

Negation and Finiteness in BCMS

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ABSTRACT

Future tense sentences in BCMS (Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbian) can be formed in two general ways: the future auxiliary verb *ću* can combine either with (i) a simple infinitive verb, or (ii) a *da*-clause, which contains a fully finite verb. This paper investigates an interesting empirical puzzle, namely, that the latter type resists being negated. The main proposal is that this puzzle and other phenomena related to finiteness and negation can be explained if we assume that NegP of a finite clause projects above the first fully finite XP. In other words, NegP can indeed appear in different positions in the clause (e.g., Zanuttini 1997), but that is determined by whether the XP immediately dominated by NegP is fully finite. I also provide an explanation for some apparent exceptions to this pattern.

KEYWORDS negation · finiteness · clausal structure

1 INTRODUCTION

In this paper I investigate two types of future tense sentences (FTS hereafter) in BCMS (Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbian). My focus will be on an interesting empirical puzzle, namely, that one FTS type resists being negated. I argue that this puzzle and a number of other phenomena related to finiteness and negation in BCMS can be explained if we assume that the generalization in (1) holds:

- (1) *NegP (i.e., sentential negation) of a finite clause projects above the first fully finite XP*

I define “fully finite” as being able to inflect for person and number. In essence, I propose that sentential negation/NegP can indeed appear in different positions in the clausal structure (e.g., Zanuttini 1997), but that is determined by whether or not the XP immediately dominated by NegP can be fully finite in this sense. This is also quite consistent with the fact that the sentential/propositional negation of a finite clause is always prefixed to a fully finite verb. At the same time, contra cartographic approaches, the analysis presented here supports the view that finiteness is not confined to a particular domain in the clause (e.g., Adger 2007, Wurmbrand et al. 2020).

There are also some apparent exceptions to this ban on negative FTS. I show in §4 that BCMS employs two strategies for generating such examples (which, in general, require rich contexts): i) deletion of a negated infinitive verb (e.g., *moći* ‘be able’), or ii) “camouflaged” constituent negation.

The facts discussed in this paper suggest that the sentential Neg head in BCMS selects for a complement with a full set of phi features (as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer). In other words, the restriction stated in (1) is understood here to be encoded in the lexicon, rather than a general principle on Negation. This assumption allows more easily for cross-linguistic variation in what features the Neg head is sensitive to in different languages. On the other hand, it is not clear that the approaches which assume that finiteness is confined to a particular domain could account for the full array of facts presented here.

The paper is organized as follows. I present some general background on FTSs and negation in BCMS in §2, where I also introduce the main empirical puzzle. I present my analysis of that puzzle in §3. In §4, I discuss exceptions to the ban on negative FTSs and, in §5, I show how the behavior of sentential negation below the particle *da* provides further support to the proposed analysis. §6 concludes the paper.

2 FTS AND NEGATION IN BCMS: SOME BACKGROUND

There are two ways of forming FTSs in BCMS. First, as illustrated in (2), the future auxiliary verb, which is historically derived from the short form of *hteti* ‘want’ in present tense (*ho-će*) can combine with the infinitive form of the lexical verb.

- (2) FTS – INFINITIVE
 Milan **će** [_{INF} oprati sudove]
 M.NOM will wash.INF dishes.ACC
 ‘Milan will wash the dishes.’

Second, the future auxiliary verb can combine with a *da*-clause, in which the verb inflects for person and gender.

- (3) FTS – DA-CLAUSE
 Milan **će** [_{DA-CL} da opere sudove]
 M.NOM will *da* wash.PRS.3.SG dishes.ACC
 ‘Milan will wash the dishes.’

Importantly, *if we limit ourselves to contexts which require pure future interpretation* (e.g., the speaker is simply outlining a plan for who will do what after dinner), an interesting (and quite clear) contrast arises for all the speakers I consulted. In particular, both (4) and (5) are acceptable as reports on what will happen in the near future. (6) is the negated version of (4) and can be felicitously used in a context where the speaker now reports what Milan and Ana will not do after dinner. But for all the speakers I consulted, the negated version of (5) in (7) does not have that meaning. It can only mean that Milan and Ana do not want to perform their respective duties. This is an interesting paradigm gap, which requires an explanation. The question is then twofold: (a) why does (7) (in a context of this sort) lack a simple negative future interpretation, and (b) why does it mean ‘not want’?

- (4) FTS – INFINITIVE
 Milan **će** oprati sudove a Ana **će** otići u bioskop.
 M.NOM will wash.INF dishes.ACC and A.NOM will go.INF in cinema.ACC
 ‘Milan will wash the dishes and Ana will go to the cinema.’
- (5) FTS – DA-CLAUSE
 Milan **će** da opere sudove a Ana **će** da ode u
 M.NOM will *da* wash.PRS.3.SG dishes.ACC and A.NOM will *da* go.PRS.3.SG in
 bioskop.
 cinema.ACC
 ‘Milan will wash the dishes and Ana will go to the cinema.’
- (6) NEG FTS – INFINITIVE
 Milan **neće** oprati sudove a Ana **neće** otići u bioskop.
 M.NOM not-will wash.INF dishes.ACC and A.NOM not-will go.INF in cinema.ACC
 ‘Milan will not wash the dishes and Ana will not go to the cinema.’

