

Observation Session 4

Tuesday, 4 February 2020 2:57 PM

Researcher ok, there we go, now we're recording, ok so first question is what languages do you speak?

TC 00:00:05.420 - 00:00:12.551

P4 um, English and Czech are the ones I would admit to speaking

TC 00:00:12.276 - 00:00:18.635

Researcher ok, and I've sort of asked you about this already on the questionnaire, um but what would you rate your language proficiencies in each of your languages, so you can talk a little bit more about your proficiencies if you would like?

TC 00:00:17.708 - 00:00:31.683

P4 I'm [a] native English speaker so I guess that's normal, I'm a more eloquent writer than speaker, and in Czech, I speak Czech at work and I read Czech and I would say I'm fluent, most

Czechs think I'm from - none of them guess that I'm from the States, because my accent is, for some reason it's more Russian or Ukrainian

TC 00:00:30.498 - 00:00:59.918

Researcher really?

TC 00:00:58.978 - 00:00:59.941

P4 yeah they always guess I'm like from one of the, one of the Slavic countries

TC 00:00:59.918 - 00:01:06.978

Researcher oh that's interesting, and have you had to take the Czech language certificate exam or?

TC 00:01:04.894 - 00:01:12.250

P4 Yes, because I went to become [a] Czech citizen, so I took all the- I took the cultural test and the language test

TC 00:01:11.278 - 00:01:20.815

Researcher ok, um and what is your opinion on mixing between your languages when you are talking, so if you are talking to another bilingual person, and like, you're familiar with them, what would you, would you freely mix or would you prefer to keep them?

TC 00:01:20.031 - 00:01:34.585

P4 oh, I don't care, if the other person understands both languages and I can't think of the proper word in whatever language we're speaking, I'll just use the other language, and, well, I'm not a real stickler for-

TC 00:01:33.027 - 00:01:49.354

Researcher yeah fair enough, that's cool, and yeah don't worry about what you think my opinions might be, because that's just, yeah, like, my opinion is that, I'm actually not a purist anyway so

like, I think it's fine to mix, but yeah, you know, that's, that's me, so um, yeah so you said - so have you noticed yourself using both of your languages then with other bilinguals?

TC 00:01:47.763 - 00:02:12.332

SD (0.45)

P4 uh, yeah occasionally, I mean as you noticed when we were speaking, I used živnostenský list because it's the more common word that I, when I- normally when I use that, even Americans who don't speak Czech really, they know what a živnostenský list is because-

TC 00:02:12.789 - 00:02:32.531

Researcher yeah you have to know for the visa, yeah yeah

TC 00:02:30.969 - 00:02:33.815

P4 yeah because a lot of them have one, so

TC 00:02:33.246 - 00:02:37.136

Researcher yeah I used to have one myself actually

TC 00:02:35.744 - 00:02:56.947

P4 or maybe even not knowing the proper word, because sometimes ironically I know words in Czech that I don't know in English, because of- especially with the, um, testing, I don't know what it is in English so

TC 00:02:56.032 - 00:03:12.526

Researcher mmhm yeah, um and you also just said with živnostenský that like another word or particle is more better or more useful or more appropriate for the situation so, everyone knows what it is, that's why you're using that one

TC 00:03:11.282 - 00:03:25.787

P4 yeah

TC 00:03:21.452 - 00:03:22.988

SD (1.3)

P4 exactly

TC 00:03:24.295 - 00:03:26.272

Researcher um and other reasons can include another word expresses the meaning more fully or another word feels easier to express in that language, do you ever have-

TC 00:03:26.199 - 00:03:37.101

P4 I think that's definitely also true

TC 00:03:35.442 - 00:03:41.076

Researcher um, so the next question is, when you do use both, how do you do this, so first sub-question for that is do you feel that you borrow words from between your languages and which types of words, so you've already sort of answered that one a little bit...

TC 00:03:40.571 - 00:04:00.452

P4 generally nouns, yeah it's - it's kind of weird to insert a random verb in another language in a sentence, so probably adjectives and nouns

TC 00:03:58.896 - 00:04:14.335

Researcher mmhmm, that makes sense, um and do you ever feel that you borrow grammar between your languages in a bilingual situation?

TC 00:04:12.495 - 00:04:21.084

P4 not intentionally, I think the grammar is so- what's the word again - like you know it's, it's distinct, like Czech grammar and English grammar I don't really understand how you can mix them

TC 00:04:19.608 - 00:04:43.029

Researcher ok, mmhmm

TC 00:04:41.997 - 00:04:45.631

P4 I don't - eh

TC 00:04:43.897 - 00:04:47.794

Researcher um and do you ever say two words, or two morphemes, in the same sentence that express the same concept but use them both, for emphasis, for example

TC 00:04:47.192 - 00:05:01.437

P4 like in two different languages, or the same, or two different words in the same language?

