

### Observation Session 8

Wednesday, 22 January 2020 3:28 PM

TC 00:00:10.961 - 00:00:15.038

Researcher yes, ok, alrighty so that one's recording and I'll set this one up, ok so, first question is, what languages do you speak?

TC 00:00:13.999 - 00:00:30.729

P8 so English is my native language and I speak German pretty well though it's dropping away as time goes by, 'cause I lived in Germany, Czech, as we saw with your little test, A2, it's one of those things where I've got a lot of vocabulary but I can't really put it together and there are a lot of words I recognised on the test but I couldn't say what they were

TC 00:00:30.067 - 00:00:52.137

SD (0.18)

P8 but if I heard them in a conversation I would get the gist of what they were saying so it's that sort of situation with my Czech

TC 00:00:52.320 - 00:00:59.385

Researcher I- I tend to get that as well actually, you recognise the word but you're not sure what it means, erm, and what would you rate your proficiencies, I suppose you already said a little bit about that, but as for writing, reading, that kind of thing

TC 00:00:58.826 - 00:01:12.311

P8 for Czech? oh for each of the languages so German, it's a funny one because, although I do a lot of translation it's all done by computer really

TC 00:01:11.426 - 00:01:21.021

Researcher yeah, or for each of your languages

TC 00:01:12.416 - 00:01:14.675

SD (6.34)

P8 so I'm seeing a lot of German and I would say it's dropped from the C's down to the B's at the moment so maybe, maybe B1 just about in terms of speaking, writing I've never really written much in German, I don't write in German, um reading yeah, I can read fairly well but um, the interesting thing is because of my studies or my work rather, environmental science, I've got this quite high level of environmental vocabulary in German and in Czech, but everyday language is not so good and certainly in Czech yeah A2 is probably a fair reflection, again I don't write in Czech, I very rarely read in Czech because I find it very difficult

TC 00:01:21.021 - 00:02:03.200

P8 I occasionally have, I wouldn't call them conversations but people speak to me sometimes and I can just about get by with what they're trying to say if they keep it simple, um, yeah

TC 00:02:03.200 - 00:02:16.350

Researcher and have you had to take a Czech language certificate exam?

TC 00:02:15.444 - 00:02:20.587

P8 I haven't had to, because I've got my permanent residency already and I got it before that requirement came in, so I don't need to um, but I could if I wanted to but things may change after Brexit, who knows, I might have to do one, and it's gonna get tougher, I read it only I think yesterday or today I read that they're actually raising the bar a little bit on it as well

TC 00:02:19.529 - 00:02:44.545

Researcher yes, I've had that mentioned to me as well so, um and what's your opinion on mixing between your languages in speech?

TC 00:02:43.526 - 00:02:53.132

P8 um, yeah it becomes strange when I - like when I was a couple of weeks ago, I was in Germany, so when I first go to Germany I'm aware that I'm in a foreign country so I get a little bit confused about whether I'm supposed to be speaking Czech or English or German and vice versa when I come home again, especially when I've been in Germany for a couple of weeks, and then I come back and suddenly I find I'm speaking German to the Czechs and so I can get a bit mixed up sometimes, with my languages

TC 00:02:52.942 - 00:03:24.644

Researcher [to assistant:] yeah I've got some more, I thought I'd just let you know, yeah, [to participant:] um that's understandable, and like, I sort of also mean purposely mixing like within one sentence like maybe you might throw in a few words from each, does that ever happen?

TC 00:03:24.092 - 00:03:41.306

P8 certainly in Czech if I'm trying to communicate with someone in Czech like I was in the pharmacy the other day, yesterday after the hospital, um, to start with, yeah it was actually a Slovak lady but um I asked her if she spoke English and she said no so I said, bit of German English, no, ok, whenever I hit a stumbling block I throw an English or German word in, especially if it's like, a universal word hopefully and sometimes that helps, um

TC 00:03:39.768 - 00:04:08.734

P8 I mean I sometimes find that I'm in a part of Prague or Czech where they do speak a bit of German and sometimes I can mix the German and Czech quite successfully, yeah, it does work, 'cause there may be someone who learned a bit of German and they can just about cope with that, so yeah and I think it - as long as the communication works, why not

TC 00:04:08.734 - 00:04:29.514

Researcher yes, exactly, and do you ever do it more so like for fun, like say with your wife or something like that, throw in any Czech words or is it just English?

