in Slovenia...'

²⁰We follow a standard approach to locating epistemic modals above and root modals below TP (Hacquard 2006, i.a.).

an overt modal *should* does not result in a change in meaning (Palmer 2001:7.6; Portner 1992). The resulting interpretation for an utterance in context *c* is sketched in terms of event-relative modality in (24-b) (Hacquard 2006, Oikonomou 2021)

- (24) a. Mary requested that I (should) clean up.
 b. $\exists e[\text{request}(e) \ \& \ \text{agent}(e) = \text{Mary} \ \& \ \text{patient}(e) = \text{speaker}(c) \ \& \ \text{content}(e) = \wedge \square^{R(e)}(\text{speaker}(c)\text{-clean-up})]$
 where $R(e)$: the accessibility relation determined by event *e*

Following a.o. Kratzer (2006) and Moulton (2009), the matrix predicate is interpreted as a property of events and the proposition expressed by the complement clause is related to it through a content function represented by ‘content’ (analogously to the theta roles of the verb). As shown in (24-b), the modal flavor of the embedded necessity modal (technically, its accessibility relation *R*) depends on the matrix event *e*. As this is an event of Mary issuing a request, the modal flavor of the embedded *should* is deontic (specifically, Mary’s requests). Crucially, what is requested by Mary is that I clean up, not the modal state of me being under an obligation to clean up. Thus, the prioritizing modality contributed in the embedded clause seems semantically invisible as it just repeats what is encoded by the matrix verb.²¹

While \square_{Mod} is harmonic and hence impossible to detect in the interpretation of DA_{Mod} -clauses under directive or desiderative predicates, it becomes semantically visible in two contexts: (i) in matrix DA-clauses, and (ii) in the complements of *say*-verbs. We have examined the prioritizing readings and the person restrictions in matrix DA-clauses in §3.1 and §3.2. We now examine complements of *say*-verbs. Such verbs are illocutionarily underspecified and can report assertions (R1) or directive utterances (R2). These result in a reading without, and a reading with prioritizing modality in the embedded clause, R1 and R2, respectively (Browne 1987, Vrzić 1996):

- (25) Vesna kaže da Jovana čita ovu knjigu.
 Vesna say.3SG.PRS.PFV DA Jovana read.3SG.PRS.IPFV this book
 R1: ‘Vesna says that Jovana is reading this book.’
 R2: ‘Vesna says that Jovana should read this book.’

As observed before, DA_{Mod} -clauses can contain overt subjects, but do not have to. If, as we claim, \square_{Mod} is subject to obviation effects independently of the covert/overt subject distinction, we predict that *even in the absence of an overt subject*, DA_{Mod} -clauses should be banned from obviating constellations. This is borne out: if the embedded subject is co-referential with the matrix subject, R2 becomes unavailable, as in (26).

- (26) Vesna kaže da čita ovu knjigu.
 Vesna say.3SG.PRS DA read.3SG.PRS.IPFV this book
 R1: ‘Vesna_i says that she_{j,i} is reading this book’
 R2: ‘Vesna_i says that she_{j,*i} should read this book.’

To account for this ambiguity, we assume that complements of *say*-verbs can realize a structure with DA_{Dec} , as in (27-a), associated with the reading R1, or a structure with DA_{Mod} , as in (27-b), associated with the reading R2 (see also Vrzić 1996):²²

- (27) [TP SUBJECT_i T... [VP say/think

²¹An anonymous reviewer asks about the syntax of Serbian overt prioritizing modals, such as the necessity modal *treba*. While interesting in its own right, we cannot pursue the issue in this paper. We note, however, that independently of the complement type they occur in, we do not expect obviation effects; these result from the semantics of the covert \square_{Mod} .

²²Relatedly, interpretative effects result from indicative/subjunctive contrasts under *advise*-predicates in Greek (Oikonomou 2021).