(7) NEG FTS – DA-CLAUSE

Milan **neće** da opere sudove a Ana **neće** da ode
 M.NOM not-will *da* wash.PRS.3.SG dishes.ACC and A.NOM not-will *da* go.PRS.3.SG
 u bioskop.
 in cinema.ACC
 ‘Milan doesn’t *want* to wash the dishes and Ana doesn’t *want* to go to the cinema.’

2.1 ON AUX *HTETI* ‘WANT’

The auxiliary particle *će* in (4) is the short form of *hoće*, which is the 3rd person, present tense form of *hteti* ‘want’. One may wonder if the AUX *će* can have the full form *hoće*, with a pure future interpretation; i.e., without the desiderative meaning. This is indeed possible when the auxiliary particle is in a focus position:

(8) VP-Ellipsis with a contrastive focus

- a. Milan *će* oprati sudove ali Ana **neće**.
 M.NOM will wash.INF dishes.ACC but A.NOM not-will
 ‘Milan will wash the dishes but Ana will not.’
- b. Milan **neće** oprati sudove ali Ana **će*/✓*hoće*.
 M.NOM not-will wash.INF dishes.ACC but A.NOM will
 ‘Milan will not wash the dishes but Ana will.’

I assume that the sentence final position in (8-a)-(8-b) has a contrastive stress (because of the contrastive focus interpretation) and therefore cannot host a clitic in (8-b). To avoid this conflict the AUX *će* is spelled out in its full form *hoće*, but it retains a pure future interpretation. There is no conflict of this sort in (8-a), since *neće* is not a clitic.

2.2 ON THE LEXICAL VERB *HTETI* ‘WANT’

The lexical verb *hteti* ‘want’ is a restructuring verb, very similar to *želeći* ‘want’. They both take the same type of complements, as shown in (9)-(11):

(9) NOMINAL COMPLEMENTS

- a. ŽELETI
 Milan **želi** [_{NP} veći poklon].
 M.NOM wants bigger present
 ‘Milan wants a bigger present.’
- b. HTETI
 Milan **hoće** [_{NP} veći poklon].
 M.NOM wants bigger present
 ‘Milan wants a bigger present.’

(10) INFINITIVAL COMPLEMENTS

- a. ŽELETI
 Milan **želi** [_{INF} jesti čokoladu].
 M.NOM wants eat.INF chocolate
 ‘Milan wants to eat chocolate.’
- b. HTETI
 Milan **hoće** [_{INF} jesti čokoladu].
 M.NOM wants eat.INF chocolate
 ‘Milan wants to eat chocolate.’

(11) DA-CLAUSE COMPLEMENTS

- a. ŽELETI
 Milan **želi** [_{DA-CL} da jede čokoladu].
 M.NOM wants *da* eat.PRS.3.SG chocolate
 ‘Milan wants to eat chocolate.’
- b. HTETI
 Milan **hoće** [_{DA-CL} da jede čokoladu].
 M.NOM wants *da* eat.PRS.3.SG chocolate
 ‘Milan wants to eat chocolate.’

Structurally speaking, the complements of *želiti* ‘want’ in (10) and (11) are smaller than CPs. Specifically, licensing of Negative Concord Items (NCIs) in BCMS is sensitive to structure: it can be licensed within a single clause or across a restructuring verb, but never across a finite CP (e.g., Progovac 1993a,b, 1994, 1996, Stjepanović 2004, Bošković 2009, Todorović & Wurmbrand 2020: etc.). Consider (12)-(13): negation of the propositional verb *tvrditi* ‘claim’ cannot license an NCI inside of its complement (instead, the ‘long-distance’ NPI *išta* can be used), while negation of a restructuring verb *želiti* ‘want’ can, indicating that its complement is smaller than a CP.

(12) TVRDI ‘claim’ – CP complement; NCIs disallowed

- Milan **ne** *tvrdi* [_{CP} da je jeo ***ništa**/✓ *išta* na žurci].
 M. not claim.PRS.3.SG *da* is eat.PST.P.3.SG nothing/anything at party
 ‘Milan doesn’t claim that he ate anything at the party.’

(13) ŽELETI ‘want’ – not a CP complement; NCIs allowed

- Milan **ne** *želi* [_{XP} da jede ✓**ništa**/**išta* na žurci].
 M. neg want.PRS.3.SG *da* eat.PRS.3.SG nothing/anything at party
 ‘Milan doesn’t want to eat anything at the party.’

In (12) *da* embeds a finite sentence, consisting of a finite auxiliary verb (*je*) and a participle (*jeo*). In (13), on the other hand, there is no auxiliary verb in the *da*-clause and the verb ‘eat’ has the finite inflection.

2.2.1 NEGATION AND THE LEXICAL VERB *HTETI* ‘WANT’

An interesting fact about *hoće* (3rd person form of *hteti* ‘want’) is that it undergoes obligatory truncation when preceded by negation. Namely, the sequence *[**ne hoće**] is disallowed and truncated to [**ne-će**], as the b. examples in (14)-(16) show.

(14) NOMINAL COMPLEMENTS

- a. ŽELETI
 Milan **ne želi** [_{NP} veći poklon].
 M.NOM not wants bigger present
 ‘Milan doesn’t want a bigger present.’
- b. HTETI
 Milan **ne-će** [_{NP} veći poklon].
 M.NOM not-wants bigger present
 ‘Milan doesn’t want a bigger present.’