TC 00:04:28.627 - 00:04:38.365

P8 not really no it's always English, because her level of English is really high, I've got this two and a half year old daughter now and she's definitely mixing them up and my wife keeps reminding me speak to her just in English but every now and then I throw in a Czech word just to help her keep going, so but that's a much lower level of course, it's an infant who is learning the language but it's an interesting thing for me to recognise as a teacher that sometimes throwing in, and I do it in the classroom, I've got no problem with this and when I'm teaching, sometimes, again whether I'm in Germany or here in Prague, I'm talking English and I see them struggling, why not throw in a Czech word just to keep the process going and maybe later on revise what it was they had the problem with, so yeah

TC 00:04:36.447 - 00:05:25.706

Researcher that makes sense, um ok so erm, perhaps if I, I've got a question in conversation with other bilinguals or people who speak Czech to a certain level, do you ever notice yourself using a little bit of both languages, due to momentarily forgetting a word?

TC 00:05:24.555 - 00:05:49.956

P8 no, but what I - again because I'm a teacher, I get this the other way around, where I find when I'm sometimes speaking in English, I start speaking a bit like a Czech where I make the Czech mistake or I oversimplify it sometimes and I - very subconsciously, and I dunno maybe two or three times a year I'll just suddenly say to my wife, oh my god I'm talking like my students, without realising it, when I'm saying it afterwards I'll think oh I just spoke like a Czech in English then, um this is something we do as teachers we have to grade our language so, I find that happens a lot and sometimes I do it when I - I don't need to and at the same time with my wife especially sometimes I can start speaking too fast and too

complicated

TC 00:05:49.204 - 00:06:39.675

SD (0.25)

P8 um and that's why, I think I mentioned it to you before with P11 whom you just interviewed, when me and him get together which we're going to do later, we'll end up talking really fast

and using a lot of the slang and I think that for P11, he really, one of the reasons I think he really likes getting together with me and to some extent with my wife is, he's using

Czech all day, and this is his- back to his native language and he wants to use it and um, and sometimes he- he likes to talk, which is great, and he keeps talking and I got used to it

quite quickly and I realised that it's a bit of a release for him and he needs it, he needs this chance to talk and talk and talk 'cause he doesn't do it during the day so um, so I

experienced it from other people um, but yeah like I said I think as a teacher, always grading and I've learned, I mean I've been doing it for 17 years and I've learned to do it

automatically more or less

TC 00:06:39.928 - 00:07:29.977

Researcher yeah, so your syntax changes and um, that's more based on your conscious effort to make sure the other person understands, not really based on your sort of knowledge of Czech and how that might have an effect?

TC 00:07:28.612 - 00:07:46.846

P8 no it's not from my use of Czech it's from the other way around, when I'm dealing with Czechs, specifically in the classroom, but if [unint] - I meet quite a few Czechs outside the classroom and socialise with them and so again, grading

TC 00:07:43.715 - 00:08:00.532

SD (1.17)

Researcher um ok, hmm, so uh, I'm just- because some of the things you've already answered, so, er

TC 00:08:01.703 - 00:08:11.440

P8 that's ok

TC 00:08:08.965 - 00:08:10.903

SD (0.53)

Researcher do you ever have a situation where you are speaking English and maybe a Czech word is more useful or more appropriate for the situation so you might throw that in?