- a. $[_{CP} DA [_{MP} M^{epi/rep} [_{TP} \{ DP_{i,j} / pro_{i,j} \} T [_{ASPP} Asp [_{VP} v [_{VP} VERB_{present}]]]]]]]]]$
- b. $[_{CP} DA [_{TP} \{ DP_{*i,j} / pro_{*i,j} \} T [_{MODP} \overset{Mod}{\text{---}} [_{ASPP} Asp [_{VP} v [_{VP} VERB_{present}]]]]]]]]]$

Under the assumption that DA_{Ctr} cannot encode R2 (as it would fail to contribute prioritizing modality), overt and covert subjects are predicted to be constrained under R2: the modal reading can only arise from the obviative complement clause, i.e., DA_{Mod} . The assumption that DA -complements of predicates like *kazati* ‘say’ cannot be DA_{Ctr} -clauses receives support from the finding that they can never be replaced by infinitivals (Progovac 1993a, a.o.).

5 THE SEMANTICS OF THE OBLIATING PRIORITIZING MODAL

In §3.2 and §4.2 we have established that DA_{Mod} -clauses are subject to generalized obviation. In the following, we aim to develop a theory that applies both in matrix and in embedded clauses.

5.1 EXISTING THEORIES FOR OBLIATING SUBJUNCTIVE COMPLEMENTS

Existing accounts for CSO fall into three main categories. First, (SEMANTIC) BLOCKING accounts (Farkas 1988, Schlenker 2005) assume that a competing construction (typically: infinitival control construction) encodes aspects of directive or desiderative attitude ascriptions. In particular, it encodes that the attitude is held *de se*²³ and/or that the attitude subject has control over the action described by the embedded clause. If this meaning can be conveyed, the competitor has to be chosen over the semantically underspecified subjunctive clause (making the subjunctive the elsewhere case). CSO is predicted to be alleviated when the attitude subject fails to self-identify or is taken to not have control over the course of events described by the embedded clause (Ruwet 1984, Farkas 1988).²⁴ Endowed with suitable meaning, DA_{Ctr} could be considered the relevant competitor for embedded occurrences of DA_{Mod} . Yet, it is unclear how to extend the blocking account to matrix cases (as Stegovec 2019 argues for Slovenian directive subjunctives) or to the absence of the prioritizing reading (R2) under *say*-complements in the obviative constellation. Neither of these constructions can be realized with an infinitival, the presumed competitor.

Second, CSO can be explained syntactically, as an ANTI-LOCALITY violation (a.o. Picallo Soler 1985, Kempchinsky 1986). But, any account that establishes the conflict as holding between subjects struggles when trying to capture the subject restrictions in matrix clauses, as well as the sensitivity to *de se*. Stegovec (2019) proposes an alternative by establishing the antilocality violation between a left-peripheral perspectival center and the subject of the obviating subjunctive:^{25,26}

²³An attitude is held *de se* if the attitude holder themselves would phrase it involving a first person pronoun, i.e., they are aware that the respective property applies to them (Castañeda 1966, Lewis 1979).

²⁴But see Feldhausen & Buchczyk (2021) for an experimental study that fails to confirm Ruwet’s intuitions for French.

²⁵Kempchinsky’s (2009) account in terms of antilogophoric binding of the subject seems related in spirit, but lacks a fully fleshed out syntax-semantics interface. Moreover, she stops short of fully identifying the modal operators appearing in matrix and in embedded contexts.

²⁶Stegovec’s account also allows for an alternative explanation of non-obviating subjunctives (as occurring in Greek). He assumes that the individual referring expression PERSPOP that reflects the perspective holder is really PRO (abstracted over and bound by the matrix predicate). Finite complement clauses that receive an obligatory control interpretation but lack an overt subject involve a defective T-head. PRO is merged as the subject and raises to the specifier of the obviating modal operator (i.e., the position occupied by PERSPOP in (28)). Extending an account along these lines to Serbian would predict that DA_{Mod} and DA_{Ctr} differ only in the nature of the T head, and it would fail to explain why focus allows overt subjects to escape obviation effects.