(15) INFINITIVAL COMPLEMENTS

- a. ŽELETI
 Milan **ne želi** [_{INF} jesti čokoladu].
 M.NOM not wants eat.INF chocolate
 ‘Milan doesn’t want to eat chocolate.’

- b. HTETI
 Milan **ne-će** [_{INF} jesti čokoladu].
 M.NOM not-wants eat.INF chocolate
 ‘Milan doesn’t want to eat chocolate.’
- (16) DA-CLAUSE COMPLEMENTS
- a. ŽELETI
 Milan **ne želi** [_{DA-CL} da jede čokoladu].
 M.NOM not wants *da* eat.PRS.3.SG chocolate
 ‘Milan doesn’t want to eat chocolate.’
- b. HTETI
 Milan **ne-će** [_{DA-CL} da jede čokoladu].
 M.NOM not-wants *da* eat.PRS.3.SG chocolate
 ‘Milan doesn’t want to eat chocolate.’

Note that for some speakers it is difficult to get the desiderative reading in (15-b). I propose this is because of the general preference for *da*-clauses in the eastern dialects. But in dialects which productively use infinitive complements (e.g., Standard Croatian), the desiderative reading is quite easy to get with infinitives, as this naturally occurring example shows. Here it is clear from the context that the dog is picky and does not want to eat anything else but the sausage.

- (17) Moj psić neće jesti ništa drugo osim moje salame.
 my doggy not-wants eat.INF nothing other apart.from my sausage
 ‘My doggy does not want to eat anything apart from my sausage.’
 (<https://www.facebook.com/SapeZG/posts/imate-izbirljivog-psa-barking-heads-hrana-je-pravi-odgovor-za-sve-izbirljivce-na/2039702656097077/>)

In the next section, I propose my analysis of the puzzle posed by the contrast in (4)-(7).

3 MAIN PROPOSAL

A successful analysis of (4)-(7) should be able to answer the following two questions: (a) why does (7) mean ‘not want’, in contrast to its positive version in (5), which lacks a desiderative reading?, and (b) why does (7) lack a simple future interpretation, in contrast to (5)? I will discuss these two questions in turn in the next two subsections.

3.1 ANALYSIS PART I

The answer to the first question above is more straightforward. I assume that *hoće* (3rd person form of the lexical verb *hteti* ‘want’) is truncated to *će* when linearly preceded by negation, via a simple post-syntactic rule in (18-a). I also assume the negative proclitic and its host form a M(orphological)-Word at PF (e.g. Embick 2007, 2015). Present tense forms of verbs *biti* ‘be’ and *imati* ‘have’ and negation also form idiosyncratic units in many varieties of BCMS, as shown in (18-b)-(18-c):

- (18) a. *hoće* → *će* / [_{M-Word} ne __]
 b. BITI ‘be’ e.g., 1st Person Singular Present: [ne (je)sam] → [nisam]
 c. IMATI ‘have’: [ne imam] → [nemam]

It seems, therefore, that rules like (18-a) are independently necessary. But since this paper focuses on syntactic and semantic properties of these constructions, I cannot really discuss the nature of phonological processes here. There is some indication, however, that the negation is combined with a full form at some level, which has undergone *partial deletion* of the initial segments of the root. Importantly, unlike when *ne* precedes roots without deletion (e.g. *ne dam* ‘not give.1SG.PRS’, *ne pevam* ‘not sing.1SG.PRS’, *ne idem* ‘not

go.1SG.PRS'), the vowel in the negation here is lengthened (i.e., *neeće*). Such lengthening is often found in contexts where deletion took place historically (e.g., Talić 2020).

The example in (7) then underlyingly looks like (19). The sequence [**ne hoće**] is post-syntactically truncated to **neće**. But in the syntax, we have a restructuring verb *hteti* 'want', taking a *da*-clause complement, which is smaller than a CP, since NCIs can be licensed by the matrix negation (see also (13)):

- (19) NEG FTS – DA-CLAUSE
 Milan **ne hoće** [_{XP} *da opere sudove/ništa*].
 M.NOM not want *da* wash.PRS.3.SG dishes.ACC/nothing
 'Milan doesn't want to wash the dishes/anything.'