TC 00:05:00.326 - 00:05:06.176

Researcher so, yeah, yeah yeah, yeah I guess you would sort of have to be swapping over then um, so it's like if you just said, something like little holčička, so it's already like, holčička has already got the diminutive form on it, so it already means little, but you're saying little in English as well so it's kind of like a double marking of that concept

TC 00:05:05.437 - 00:05:31.934

TC 00:08:13.042 - 00:08:14.650
SD (0.23)
P4 I mean I'm normally at home, or at work, or I'm out with friends, so I would say it depends on more, who I'm with, maybe in restaurant situations, you know if you go out with your friends, and they only speak English and you speak Czech to the - so, you might be more likely to mess up there, when you're switching
TC 00:08:14.881 - 00:08:39.750
Researcher and then I was gonna say what places are you in when you speak English, what places are you in when you speak Czech?
TC 00:08:38.057 - 00:08:45.310
P4 uh, I speak - I speak Czech pretty much everywhere, except at the Writers group meetings which are in English, yeah, pretty much Writer's group, um, yeah and whenever I'm out with my friends who speak English
TC 00:08:44.078 - 00:09:04.719
Researcher yeah, ok, are they like from a- like an expat group type of thing, or you've just found them?
TC 00:09:02.902 - 00:09:11.923
P4 Oh they're all writers [laughs]
TC 00:09:09.922 - 00:09:14.944
Researcher so you met them through the writers club, ok, cool
TC 00:09:13.330 - 00:09:16.817
P4 yeah so it's like at the writing meetups that I go to and the writing - the critique meetings
TC 00:09:14.944 - 00:09:22.997
Researcher ok um, just a few more, thank you, do you feel more relaxed in speaking when you can use both languages interchangeably, rather than just Czech or just English, or not?
TC 00:09:22.038 - 00:09:34.957
SD (0.79)
P4 uh I don't think it matters, language wise, I think it matters more who I'm with, if the person themselves makes me nervous
TC 00:09:35.753 - 00:09:48.214
Researcher ok, that makes sense
TC 00:09:46.079 - 00:09:48.687
SD (0.44)
P4 uh, like if I met the Minister of the Interior, Ministry of the Interior for example, I'm often really nervous and um, don't want to look like a complete idiot, which generally I do anyway, cuz
TC 00:09:49.135 - 00:10:05.462
Researcher I'm sure you don't, um ok and so, I've kind of already got that in there actually, how long you've been here, but how long have you been speaking Czech?
TC 00:10:03.570 - 00:10:16.632
P4 Uh, since I came, even actually before that I found a course, um that - they taught, it was in Texas where of course, hardly anyone speaks Czech, so the course was a complete beginners, as well as people who had been born here and who had spoken it, and just wanted to brush up so it was really difficult to learn, but once I came, I think I was here, so probably about 20 years, 'cause I think I started speaking it after a year
TC 00:10:14.993 - 00:10:48.637
Researcher yep ok, like so you were pretty fluent after a year here
TC 00:10:47.517 - 00:10:54.347

P4 um

TC 00:10:52.792 - 00:10:55.452

Researcher or how long did it take, do you think?

TC 00:10:54.460 - 00:10:58.008

P4 let's see well, I essentially would go to the park and I would memorise vocabulary and like, I would do, I would essentially read the textbooks and like, teach myself the grammar, and

read books, and then after about a year, I fortunately met a Czech friend and she spoke Czech to me, and um, by this time I'd learned enough vocabulary that I was able to speak but that

first week it was extremely difficult, and my head hurt every single day, because you know when I was with her, she was actually speaking Czech the whole time and she was patient enough,

you know, to wait for my replies, and that kind of broke the - I dunno after that I could speak it, I dunno if that makes sense, I mean I could speak it before but very haltingly, and,

and after that I could more think while I was speaking

TC 00:10:57.513 - 00:11:55.063

Researcher well that's really, that's really nice

TC 00:11:54.185 - 00:11:57.715

P4 yeah, but I dunno if you call it fluent, but I mean, I was definitely speaking

TC 00:11:55.910 - 00:12:02.264

Researcher yeah, well I mean, if you're speaking and being understood, yeah, that's good, so, um ok so do you feel any like, societal pressure to either mix the two languages in a sentence or to

not mix the languages in a sentence, so like, do you think if you're mixing, people would be like, why are you doing that, or is it weird, like if people would judge you more for doing

that, or not doing that, etc?

