

Observation Session 6

Thursday, 30 January 2020 11:16 AM

Researcher ok perfect, so first question is, what languages do you speak?

TC 00:00:00.210 - 00:00:12.166

SD (0.4)

P6 English and Czech basically um, I can sort of understand Slovak because I can- I can communicate with- Slovaks

TC 00:00:12.567 - 00:00:23.269

Researcher um and what would you rate your language proficiencies in each of your languages as for reading, writing, speaking etc

TC 00:00:22.752 - 00:00:30.434

SD (0.47)

P6 oh, well in English, I'm fluent in everything, in Czech, in Czech I'm very comfortable with most kinds of conversations, I watch Czech TV I read Czech newspapers, for better- higher qualities of Czech literature - I don't - I find that rough-going often

TC 00:00:30.905 - 00:01:12.714

SD (0.22)

P6 and sort of high-level professional discussions like I - I can carry on conversations with my doctors, but it can be difficult, I found that when I was sick, and they were questioning me, I was just too slow and they were telling me I didn't speak Czech, so I just had a - more difficulty connecting so um, when I have to struggle to remember the technical term, I usually know the technical terms but, but it doesn't always come as easily, so

TC 00:01:12.939 - 00:02:01.729

Researcher ok, um and did you have to take the Czech language certificate exam?

TC 00:02:01.040 - 00:02:06.967

P6 No

TC 00:02:05.782 - 00:02:07.304

Researcher No, have you taken it

TC 00:02:07.009 - 00:02:09.053

P6 I haven't

TC 00:02:08.054 - 00:02:09.673

Researcher are you a citizen or a permanent resident?

TC 00:02:09.101 - 00:02:12.225

P6 I'm a permanent resident, um I don't think I will have to in any case because I'm over 65, so

TC 00:02:11.054 - 00:02:20.029

Researcher I didn't know that was a rule

TC 00:02:19.049 - 00:02:22.293

P6 and I've been here since 1990, or- not all the time but most of it

TC 00:02:20.039 - 00:02:29.002

Researcher um, and what's your opinion on mixing between your two languages in speech so say, within the same sentence, between sentences, with someone you're familiar with, or not

TC 00:02:27.742 - 00:02:42.389

SD (0.25)

P6 I don't usually mix them

TC 00:02:42.642 - 00:02:46.423

Researcher ok yeah, yep, just one or the other usual

TC 00:02:44.999 - 00:02:49.064

P6 yeah one or the other
TC 00:02:47.420 - 00:02:49.511
Researcher and what are your thoughts on people who do do that- or doing that
TC 00:02:49.232 - 00:02:55.553
P6 I don't like it very well I just - I like both English and Czech, and I have an aesthetic feel for both of them and I don't really like the combination
TC 00:02:53.067 - 00:03:07.022
Researcher mix them together, mmhm, have you ever noticed yourself maybe sometimes using both of your languages, like if you've forgotten a word or whatever, if you're speaking with your husband or
TC 00:03:04.969 - 00:03:20.509
P6 uh I forget words all the time, in both English and Czech, depending on which I'm using the most, so, so yeah, I'll remember it in one language and not the other so, it's very frustrating
TC 00:03:20.055 - 00:03:34.968
Researcher and so maybe you might like, use the word from the other language, if the other person- if you know that the other person-
TC 00:03:32.216 - 00:03:38.606
P6 if I know the other person knows the other language then I'll probably use the word from the other language, yeah
TC 00:03:36.447 - 00:03:42.283
Researcher yeah if you've got it in your head, straight up, yeah that makes sense, and do you ever find that a word in the other language might be more useful or more appropriate for the situation,
 like culturally
TC 00:03:41.025 - 00:03:56.000
P6 oh yeah, yeah
TC 00:03:53.387 - 00:03:57.319
P6 yeah there are lots of things that you can't really say in one language or the other
TC 00:03:57.319 - 00:04:02.554
Researcher um and do you ever find that another word expresses a meaning more fully, yeah
TC 00:04:01.983 - 00:04:09.305
P6 true
TC 00:04:06.735 - 00:04:09.107
SD (0.19)
Researcher and if so do you use the word from the other language
TC 00:04:09.305 - 00:04:12.895
P6 no
TC 00:04:12.176 - 00:04:13.602
Researcher no you don't use it, you just know that it would express it better
TC 00:04:12.895 - 00:04:17.136
P6 yeah
TC 00:04:15.588 - 00:04:16.728
SD (0.4)
Researcher um, ok yep cool, um, if you ever did say like forget a word and use it or like borrow a word in a bilingual situation, what types of words like nouns, verbs do you tend to have an issue
 with?
TC 00:04:17.136 - 00:04:39.846
Researcher or is it just-
TC 00:04:39.846 - 00:04:43.558

P6 I dunno it's just kinda random I think

TC 00:04:42.796 - 00:04:48.125

Researcher yep no worries, ok, do you ever feel that you borrow grammar between your languages in a bilingual situation, so -

TC 00:04:47.082 - 00:04:56.553

P6 no

TC 00:04:53.980 - 00:04:56.284

SD (0.26)

Researcher no? Um, are you aware at all of like, your syntax, the way you phrase your sentences, changing to match the form of your other language?