(28) [[PERSPOP_j MODOP] SUBJECT_{j,*i}... VERB_{Subjunctive}...]

His account faces challenges in determining the correct binding domain for the subject to the exclusion of e.g., object clitics. In addition, while sensitivity to *de se* can be explained through the dependence on the perspectival operator, sensitivity to presumed control over the course of action remains unexpected as it is for the original syntactic accounts (see discussion in §5.2.).

Third, CSO can be explained semantically. Kaufmann (2019b) observes that an account for a perspective sensitive, non-descriptive modal operator is required independently, and that the assumptions Kaufmann (2012) and Stegovec & Kaufmann (2015) make to address this go a long way towards predicting conflicting presuppositions in obviative contexts. Kaufmann (2019b) maintains the idea of a perspectival operator (set to speaker, addressee, and matrix subject referent according to the familiar clause-type sensitive alternation, see §3.2), but treats obviation effects as instances of inherently conflicting meanings (Szabolcsi 2021 calls them ‘mind-boggling meanings’; see Constantini 2016 for similar intuitions about knowledge ascriptions in Italian). In the spirit of the semantic approach, we now aim to devise a meaning for $\overset{\text{Mod}}{\Omega} \equiv \equiv$ as an obviating modal.

5.2 ASSIGNING OBVIATIVE SEMANTICS TO $\overset{\text{mod}}{\Omega} \equiv \equiv$

The semantic/pragmatic account of obviation in directives proposed by Kaufmann (2019b) can be sketched as follows.²⁷ In contexts of felicitous use, morphological imperatives/directive subjunctives $\phi!$ combine at-issue and propositional meaning in the following way:²⁸

- A DIRECTOR (= the perspectival center), who is taken to know what is necessary according to the kind of criteria the participants to the conversation agree to rely on (DECISIVE MODALITY, Kaufmann 2012), but not whether ϕ or $\neg\phi$ will happen, commits to ϕ being necessary for
- an INSTIGATOR, who is committed to bring about ϕ in case they learn it is necessary.

If one individual *D* is both director and instigator, and *D* is presumed to be able to bring about ϕ (PRESUMED CONTROL), then *D* is subject to the conflicting requirement that they know that ϕ will come about but also don’t know whether ϕ will come about. In the interrogatives, the director *D* is asked to commit to whether ϕ is necessary in the relevant sense, again giving rise to a conflicting requirement that *D* is both taken to know and not know whether the preajcent will come about. Obviating constellations thus result in inherently contradictory discourse requirements for the utterance speaker, or presuppositions that cannot be resolved felicitously.

However, this account does not straightforwardly apply to Serbian DA-clauses as they differ from imperatives or directive subjunctives in two ways. First, DA-clauses are strong directives (see §3.1). Unlike imperatives, they can only be used for commands, not for advice, invitations, to express acquiescence, and the like. Second, directive subjunctives, like Romance and Hungarian subjunctives (Szabolcsi 2021 for recent discussion), are sensitive to presumed (lack of) control. Oikonomou (2016) shows this for Greek *na*, see

(29), Adrian Stegovec, p.c., confirms the effect also for Slovenian *naj*. In contrast, $\overset{\text{Mod}}{\Omega} \equiv \equiv$ appears to be insensitive to presumed control, see (30).²⁹

²⁷Kaufmann (2020) suggests an extension to desideratives, see also Szabolcsi (2021).

²⁸Mutual acceptance is supposed to be understood in terms of pragmatic presuppositions (Stalnaker 2002), i.e., assumptions that are mutually shared by the interlocutors in the actual context or in the context described by the matrix clause of a speech report. Speakers using modality of this kind commit to these requirements being fulfilled and can be challenged by their interlocutors for having taken them for granted (e.g., von Stechow 2004).