3.2 ANALYSIS PART II

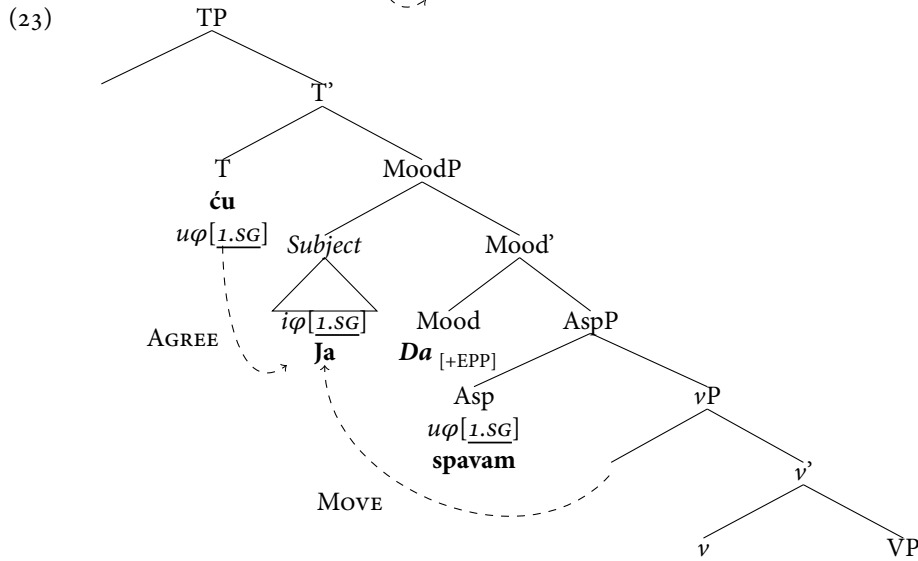
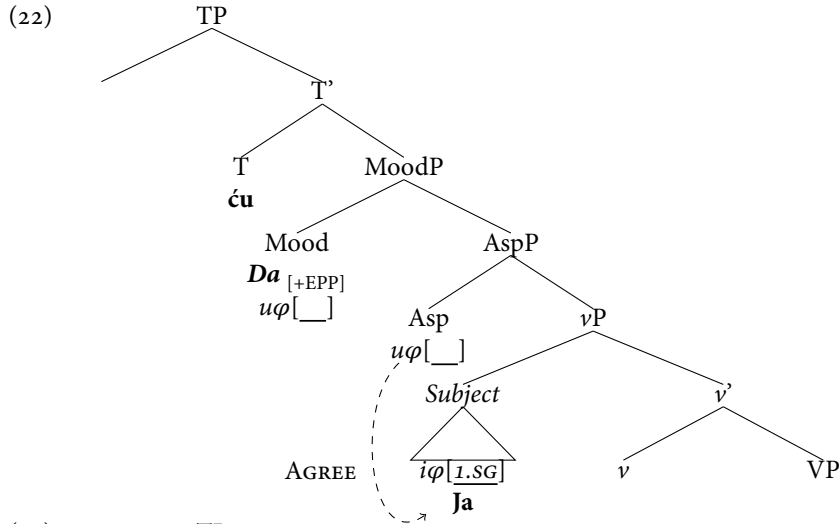
The second question is more challenging, as it is not clear why the negated simple future interpretation is lacking with *da*-complements, but not with infinitives. I will try to capitalize exactly on the difference in inflection – with infinitives, the main verb is not finite, whereas with *da*-complements, it is. I will first adopt Todorović & Wurmbrand's (2020) assumption that *da*-clauses come in different sizes (CPs, TP, vPs) and that *da*, as a "finiteness indicator", can be located in different positions in the structure. I will also assume, following Veselinović (2019), that the *da*-clause in the FTS is a MoodP, as in (20):

- (20) [_{MoodP} Mood_[φ] *da* [_{AspP} Asp_[φ] [_{vP} Subject [_v v VP]]]]
└───┴───┴───┴───┴───┘
AGREE

The key characteristic of such MoodPs is that both Mood and Asp have a φ -probe (which is similar to feature inheritance in the C-T domain, Chomsky 2007, 2008). Consider then how a simple FTS like (21) is derived on my proposal (see also the relevant structures in (22) and (23) below).

- (21) Ja **ću** *da spavam*.
 I will.1.SG *da* sleep.PRS.1.SG
 'I will sleep.'

Both *ću* and *spavam* are fully finite in that they agree for 1st person, singular features. MoodP [*da spavam*] looks like a "mini-clause" and is similar to CP in some respects. Like CP, it includes the full argument structure and is endowed with a full set of φ -features. Unlike CP, it lacks force and tense. The present tense morphology is default/not interpreted; rather, the future interpretation comes from T. I also assume that both Asp and Mood in (19) have a set of φ -probes. Asp probes the subject in Spec vP, agrees with it, but it cannot license its case, because it is in some sense deficient (e.g., Chomsky 2000, 2001). Alternatively, as in the system of Pesetsky & Torrego (2007), it could be the verb lacks valued *u*T (like infinitives) and thus structural case cannot be assigned. Personally, I find this analysis more promising since, after all, the future tense interpretation in (21) comes from the future auxiliary *ću*, and not from the present tense verb *spavam*. Thus, the subject still has an active (unvalued) case feature. But the Asp has agreed for 1st person, singular features. The verb moves to Asp, where it acquires this inflection, which is realized as *spavam*. Mood also has a φ -probe and agrees with the subject (this is spelled out as *da*). Since Mood also has an EPP feature, the subject moves to its Spec (see (23)). In this position the subject is probed by T, which agrees with it and licenses its case. The subject then moves to SpecTP.



Thus, the same argument undergoes φ -agreement twice, but its case is licensed in the higher, SpecMoodP position. Also, Mood in (20) is the host for clitics, which is another similarity with C (e.g., Progovac 1996).

- (24) Ja *ću* da *ga* vidim.
 I will.1.SG *da* him see.PRS.1.SG
 'I will see him.'

But then why does (21) resist being negated? If we compare the *da*-clause FTS in (21) with other periphrastic verbal forms, we observe that this is the only form where both the auxiliary and the main verb inflect for person and number: *ću* and *radim* both show 1st person sg. agreement. In the infinitive FTS in (26) the main verb has no inflection, and in (27) the main verb takes the participial form, which inflects for number and gender, but not person.

- (25) FTS WITH DA-CLAUSE
 Ja *ću* [_{MoodP} *da radim*].
 I will.1.SG *da* work.1.SG
 'I will work.'