TC 00:04:56.553 - 00:05:07.785

P6 No I don't think so

TC 00:05:06.293 - 00:05:09.815

Researcher ok, you've got them pretty separate, yep yep

TC 00:05:08.677 - 00:05:12.034

P6 yeah

TC 00:05:10.289 - 00:05:11.639

SD (0.64)

Researcher um, and you wouldn't ever add like an ending, a diminutive or something like that onto an English word for example

TC 00:05:12.281 - 00:05:24.719

P6 um, maybe if the word was similar to the Czech and I did- but I didn't - I dunno, I don't think so, not really

TC 00:05:24.627 - 00:05:37.083

Researcher not really? ok

TC 00:05:35.390 - 00:05:37.488

SD (0.07)

Researcher erm, so if you don't really- if you ever do mix a little bit, what places do you tend to be in and also what places are you in when you speak English, and what places are you in when you speak Czech?

TC 00:05:37.558 - 00:05:51.925

P6 um, I would only mix it with people that I knew were fluent in both, uh

TC 00:05:51.192 - 00:05:59.720

P6 and um, I'm in - English speaking environments most of the day, I go to this co-working space and then at home I'm in total Czech environment and when I go out with my husband we're usually just in a Czech environment

TC 00:05:59.720 - 00:06:19.892

Researcher ok so he's Czech

TC 00:06:18.977 - 00:06:20.224

P6 he doesn't- yeah he doesn't speak English, so uh, and some of my friends are Czech that don't speak English

TC 00:06:19.892 - 00:06:32.701

Researcher yeah I suppose that would really help with learning the language as well and maintaining it and stuff, um ok so would you feel more relaxed in a space where you can use both languages interchangeably or would you feel more relaxed just speaking Czech or just English?

TC 00:06:32.655 - 00:06:50.559

P6 just Czech or just English

TC 00:06:50.352 - 00:06:53.109
Researcher mmhmm, um and how long have you been living in this country?
TC 00:06:52.832 - 00:06:57.907
P6 it's about 20 years all together, I came in 1990, and we went to the US for 8 years I think in 1999, and then we've been back since 2008, so whatever that adds up to [laughs]
TC 00:06:57.907 - 00:07:24.475
Researcher yeah I'll figure it out, and how long have you been speaking Czech?
TC 00:07:23.110 - 00:07:28.415
P6 I started learning in um, 1982 I took a um, intense- intensive course at UCLA, which I wasn't told until after I got into it, it was for graduate students in Slavic Linguistics, so I
TC 00:07:28.006 - 00:07:51.048
P6 thought I was just taking it because I was - I was- yeah I'd gotten interested in Czech dissidence and Czech literature, and so the head of my amnesty group said I should take his
course, and then he told me that he wasn't gonna be there, so and that it was a course of graduate students in Slavic linguistics, who were already fluent, most of them, in another
Slavic language, so
TC 00:07:51.048 - 00:08:20.844
Researcher oh, that makes it difficult, like it makes it easier for them
TC 00:08:17.898 - 00:08:23.314
P6 the first- the first day um, he said learn all the um - all the case endings by the end of the week, so
TC 00:08:21.540 - 00:08:32.260
Researcher wow that's pretty hard
TC 00:08:31.432 - 00:08:35.367
P6 uh, but it turned out to be good because I got the structure and then I could use the dictionary and things like that
TC 00:08:32.598 - 00:08:45.181
Researcher yeah, definitely, sounds like it
TC 00:08:43.969 - 00:08:47.270
P6 so and then I came for the first time in 1985, and I was here for about 3 months altogether, and nobody spoke English at that time, so I spoke Czech
TC 00:08:46.018 - 00:09:00.404
Researcher ah, awesome
TC 00:08:59.224 - 00:09:01.226
P6 and then when I came back in 1990, very few people spoke Czech - uh, English, at that time either, so it was really, in Czech environments from then on until mostly, mostly I was using
mainly Czech in uh, until we left for the US in 1999, um and then, but since I've come back I've been more in English, so
TC 00:09:00.550 - 00:09:39.149
Researcher 'cause there's yeah, a bit more English going on over here now as well, um when you were in the US, with your husband, did he speak - did you still keep speaking Czech with him?
TC 00:09:38.052 - 00:09:51.736
P6 we spoke Czech yeah
TC 00:09:50.291 - 00:09:53.450
Researcher you still spoke Czech at home, yeah, um,
TC 00:09:51.807 - 00:09:55.190
SD (0.22)
Researcher what was your original interest in Czech? So you were interested in the literature, and?