²⁹An anonymous reviewer asks if Serbian DA-clauses can appear on shopping lists, a case of ‘self-instructions’

- (29) [context presumed lack of control:] *You have the alarm, I need you to wake me up:*
 Avrio na ksipniso stis 6:00 a.m.
 Tomorrow NA wake.1SG at 6:00 a.m.
 ‘Tomorrow I should wake up at 6:00 a.m.’ Greek; Oikonomou 2016
- (30) [context presumed lack of control:] *You have the alarm, I need you to wake me up:*
 a. *Da se probudim sutra u 6!
 DA REFL wake.1SG.PRS.PFV tomorrow at 6
 intended: ‘Tomorrow I should wake up at 6am.’
 b. *Da stignem na vrijeme!
 DA arrive.1SG.PRS.PFV on time
 intended: ‘See to it that I am there on time.’

Similarly, no improvement is recorded for embedded DA-clauses in obviating constellations (detectable as PSO, the impossibility of realizing an overt subject) when the agent is known to have no control over the relevant course of events:

- (31) Jovan želi da (*on) bude izabran.
 Jovan want.3SG.PRS.IPFV DA he be elected
 ‘Jovan wants for himself to be elected.’

At the same time, $\overset{\text{Mod}}{\text{N}} \equiv \text{N}$ shares two properties with obviative subjunctives in Romance or Hungarian. First, stress on subject pronouns (indicating contrastive focus) alleviates obviation effects:

- (32) Vesna_i želi da { *ona_i / ONA_i } dobije nazad pare.
 Vesna want.3SG.PRS.IPFV DA she get.3SG.PRS.PFV back money
 ‘Vesna wants that SHE gets the money back.’

Second, attitudes held only *de re* (i.e., in context where the attitude subject fails to identify themselves) diminish obviation effects in the embedded case (tested on ‘Kako biste VI rekli?’, Facebook). All 17 speakers who responded disprefer an overt pronoun in a *de se*-context as in (33), but 13 speakers prefer the overt pronoun in a *de re*-context in a CSO constellation as in (34) (note, however, that one person still prefers the covert pronoun and four people find both versions unacceptable).

- (33) [context *de se*] *Petar is a proud politician and he’s very sure of himself. He is a candidate in the upcoming election and he recently said for the media: ‘I want to win the election.’*
 a. Petar želi da on pobedi na izborima.
 Petar want.3SG.PRS.IPFV DA he win.3SG.PRS.IPFV on elections
 (0 speakers)
 b. Peter želi da pobedi na izborima. (17 speakers)
- (34) [context *de re*] *Petar is so drunk that he forgot that he was a candidate for president in the upcoming election. In such a state, he’s watching TV and sees someone who he thinks is a great candidate and should win. What Peter doesn’t realize is that the candidate he sees on TV is actually him.*
 a. Petar želi da on pobedi. (13 speakers)
 Petar 3SG.PRS.IPFV DA he win.3SG.PRS.IPFV
 b. Peter želi da pobedi. (1 speaker)

that is felicitous with Greek *na*-subjunctives and Slovenian *naj*-subjunctives. Here, too, no improvement occurs in Serbian. As the effect is ill-understood in principle, we set it aside for the moment.

(both bad: 4 speakers)

To take stock, $\overset{\text{Mod}}{\Box}=\equiv$ shows a familiar pattern of clause type dependence in the setting of the parameter that determines what subjects count as obviating. Obviation effects are avoided in attitude ascriptions when the attitude is held about the attitude subject only *de re*, and they are sensitive to stress on the embedded subject. Unlike the previously studied cases, obviation effects in Serbian seem insensitive to presumed lack of control. Moreover, matrix DA-clauses are strong directives, thus serving a more restricted range of speech acts than canonical imperatives or Greek and Slovenian directive subjunctives. Taking into account the similarities and differences between Serbian DA-clauses and obviative subjunctives as studied for other languages, we now proceed to develop a modified version of the semantic-pragmatic account that covers the Serbian data.