- (26) FTS WITH INFINITIVE
Ja **ću** [raditi].
I will.1.SG work.INF
'I will work.'
- (27) SIMPLE PAST TENSE
Ja **sam** [radio].
I am.1.SG work.PART.S.M
'I worked.'

According to (1), NegP (XP encoding sentential negation) of a finite clause should project above the first fully finite XP. Thus, whatever is the constituent containing the lexical verb in (26)-(27), NegP cannot project right above it, since the verb is not fully finite (it is either infinitive or it lacks person agreement). We would expect NegP to project above constituents immediately dominating *ću* in (26) and *sam* in (27), since these are fully finite. As (28)-(29) show, this is indeed the case.

- (28) FTS WITH INFINITIVE
Ja **ne-ću** [raditi].
I not-will.1.SG work.INF
'I will not work.'
- (29) SIMPLE PAST TENSE
Ja **ni-sam** [radio].
I not-am.1.SG work.PST-PART.S.M
'I did not work.'

But in the FTS with a *da*-clause, MoodP is *finite*, so NegP should project right above it, according to (1). I argue, however, that this creates an intervention effect. In particular, this MoodP needs to be licensed in the head-complement configuration by a particular kind of T, which can select it, but the presence of NegP blocks this licensing, which explains the lack of a simple negative future interpretation in (7) (But see §5 for an alternative proposal).

- (30) $T_{will} [_{NegP} Neg [_{MoodP} Mood da [_{AspP} Asp [_{vP} Subject [_{v'} v VP]]]]]$


Now, (31) is a seeming counterexample, since *ne* is located between *ću* and the *da*-clause, but we are dealing here with *constituent* negation, not *sentential* (propositional) negation.

- (31) Ja *ću* **ne** *da* jedem kolače (*nego* *da* spavam).
I will.1.SG not *da* eat.1.SG cookies neg-but *da* sleep.PRS.1.SG
'I will not eat the cookies, but sleep.'

It is important to clarify at this point that my interest here is limited to sentential negation of finite clauses, since I want to derive the paradigm gap in (4)-(7), which are all finite clauses and negation in (6)-(7) is sentential. Negation can, of course, appear in a number of non-finite contexts (adjunct clauses, word-level negation) but the restriction in (1) has little to say about them. Now, constituent negation (c-neg hereafter) is marked by putting the negative marker immediately after the relevant constituent, and is often accompanied by *nego* or *već* 'but':

- (32) C-NEG WITH ADVERBS
Milan trči **ne** sporo (*nego* brzo).
M.NOM runs not slowly but fast
'Milan runs not slowly but fast.'

Semantically speaking, c-neg expresses *contrary negation*, unlike sentential negation,

which expresses *propositional (contradictory)* negation. As discussed in Borschev et al. (2007), *contrary negation* is a weaker notion: **q** is a contrary negation of **p** iff **p** and **q** cannot both be true but *can* both be false. In addition, as is well-known, c-neg cannot license NCIs (e.g., Partee 2007). For instance, c-neg in (33-b) cannot license the NCI object, unlike sentential negation in (33-a):

- (33) a. SENTENTIAL NEGATION
 ✓Starac **nije** pojeo **ništa**.
 old.man not-is ate nothing
 'The old man didn't eat anything.'
- b. C-NEG
 *Ne starac (nego dečak) je pojeo **ništa**.
 not old.man but boy is ate nothing
 intended: 'Not the old man (but the boy) ate something.'

Going back to (31), we see that the NCI *ništa* cannot be licensed here (e.g., (34)), which clearly shows that this is c-neg. Consequently, (31) does not challenge the statement in (1). The constituent to which c-neg is attached in (31)/(34) is MoodP. I also assume, following Todorović & Wurmbrand (2020), that *da*-clause complements of restructuring verbs like *want* are TPs.

- (34) *Ja ću **ne** da jedem **ništa** (nego da spavam).
 I will.1.SG not *da* eat.1.SG nothing neg-but *da* sleep.PRS.1.SG
 intended: 'I will not eat anything, but sleep.'

3.3 INANIMATE SUBJECTS AND FTS

One may wonder at this point if animacy of the subject is an important factor for the contrast in (4)-(7), since only animate subjects may have desires. But the contrast also appears with verbs taking inanimate subjects. Consider the following change-of-state verbs, again in a context requiring pure future interpretation. For instance, your task is to observe a number of objects in a room and report what you think will happen to which object:

- (35) FTS – INFINITIVE
 Vrata će se zatvoriti i bomba će eksplodirati.
 door will REFL close.INF and bomb will explode.INF
 'The door will close and the bomb will explode.'
- (36) FTS – DA-CLAUSE
 Vrata će da se zatvore i bomba će da eksplodira.
 door will *da* REFL close.PRS.3.SG and bomb will *da* explode.PRS.3.SG
 'The door will close and the bomb will explode.'
- (37) NEG FTS – INFINITIVE
 Vrata se **neće** zatvoriti i bomba **neće** eksplodirati.
 door REFL not-will close.INF and bomb not-will explode.INF
 'The door will not close and the bomb will not explode.'
- (38) NEG FTS – DA-CLAUSE
 Vrata **neće** da se zatvore i bomba **neće** da eksplodira.
 door not-will *da* REFL close.PRS.3.SG and bomb not-will *da* explode.PRS.3.SG
 'The door will not close and the bomb will not explode.'