TC 00:12:00.702 - 00:12:32.135

P4 I pretty much don't care what people think [laughs], but I mean, I do know that there are some people who don't like it, but I mean, and when I know they don't like it I try to um, uh, I

can't even speak English anymore,

TC 00:12:30.594 - 00:12:51.334

Researcher that's ok, sorry

TC 00:12:50.674 - 00:12:52.737

SD (0.04)

P4 uh, I try to [h]umour them, that isn't the right word.. yeah

TC 00:12:52.779 - 00:12:56.892

Researcher yep, yeah, no, it works, yeah, yeah ok and um, ok, do you feel social pressure to conform to then speak Czech, when you're out in the Czech Republic then, I mean I suppose - you, since

you speak it really well, you don't necessarily feel pressure, you enjoy it yeah

TC 00:12:56.252 - 00:13:15.457

P4 I enjoy it, in fact a lot of Czechs want to speak English and I refuse to speak English to them

TC 00:13:13.049 - 00:13:22.014

Researcher mmhmm, and do you feel any language pride for your own language?

TC 00:13:19.660 - 00:13:26.327

P4 Not necessarily, I don't think so, I'm not a very prideful person though, I dunno if someone who is prouder would feel that way or not, I mean, I don't feel ashamed, I mean I feel

ashamed of the country sometimes, considering you know, the politics, but

TC 00:13:25.768 - 00:13:45.407

Researcher oh, me too about mine, so

TC 00:13:42.366 - 00:13:47.257

P4 yes yes, I mean I think Australia compared to America right now I think Australia's winning, as in, you're a lot better than we are right now

TC 00:13:45.427 - 00:13:58.433

Researcher yeah, I dunno

TC 00:13:56.851 - 00:14:00.654

P12 yeah no... I'm not listening to what you're saying

TC 00:13:57.530 - 00:14:04.264

SD (0.84)

Researcher um, but yeah I think it's difficult when- because for example when I interviewed people over in Australia who were Czech, they often said that they had a lot of pride for their own language, but it's quite different when your language is a minority language on the global scale, yeah

TC 00:14:05.106 - 00:14:20.885

P4 I think so too, I think so too, I mean I think if I were from a tiny country that I would feel proud, because not many people in the world spoke my language,

TC 00:14:17.965 - 00:14:30.076

Researcher but when it's English it's like, yeah

TC 00:14:28.986 - 00:14:32.224

P4 there's not really anything unique about it, I guess

TC 00:14:30.914 - 00:14:36.678

Researcher yeah yeah yeah, um do you most often listen to media in Czech or English?

TC 00:14:35.495 - 00:14:46.457

P4 uh, media what do you mean, media?

TC 00:14:45.636 - 00:14:49.820

Researcher like, TV, movies, books, Netflix, Youtube?

TC 00:14:49.456 - 00:14:54.888

P4 uh, I don't watch anything

TC 00:14:54.296 - 00:14:57.909

Researcher books, books

TC 00:14:56.931 - 00:14:58.442

P4 I listen to the radio in Czech, I read books in Czech and English, because I'm a writer and I don't wanna - so that's probably why I read in English, because I don't want to completely lose my native language when I write in it, um, but I think if I did watch TV, here, then I'd definitely watch it in Czech, and movies I just tend to watch whatever language they're in originally

TC 00:14:58.238 - 00:15:27.655

Researcher mmhmm, and you said- I just heard you sort of saying before that you visit home not super often?

TC 00:15:27.002 - 00:15:34.440

P4 um, it used to be about once a year, and that- I think that would be ideal, I think actually twice a year because I really miss my family, a lot, um, I don't necessarily like, you know, the place, but I miss the people a lot, yeah

TC 00:15:33.164 - 00:15:52.969

Researcher ok yeah well fair enough, and just the last question um, so what language do you most often speak with your friends, at home, etc, at work

TC 00:15:51.969 - 00:16:04.671

P4 mm here I'd say it's half in half, because I mean I live alone right now, so I don't - I speak Czech to the cats [laughs] and

TC 00:16:03.030 - 00:16:13.850

Researcher well there you go

TC 00:16:12.481 - 00:16:14.273

P4 when I was married I mean we spoke Czech um, and at work I speak Czech, uh but then all of my social - friends, all of, my centre of my entire social life right now, it used to be all Czech, and now it's all English-speaking

TC 00:16:13.850 - 00:16:31.775

Researcher ok, alright well that's pretty much the end of our interview so thank you again so much for coming here to help me out tonight, I really- yeah it's fantastic, um and if you think of any like, instances of borrowing or whatever in your speech that you just think - oh I could tell Chloe about that then just feel free to message me or whatever, so, thanks again

TC 00:16:31.285 - 00:16:53.203

P4 ok, alright, hopefully that helped

TC 00:16:51.925 - 00:16:56.648

Researcher yes! I think so, thank you very much

TC 00:16:54.840 - 00:17:00.727