First of all, the speech acts carried out by strong directives are exactly the ones that can intuitively be considered as resting on the speaker's wishes. An interpretation along these lines has been proposed for canonical morphosyntactic imperatives (e.g. Bierwisch 1980, Condoravdi & Lauer 2012, Oikonomou 2016), where it is problematic in light of their use to dispense advice or extend invitations. However, it seems accurate for strong directives like Serbian DA-clauses, which lack precisely the functions that do not intuitively rest on speaker preferences. Moreover, like other obviating constructions, Serbian prioritizing DA-clauses indicate discontinuity between the will and the actions of a person (Ruwet 1984, Szabolcsi 2021). We therefore propose that $\overset{\text{Mod}}{\Box}=\equiv$ expresses the perspectival center's wishes (or goals) regarding the actions of (presumed) others (possibly in coordination with their own actions):

- (35) a. $\overset{\text{Mod}}{\Box}=\equiv$ is sensitive to the *perspectival center*, set to speaker (committing move), addressee (information seeking interrogative), SELF of speech or attitude report (embedded sentence), (Stegovec 2019, Kaufmann 2019b).³⁰
- b. $\overset{\text{Mod}}{\Box}=\equiv$ combines with an individual denoting expression (subject) and a property (i.e., it is an 'ought-to-do' operator, Schroeder 2011).
- c. The grammatical subject has to *evoke 'others'* (= alternative(s) to the perspectival center).

More formally, we assume that expressions α are interpreted with respect to a context c and a centered world of evaluation $\langle x, w \rangle$ (the speaker and world of the context in the matrix commitment case, shifted in interrogatives or embedded clauses). An expression α is assigned both an ordinary and a focus semantic value (Rooth 1985, 1992), indicated as in (36).

- (36) a. $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c, \langle x, w \rangle}$: ordinary value
 b. $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket_f^{c, \langle x, w \rangle}$: focus semantic value

The focus semantic value of an unfocused expression is just the set containing its ordinary value, the focus semantic value of a focused expression consists in the set of alternatives to α 's ordinary semantic value, see (37).

- (37) $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket_f^{c, \langle x, w \rangle} = \{ \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c, \langle x, w \rangle} \}$ if α is unfocused, else:
 $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket_f^{c, \langle x, w \rangle} = D_\tau$, the domain associated with τ , the semantic type of α .

We assume that $\overset{\text{Mod}}{\Box}=\equiv$ is interpreted as an event-relative necessity modal, where R has

³⁰As we are deriving the obviation effect semantically, nothing hinges on whether the perspectival center is represented in the syntax. This choice will, however, impact the possibilities for implementing the changes in perspective as determined by clause type or matrix clause, a challenge not specific to the phenomenon under discussion here (e.g., Speas & Tenny 2003, Pearson 2013, Zu 2018).

to pick out the wishes or goals of the perspectival center x . Moreover, it introduces the presupposition that the focus semantic value of its subject is not identical to the singleton set containing the perspectival center. This presupposition reflects the intuition that DA_{Mod} expresses wishes that concern the actions not (only) of the perspectival center themselves.

- (38) a. $\llbracket \overset{\text{Mod}}{\llbracket \text{---} \rrbracket} \rrbracket^{c, \langle x, w \rangle} = \lambda e. \lambda P. \lambda x. \forall w' [R(e)(w)(w') \rightarrow P(w')(x)]$
 b. $\llbracket [\alpha [\overset{\text{Mod}}{\llbracket \text{---} \rrbracket} e \phi]] \rrbracket^{c, \langle x, w \rangle}$ presupposes that
 (i) modal flavor R (as determined by event argument) reflects wishes/goals of x , and (ii) $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket_f^{c, \langle x, w \rangle} \neq \{x\}$.

The requirement that the focus value of the subject be different from the singleton set containing the perspectival center is met if the subject does not refer to the perspectival center. It is also met if the subject refers to the perspectival center but is focused, in which case its focus semantic value will be a non-singleton set also containing alternatives to the perspectival center.