Again, (35)-(36) are acceptable as reports on what will happen in the near future. (37) is the negated version of (35) and can be felicitously used in a context where the speaker reports what s/he thinks will not happen to which object. For all the speakers I consulted, however, the meaning of the negated version of (36) in (38) is again different and can

be paraphrased as: “The door is stuck and doesn’t “want” to open and the bomb refuses to explode”, which follows the pattern in (4)-(7). It appears then that animacy is not a crucial factor, and its effects are subtle.

Now, a genuine counterexample to this pattern is the verb *biti* ‘be’. It can easily have a pure future interpretation in an FTS with a *da*-clause without any extra context, as shown in (39):

- (39) Večeras **neće** da bude mnogo hladno.
 tonight not-will *da* be.PRS.3.SG very cold
 ‘Tonight, it will not be very cold.’

Since the subject in (39) is an expletive, the desiderative reading is not even available. But even when the subject is not an expletive, the future reading is easily accessible, as in (40):

- (40) Zima **neće** da bude mnogo hladna.
 winter not-will *da* be.PRS.3.SG very cold
 ‘The winter will not be very cold.’

In addition to *biti* ‘be’, some other verbs of existence (i.e., *trajati* ‘to last’, *završiti se* ‘to end’) seem to behave in a similar manner:

- (41) a. Zima **neće** da traje dugo.
 winter not-will *da* last.PRS.3.SG long
 ‘The winter will not last long.’
 b. Zima **neće** da se završi uskoro.
 winter not-will *da* REFL end.PRS.3.SG soon
 ‘The winter will not end soon.’

Given the statement in (1), NegP is required to project above MoodP (since MoodP is finite), but I suggest it may ignore MoodPs headed by *biti* (and similar verbs of existence), which is treated not like a typical lexical verb, but more like an impoverished, auxiliary verb. This then allows NegP to project above TP, which gives us sentential negation with a pure future interpretation. In the next section, I discuss some other seeming exceptions to the ban on negative FTS.

4 EXCEPTIONS TO THE BAN ON NEGATIVE FTS

In this section I show that BCMS employs two strategies for generating apparent exceptions to the ban on negative FTS (which, in general, require rich contexts): (a) deletion of a higher, restructuring verb in the infinitive form (e.g., *moći* ‘be able’) (b) “camouflaged” c-neg.

4.1 INFINITIVE VERB DELETION

Consider the minimal pair in (42). (42-a) is strange in an out of the blue contexts, because of the desiderative meaning. But for all the speakers I consulted, (42-b) is acceptable on a pure future interpretation.

- (42) a. # Zemljotres **neće** da sruši kuću.
 earthquake not-will *da* take.down house
 ‘The earthquake will not tear down the house.’
 b. ✓ Zemljotres **neće** da sruši kuću, ako je dobro sagradiš.
 earthquake not-will *da* take.down house if it well build.PRS.2.SG
 ‘The earthquake will not tear down the house, if you build it well.’

As observed by an anonymous reviewer, (42-a) also improves when followed by the phrase *garantujem ti* ‘I guarantee it’. The example in (43-a) is repeated from (38) and it means that the door is stuck, refusing to close. But the meaning of (43-b) does have a future interpretation – the closing of the door will not happen, unless the wind blows (the door is not necessarily stuck).

- (43) a. # Vrata **neće** da se zatvore.
 door not-will *da* REFL close.PRS.3.SG
 ‘The door will not close.’ (it is stuck)
 b. Ovde niko ne živi. Vrata **neće** da se zatvore ako
 here no.one not live.PRS.3.SG door not-will *da* REFL close.PRS.3.SG if
 vetar ne dune.
 wind not blows
 ‘No one lives here. The door will not close, if the wind doesn’t blow.’

I propose that those examples involve a deletion of the infinitive form of restructuring verbs like *moći* ‘be able’ or *uspeti* ‘accomplish’. For example, (42-b) really looks like (44) underlyingly:

- (44) Zemljotres **neće** [_{VP} ~~moći~~] da [_{VP} sruši kuću, ako je dobro sagradiš.]]
 earthquake not-will ~~be.able~~ *da* take.down house if it well build.PRS.2.SG

‘The earthquake will not ~~be able to~~ tear down the house, if you build it well.’

These verbs can always be unearthed/pronounced in such examples. The statement in (1) still holds: (42-b) underlyingly includes an infinitive FTS *će moći* ‘will be able’, which takes a *da*-clause complement [*da sruši ...*] ‘to tear down...’. The infinitive FTS is negated, NegP projects above *će* since *moći* ‘be able’ is non-finite. *Moći* ‘be able’ is then deleted, creating the impression that a pure future meaning is generated when *neće* seemingly directly combines with a *da*-clause.

Consider in turn an example like (45), with an animate subject:

- (45) Pas **neće** da laje.
 dog.NOM not-will *da* bark.PRS.3.SG
 ‘The dog doesn’t want to bark.’