TC 00:09:55.413 - 00:10:00.006

P6 I got interested in Czech literature when Havel was in jail, they - Tom Stoppard had come to California, was doing a production of Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's MacBeth and so I found out

about Kohout and then he was talking about Havel who was in jail at that time, I read an article on him, and he spoke as well at San Diego or wherever he was, I was a big Stoppard fan so

I went to that and read the articles and so on, started getting interested in Havel and then I read one of his short plays and loved it

TC 00:09:58.993 - 00:10:57.028

P6 and then about the same time, somebody gave me Kundera's book, which turned out my - that head of my amnesty group had translated as well so, Michael Heim, was really, uh

TC 00:10:57.028 - 00:11:15.759

Researcher yeah, I think that's the most interesting way that someone has come to learn Czech that I've had so far

TC 00:11:13.942 - 00:11:22.488

P6 yeah, he was using his textbook, but he hadn't printed it yet so we just had these uh, sheafs, but he wasn't actually there, I didn't actually get to take a course with him, he was in

Russia that semester so

TC 00:11:21.433 - 00:11:40.522

Researcher um, yeah that's awesome, so do you feel any societal or community pressure to mix or not mix the two languages when you're like, out in public, I guess if you don't really mix them

anyway it's not a huge issue but, do you ever feel any social pressure to conform to the majority language?

TC 00:11:38.953 - 00:11:58.418

P6 no

TC 00:11:51.510 - 00:11:53.162

SD (5.05)

P6 just the fact that nobody- I mean the people I know don't tend to speak English, so uh, um, if they speak really good English then we tend to speak you know whatever's, whatever seems

appropriate to that environment, usually the Czechs at the coworking space, I usually speak English with them just because everybody else is

TC 00:11:58.220 - 00:12:33.119

Researcher ok, yeah fair enough but like in public and stuff it's not really an issue or, it?

TC 00:12:31.041 - 00:12:38.299

P6 well I dunno I mean if I'm on a tram, um, I'm usually like, a little conscious of it if I'm speaking English, so I- I probably speak more quietly

TC 00:12:36.825 - 00:12:52.918

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

TC 00:12:52.072 - 00:12:59.077

SD (0.52)

P6 um, I feel pride in literature, in both languages, I just love both of the literatures, as far as language itself, I dunno

TC 00:12:59.606 - 00:13:19.634

Researcher yeah it's understandable, what language do you consume most of your media in?

TC 00:13:18.550 - 00:13:26.450

SD (0.3)

P6 well now it's gone back to being English, it used to be entirely Czech

TC 00:13:26.755 - 00:13:36.206

Researcher so like including books, TV and all that kind of thing
TC 00:13:35.328 - 00:13:40.540
P6 um, books, I - well I didn't, I just didn't read much before because there weren't very many - and I
had trouble reading the kind of Czech books that I would've liked to have read
 (present tense pronunciation) - to have read (correction), so um, so books- now I read mostly English
books on my kindle [laughs]
TC 00:13:39.441 - 00:14:04.174
Researcher yeah, kindles are great, what, so what language do you most often speak with your friends,
at home etc
TC 00:14:02.994 - 00:14:12.773
SD (0.89)
P6 well, it's just too different - I mean at home I'm speaking Czech, with his- our mutual friends I'm
speaking Czech, with a few of my old friends I'm speaking Czech but everywhere else is
 English, so
TC 00:14:13.671 - 00:14:34.903
Researcher and how often do you visit home or an English speaking country?
TC 00:14:34.666 - 00:14:39.645
SD (0.49)
P6 well, probably only like once a year now, um, when my parents were alive I was going more
frequently but
TC 00:14:40.142 - 00:14:52.342
SD (0.1)
Researcher ok, um well that's pretty much the whole interview, so thank you very very much for
participating, I really appreciate it, um, and yeah, that's it, so thank you
TC 00:14:52.450 - 00:15:05.685