By these assumptions, obviation effects are predicted to appear in both matrix and embedded contexts, but will vanish with focus on the subject or when an embedded clause characterizes an attitude that is not held *de se* (leading to non-identity between subject referent and perspectival center). We derive that DA -clauses express the wishes or goals of the perspectival center, rendering matrix DA -clauses strong directives or expressives (desiderative readings). In contrast to the semantic-pragmatic accounts for obviation effects in Kaufmann (2019b) and Szabolcsi (2021) for canonical imperatives and directive subjunctives in Slovenian and Hungarian, presumed control over the course of events is predicted to be orthogonal.

As it stands, this interpretation is tailor-made for Serbian DA_{Mod} . It remains to be seen to what extent desiderative and directive modals in other languages display the same patterns. Moreover, it is worth noting that we are proposing a modal operator that directly imposes conditions on the focus semantic value of an expression it combines with, a situation Rooth (1992) aimed to avoid in his strong theory of focus-association. We will leave it to future research to determine if this is indeed a case that undermines the strong theory of focus association.

6 COMMENTS ON APPARENT EXCEPTIONS TO MATRIX GSO

In §3.2, we argued that matrix DA -clauses instantiate the pattern of generalized subject obviation. Specifically, first person subjects are unacceptable in the commitment case, i.e. matrix DA -clauses cannot be used to tell oneself to act in a particular way. However, we note two types of exceptions to this constraint.

6.1 THREATS

Matrix DA -clauses can be used with a first person subject to threaten the addressee into realizing courses of events that are entirely under the addressee's control. *Jel vam jasno* 'is that clear?' can be added to disambiguate in favor of such a threat.

- (39) Da (*ja) dobijem pare nazad (jel vam jasno?)
 DA I get.1SG.PRS.PFV money back Q you.DAT.PL clear
 'Make it such that I get my money back!'
- (40) Da pobedim na izborima, jel vam jasno?
 DA win.1SG.PRS.PFV in elections, Q you.DAT.PL clear
 '(Make sure that) I win in the elections, is that clear?'
 'You will make sure that I win that elections, is that clear?'

Note that the felicity of the first person forms relies crucially on the fact that the speaker takes the addressee to have full control over the course of events. For instance, (40) can only express that the speaker expects the addressee to fix the elections so that the speaker wins. This contrasts with the data considered in §5: cases like (30), where the speaker lacks full control but things are not entirely in the hands of the addressee either, do not escape the obviation restriction. To capture this, we could modify the semantics of DA_{Mod} , so that an obviation restriction is voided if an individual other than the subject has full control over the relevant course of events. We are hesitant, however, because of what seems to be a formal difference: in threats, overt (unstressed) subjects seem impossible, making it look like a genuine case of PSO after all (i.e., unfocused subjects coreferential with the perspectival center are acceptable as long as they are not overt). However, in contrast to all other cases that fit the PSO pattern (which we explained away as disambiguation in favor of DA_{Mod}), focused overt subjects are also excluded from the unembedded clause in (40). We tentatively suggest that threats are realized with DA_{Ctr} , which is licensed pragmatically or by a modal or illocutionary operator different from both DA_{Mod} and the imperative operator (e.g. Han 2000, Kaufmann 2012, Stegovec 2019). As DA_{Ctr} cannot host a subject (independently of stress), the failure to improve subjects by stressing them is expected.³¹ Independent evidence for the idea that threats can involve a particular kind of modality different from the one participating in the regular pattern of GSO comes from Slovenian. Slovenian *naj*-subjunctives, which in contrast to Serbian *DA*-clauses can escape the obviation restriction in cases of shared control over the course of events (see §5), are not used naturally for threats in which full control rests with the addressee, as in (41) and (42). Instead, Slovenian resorts to directive *DA*-clauses as in (43) (Adrian Stegovec, p.c.).