This sentence has only the desiderative reading in an out-of-the-blue context and according to the proposed analysis this is because it underlyingly has the restructuring verb *hteti* ‘want’, taking the *da*-complement and undergoing truncation next to negation. But the type of ellipsis we see in (44) is also possible here with some context (see (46)). Specifically, the future negation **neće** does not trigger obligatory desiderative reading if it combines with an infinitive verb, as we already saw. If that infinitive verb takes a *da*-complement and can be deleted with the aid of additional context, this will create the impression that **neće** directly combines with a *da*-clause without triggering the obligatory desiderative reading. In (46), the desiderative meaning is not obligatory, since the sentence includes a hidden verb *moći* ‘be able’, which can be pronounced. Thus, as shown in (44) and (46), the additional context reveals that this process of verb deletion is in general available in BCMS (with both animate and inanimate subjects) and may generate structures which seemingly directly combine **neće** with a *da*-clause without the desiderative restriction.

- (46) Pas **neće** [_{VP} ~~moći~~] da laje, ako mu staviš brnjicu.
 dog.NOM not-will ~~be.able~~ *da* bark.PRS.3.SG if him put muzzle
 ‘The dog will not be able to bark if you put a muzzle on it.’

4.1.1 INFINITIVE VERB DELETION: FURTHER SUPPORT

This process of deleting infinitive verbs seem to be more general in BCMS and it appears in two other contexts. First, Veselinović (2019) shows convincingly that the process of omitting infinitive verb underlies the root/epistemic ambiguity in this language:

- (47) a. Mora da Ana uči. (epistemic, #deontic)
must *da* Ana study.PRS.3.SG
'It must be that Ana is studying.'
b. Ana mora da uči. (#epistemic, deontic)
Ana must *da* study.PRS.3.SG
'Ana must study.'

The examples (47-a)–(47-b) are on the surface very similar, but Veselinović shows using a battery of tests that (47-a) looks like (48) underlyingly, with a deleted verb *be* taking a CP complement. This verb can always be pronounced. (47-b), on the other hand, is mono-clausal and looks like (49):

- (48) (epistemic, #deontic)
[_{TP} [_{ModP} Mora [_{vP} (~~biti~~) [_{CP} *da* [_{TP} Ana [_{AspP} [_{vP} ... uči]]]]]].
must be that Ana study
(49) (#epistemic, deontic)
[_{TP} Ana [_{ModP} mora [_{MoodP} *da* [_{AspP} [_{vP} ... uči]]]]].

Second, in Despić (2025), I argue that certain *analytic negative imperatives* (ANIs) also involve deletion of verbs like *dozvoliti* 'allow', and/or *desiti se* 'to happen'. For example, in addition to regular ANIs like (50-a), examples like (50-b) are also possible in BCMS.

- (50) a. Nemoj [pojesti tu jabuku]!
Neg-can.IMP.2 eat-PERF.INF that apple
'Do not eat that apple!'
b. Nemoj [da Marko pojede tu jabuku]!
Neg-can.IMP.2 that Marko eat.PRS.3.SG that apple
'≈ Don't let Marko eat that apple!'

The structure in (50-b) raises some challenges since: (a) it is not clear where the thematic role of the addressee comes from, and (b) *nemoj* takes a CP as its complement, which NCI-licensing shows (see Despić 2025 for more details). Despić (2025) proposes that (50-b) underlyingly includes a deleted verb *dozvoliti* 'to allow', which can be always pronounced; see (51). Also, the addressee's theta-role in (50-b) comes from *dozvoliti* 'allow':

- (51) Nemoj (~~dozvoliti~~) [_{CP} da Marko pojede tu jabuku]!
Neg-can.IMP.2 allow *da* Marko eat.PRS.3.SG that apple
'≈ Do not allow/let it happen that Marko eats the apple.'

4.2 CAMOUFLAGED C-NEG

One may also run into examples like (52)–(53), which are fine on the future interpretation for the majority of the speakers I consulted.

- (52) Izgleda da kometa neće da padne negde u Sibiru, kako se
seems *da* comet not-will *da* fall.PRS.1 somewhere in Siberia how REFL
prvobitno očekivalo, već negde u Evropi.
first expected but somewhere in Europe
'It seems that the comet will not fall somewhere in Siberia, as originally expected, but somewhere in Europe.'

- (53) Izgleda da malina **neće** da sazri (nekad) u junu, kako se prvobitno
 seems *da* raspberries not-will *da* ripen sometime in June, how REFL first
 očekivalo, nego malo kasnije, u julu.
 expected but little later in July
 'It seems that raspberries will not get ripe sometime in June, as originally expected, but a little bit later, in July.'

Now, although this negation looks like sentential negation on the surface, note that it uses particles like *već* or *nego* 'but', which is a hallmark of c-neg (*contrary negation*). And, crucially, observe that such examples do not license NCIs, as shown in (54) and (56) – the NCIs *ništa* 'nothing' and *nigde* 'nowhere' cannot be licensed by this negation. Examples (55) and (57) simply show that other types of sentential negation can license these elements; e.g., simple negative past sentences (without *već* or *nego* 'but', etc.) can license these NCIs. All of this clearly indicates that this is really not sentential negation, but c-neg. Consequently, such examples are outside the scope of (1).

