

Asking Yes/No Questions in BCS

We've already somewhat discussed how to pose questions using words like *ko/tko*, *šta/što*, and *kako*. Now we're going to talk about how to pose yes or no questions. To do this, we're going to utilize the word *li*, which is a specific enclitical word that indicates a question is being asked.

There are two ways to pose yes or no questions in BCS. The first way involves using the phrase "Da li..." at the beginning of the sentence. This way is more commonly used in Serbia. The second involves putting the verb at the beginning of the sentence, like "Jeste li..." This second type of sentence is significantly more commonly used in Croatia, to the point that some people in Croatia flatly refuse to pose questions using the other construction. In Bosnia, both types of sentences are used, though the "Da li..." type sentences may be utilized in more formal settings.

Before we dive into some examples, I wanted to point out some things. First, one can never begin a sentence with the word *li*, which is why we need to either use the word *da* at the beginning or put the verb at the beginning of the sentence. Also, in sentences such as these, the word *da* does NOT mean yes, but rather, it functions as a kind of anchor before the question word *li*.

Now, for some examples:

Da li ste vi Profesor Savić? *Are you Professor Savić?*
Jeste li vi Profesor Savić?

Da li se zoveš Nenad? *Is your name Nenad?*
Zoveš li se Nenad?

Da li si student? *Are you a student?*
Jesi li student?

Da li se zove taj čovek/čovjek Goran Čulić? *Is that man called Goran Čulić?*
Zove li se taj čovek/čovjek Goran Čulić?

You may have noticed by now that the word order in BCS is less strict than in English. That said, there are still some rules, like the one I mention above about how one can't begin a sentence with the word *li*. I don't want to go into too much detail now about this because I don't want to confuse anyone but suffice to say that other enclitical words (like *se*) should never be used at the beginning of sentences. There are various rules governing where to put these words, but for now, it's best not to trouble yourself about it too much and simply focus on following the patterns that you discern. (Once you know more, we can go into more detail.)

Can you come up with your own examples of yes/no questions?