- (41) ??*Naj* dobim denar nazaj do jutri!
naj get.1SG.PRS money back by tomorrow.
 intended: ‘Make sure that I really get my money back by tomorrow!’ Slovenian
- (42) ?*Naj* sem jutri prvi na seznamu!
naj be.1SG.PRS tomorrow first on list
 ‘I better be the first one on the list tomorrow’
 (when dissatisfied with my position on the waiting list) Slovenian
- (43) *Da* sem jutri prvi na seznamu!
DA be.1SG.PRS tomorrow first on list
 ‘I better be the first one on the list tomorrow.’ Slovenian

We conclude that a comprehensive understanding of the matrix form types involved in various types of directive utterances will require more careful characterizations of what at first glance seem to be closely related directive speech acts, as well as reliable tests to distinguish between them.

³¹We may appear to predict that threats with *jel vam jasno* should not tolerate overt subjects even in non-obviating constellations. This, however is not borne out, consider (i):

- (i) *Da* Marija dobije pare nazad, jel vam jasno?!
DA Marija get.3SG.PRS.PFV money back, Q you.DAT.PL clear
 ‘Marija has to get her money back, is that clear?’

We assume that DA_{Mod} -clauses, as strong directives, are always available to express threats when not blocked because of an obviation restriction (consider a variety of pragmatically similar options in English: *I will win that race, do you understand?, I want to win that race, do you understand?, I have to win that race, do you understand?, etc.*).

6.2 RE-EXAMINING MATRIX DESIDERATIVES: WELL-WISHES, OPTATIVES, AND TOASTS

Matrix DA-clauses used for wishes also merit closer inspection. It seems that they belong to two at least pragmatically different categories. First, we find that true “well-wishes” are as limited as they are with canonical morphological imperatives. They can appear only when at least the addressee clearly lacks control over the course of events, compare (44) to cases like English (45) (Condoravdi & Lauer 2012, Kaufmann 2019a). Matrix DA-clauses for true “well-wishes” display the obviating behavior discussed in §3.2.

- (44) Da brzo ozdraviš!
 DA quickly get-well.2SG.PRS.PFV
 ‘Get well soon!’
- (45) a. #Get work done on the train! (from Condoravdi & Lauer 2012)
 b. #Get tenure! (from Kaufmann 2019a)

While reduced control for the speaker proved insufficient to render felicitous (30-b) (string identical to (46) without *samo*), it does have a felicitous use as an optative:

- (46) (Samo) da stignem na vrijeme!
 only DA arrive.1SG.PRS.PFV on time
 ‘If only I’m there on time...!’

As indicated by the option of adding *samo* ‘only’ without a significant change in meaning, we take these to constitute cases of standalone conditional antecedents. In addition to the usages as complement clauses and directive and desiderative matrix clauses discussed above, Serbian DA-clauses can serve as conditional antecedents; Grosz (2012).³² No obviation effects are expected for optatives of this kind (or any other optatives, to the best of our knowledge), this use of (46) is thus not in conflict with the account developed in this paper.

Finally, DA-clauses can be used for toasts (preferably marked by an ethical dative *nama* ‘for us’ (which then requires an overt subject):

- (47) Da (#ja nama) brzo ozdravim!
 DA I we.DAT quickly recover.1SG.PRS.PFV
 ‘May I recover quickly (for us)!’
- (48) Da ti nama brzo ozdraviš!
 DA you we.DAT quickly recover.2SG.PRS.PFV
 ‘May you recover quickly (for us)!’

It is again interesting to consider these data in a crosslinguistic context. German has a designated toasting-clause, which resembles an embedded purpose clause and can also be realized with an ethical dative in first person plural (understood as inclusive).³³

- (49) a. Auf dass ich (uns) die Wahl gewinne!
 to that I us.DAT the election win
 ‘To me winning the election!’
 b. Auf dass du (uns) schnell gesund wirst!
 to that you us.DAT quickly healthy become
 ‘To you recovering quickly!’