- (54) Izgleda da kometa **neće** da padne ***nigde** u Siburu, kako se
 seems *da* comet not-will *da* fall.PRS.1 nowhere in Siberia, how REFL
 prvobitno očekivalo, već negde u Evropi.
 first expected but somewhere in Europe
 'It seems that the comet will not fall anywhere in Siberia, as originally expected, but somewhere in Europe.'
- (55) Kometa **nije** pala ✓**nigde** u Siburu.
 comet not-is fall.PART nowhere in Siberia
 'The comet did not fall anywhere in Siberia.' (NCI licensing fine)
- (56) Izgleda da malina **neće** da sazri (***nikad**) u junu, kako se prvobitno
 seems *da* raspberry not-will *da* ripen never in June how REFL first
 očekivalo, nego malo kasnije, u julu.
 expected but little later in July
 'It seems that raspberries will not get ripe ever in June, as originally expected, but a little bit later, in July.'
- (57) U ovim krajevima malina **nije** sazrela **nikad** u junu.
 in these areas raspberry not-is ripen.PART never in June
 'In these areas raspberries never got ripe in June.' (NCI licensing fine)

I suggest that c-neg in (52) modifies the MoodP/*da*-clause constituent, and underlyingly looks like (58):

- (58) Izgleda da kometa će **ne** [_{MoodP} *da* padne negde u Siburu], nego ...
 seems *da* comet will not *da* fall.PRS.1 somewhere in Siberia but

As suggested in Section 3, the sentential negation particle forms an M-word with a finite verb at PF and in (58) the finite verb *će* linearly precedes **ne**. I propose that because of this PF pressure to form an M-word in which **ne** precedes *će* (which also may come from frequency) many speakers have a Local Dislocation rule which simply inverts the order of the two to fit the general pattern. This creates an impression of sentential negation, but underlyingly it is really c-neg.

5 NEGATION BELOW DA

Finally, according to (1) Sentential NegP projects above MoodP, because the latter is finite. But I also assume that AspP selected by Mood has φ -features (see (22)-(23)), which predicts that Sentential NegP should be able to project right above AspP (i.e., the main verb) and below MoodP (i.e., *da*). This is apparently correct:

- (59) Ja ću *da ne* plaćam **ništa**, pa dokle doguram.
 I will *da* not pay.PRS.1.SG nothing where until push.PRS.1.SG
 ‘I will not pay anything, and let’s see how far I’ll be able to go...’
 (<https://vasudeva.forumburundi.com/t1789p25-vuciceva-srbija>)
- (60) Sin mi je ne raspustu a ja ću *da ne* radim **ništa**.
 Son me is on break and I will *da* not do.PRS.1.SG nothing
 ‘My son is on a school break and I will do nothing.’

Both (59) and (60) license NCIs, which indicates that we are dealing with sentential negation. Interestingly, NegP in this position cannot license NCIs in the subject position:

- (61) ***Niko** će *da ne* plaća **ništa**.
 no.one will *da* not pay.PRS.3.SG nothing
 ‘No one will pay anything.’
- (62) ***Niko** će *da ne* radi **ništa**.
 no.one will *da* not do.PRS.3.SG nothing
 ‘No one will do anything.’

Recall that in (22)-(23), Spec *v*P is not a case position. The subject moves from Spec *v*P to Spec MoodP, where it gets case from T. Asp agrees with the subject (hence the agreement on the verb), but it doesn’t license its case. The facts in (61)-(62) are then accounted for on a reasonable assumption that a case-less nominal simply cannot undergo NCI licensing. (e.g., see Gong 2023 and references therein for related proposals).

6 SUMMARY

In this paper, I examined two types of FTS in BCMS and provided arguments that the FTS with a *da*-clause cannot be negated. I argued that this is because of a condition which requires sentential NegP to project above a fully finite XP, which is in this case the *da*-clause/MoodP. In other words, I proposed that a sentential Neg head in BCMS selects for a complement with a full set of phi features. The fact that the sentential negation of a finite clause is always prefixed to a fully finite verb is completely consistent with the proposal. Given this condition, sentential NegP is only able to project above AspP (below *da*), as discussed in §5, but not above MoodP, because that would create an intervention effect between T and MoodP. Given the facts in §5, however, it is also quite possible that sentential NegP simply must project above the first finite XP, which would limit it to AspP. Thus, both MoodP and TP would be excluded from combining with NegP in this way on such an approach (without invoking the blocking condition in (30)), which would also be consistent with all the facts discussed here.

In general, in very simple contexts, requiring pure future interpretation, the FTS with a *da*-clause resists being negated. The FTS with an infinitive does not show this contrast in the same type of environment. Now, in some very specific and rich contexts, the sequence: “**neće** *da*...” may have a pure future/non-desiderative interpretation. I argued that there are two types of such exceptions. First, I proposed that an infinitive verb (e.g., *moći* ‘be able’), taking a *da*-clause as its complement may get deleted under the negated auxiliary, which creates the sequence: “**neće** $\forall_{\text{INF}}$ [*da*...]” and the impression of a pure future meaning with negated *da*-clause FTSs. Second, I argued that that in some cases c-neg may be masked as sentential negation, due to a post-syntactic Local Dislocation rule, which inverts the order of *ne* and *će*, causing it to look like sentential negation. The very fact that such constructions require extra machinery and rich contexts indicates that they should not be treated as the basic case, but rather as exceptions.

ABBREVIATIONS

1	1st person	IMP	imperative
2	2nd person	NCI	negative concord item
3	3rd person	PERF	perfect
BCMS	Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian	PRS	present
NOM	nominative	PST	past
ACC	accusative	PART	participle
FTS	future tense sentence	REFL	reflexive
INF	infinitive	SG	singular

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