We can imagine two explanations for Serbian toasting-clauses: (i) they contain ^{Mod} $\text{Q}=\text{=}$ and

³²Grosz (2012) argues that such uses require any one of several markers to disambiguate towards an optative use (for Serbian, he lists *samo* ‘only’, *makar* ‘at least’, and interjection *e(h)*). While we agree with the data he considers in this respect (Grosz 2012:281), *samo* can be dropped without a significant change in meaning in our (46). A more detailed investigation of optatives and conditionals has to be left for future research.

³³We are indebted to Stefan Kaufmann (p.c.) for pointing out this construction to us.

are thus obviating, but the perspectival center is set to a plurality comprising speaker and addressee ('joint wishes'), or (ii) they are stand-alone purpose clauses that are anchored to the concomitant non-verbal action of raising one's glass (see Arsenijević 2020 for purpose DA -clauses). More careful evaluation of the behavior of plural subjects will be needed to evaluate (i), but the appearance of ethical datives as well as the crosslinguistic data provide tentative support for option (ii).

7 CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we have argued that Serbian displays a full pattern of generalized subject obviation, where the embedded part (classical subject obviation, CSO) is masked as a constraint against the realization of overt pronominal subjects (PSO). We analyze PSO in terms of a structural ambiguity between two types of (finite) DA -complements that can occur under *want/tell/...*-type verbs, namely DA_{Ctr} , a non-obviating variant with an obligatorily controlled subject that does not allow for an overt subject to be realized, and DA_{Mod} , an obviating structure that expresses prioritizing modality and can contain overt subjects. The presence of an overt subject under a *want/tell/...*-type verbs thus disambiguates in favor of the obviating DA_{Mod} -structure.

Obviating prioritizing covert modal $\overset{Mod}{\mathcal{N}^{=}}$ (as appearing in DA_{Mod} -clauses) is insensitive to presumed control, but is sensitive to *de se*-identification and stress, which we capture by letting it express the perspectival center's wishes/goals about the actions (also) of (presumed) others. The data considered in §6 show that the spectrum of directive and desiderative clauses (minor clause types in the sense of Sadock & Zwicky 1985) deserve more attention in future research. Our first attempt at drawing more fine-grained distinctions confirms, however, the paradigm of generalized subject obviation for examples that realize DA_{Mod} -clauses, as hypothesized in §4.

Finally, this study of Serbian DA -clauses adds masking as PSO as a pattern of obviation effects in complements of directive and desiderative predicates. In the larger crosslinguistic picture, this poses the question of why masking happens in Serbian, but not, for instance, in Slovenian, a closely related Slavic language (Stegovec 2019). Two differences come to mind as potentially relevant. First, the pronominal systems of the two languages might be different. Stegovec (2020) observes that PCC with clitics is more restricted in Slovenian than in Serbian, which he argues is due to Slovenian clitics being more complex than Serbian clitics. To the extent that those differences also apply to full pronouns / covert pronouns, this might be a potential reason why Serbian and Slovenian obviation effects do not exactly match. Second, the availability of finite clauses to replace infinitival complements with all types of matrix predicates might differ. As our account heavily relies on the disambiguation between inherently subjectless DA_{Ctr} -clauses and obviative modal DA_{Mod} -clauses through overt subjects, we lean towards an explanation that relies on a different status of infinitival complements in the two languages. However, further investigation of microvariation will be required to fully understand the differences.

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ABBREVIATIONS

1	first person	M	masculine
2	second person	NOM	nominative
3	third person	PFV	perfective
ACC	accusative	PL	plural
BCMS	Bosnian/Croatian/- Montenegrin/Serbian	PSO	pronominal subject obviation
		PST	past
CSO	classical subject obviation	Q	question particle
DAT	dative	SBJV	subjunctive
F	feminine	SG	singular
GSO	generalized subject obviation		

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