TC 00:08:11.440 - 00:08:29.231

P8 yeah, um, I think it was only yesterday when I met my mother-in-law, in the evening, my wife had forgotten her phone at their place so I met her at the tram stop just here and then I had

to go up to the pharmacy, so we were on the tram together and yeah, specifically with her, I mean, her husband's- his English is a bit better, but um, I think with both of them,

sometimes we're having a relatively simple conversation in English but if I know the Czech word which will help it flow, they might say a word in Czech themselves and they'll get stuck

and they'll say the Czech word and then I'll recognise and I'll say what it is, absolutely, with them specifically, I mean so they're both 70, I mean he had a relatively good level of

English, but they both made an effort once me and my wife got engaged and they knew that we were going to get married and they knew that people were coming over from England they were

great, they made an effort to brush up their English a bit and, so we can have this basic conversation but then every now and again, like yesterday she forgot the word for neighbour, she

wanted to explain that she'd been talking to- and she said the word in Czech for neighbour, and I said neighbour and she said oh yeah yeah that's it, so yeah, every now and again it's

necessary

TC 00:08:27.521 - 00:09:44.042

Researcher yep, ok, um and do you ever feel, for yourself that like a certain word is easier to express in either Czech or English, I suppose most things would be easier to express in English for you, or?

TC 00:09:42.673 - 00:09:59.229

P8 um well again depending on the situation, it might be, if you're trying to explain some sort of concepts and theories, over the years I've got to understand the sort of Czech interpretations of certain things especially in terms of environment, nature and such like, so sometimes I think I can go with their- for example I mean the word nature for us means plants and animals but in Czech and in German natur means plants, animals, the fields, the rivers the land forms and everything together, so the Czechs often make this strange mistake of saying oh, they use the structure of going for a walk in the nature, now 'the' first of all is a mistake 'cause there's no article, but going for a walk in nature, now it sounds - that's totally strange to us, doesn't make sense, but to them it is, it does make sense 'cause it means going for a walk in the fields, surrounded by the animals, so if they use that expression, um if I'm in a situation where I'm talking and I've done it recently, I talked about being in nature, and I realised when I was saying it that I was doing it, to keep it simple because, if I would- we would say going for a walk in the countryside, like that and they don't necessarily get what you mean by that, so

TC 00:09:57.813 - 00:11:07.185

SD (0.02)

P8 that's a good example so instead of saying I'm going for a walk in the countryside or we've got great countryside around the cottage, I would say to a lower-level person, yeah the nature is great around my cottage, just to make it clearer to them

TC 00:11:07.206 - 00:11:22.761

Researcher yeah for something that they will understand, yeah, yeah

TC 00:11:20.480 - 00:11:23.854

P8 yeah so that specifically, my field, environment, there's a couple of things like that where I've got to understand their interpretation of certain words,

TC 00:11:22.823 - 00:11:33.068

Researcher yeah, yeah and then change it accordingly

TC 00:11:31.023 - 00:11:34.305

P8 and nature is a real classic one

TC 00:11:33.241 - 00:11:38.698

Researcher yeah I have noticed that with Czech friends as well, when I first heard it I was like, ok, and then I sort of started using it myself

TC 00:11:35.310 - 00:11:46.360

P8 logically it makes sense, why not call it the nature, because it is but we have this thing it's the living things, and everything else is the landscape or the countryside, but for, I don't know what other languages but certainly in German and Czech, nature includes the land forms, the forests as a whole not the individual plants

TC 00:11:44.141 - 00:12:04.348

Researcher um, ok and what places are you in when you tend to use one language or another or a mixture of both?

TC 00:12:03.855 - 00:12:12.549

P8 I mean when I'm out and about in the shops and places like this talking to the guy to come in, yeah I will just use Czech 'cause I've got enough to get by in certain situations and I

think that's what a lot of non-native speakers do, you haven't learnt the language, in a classical way, we've learnt situations and how to deal with them, I mean I remember when I was

first here the school, the Caledonia school gave free lessons to the English teachers but I didn't like it because it was learning Czech from the beginning and I didn't want that, I

wanted, partly because then I didn't expect to be here for so long, I wanted situation learning if that's the right expression, so if someone comes up to you and asks you in the street

like, when's the next tram or what time is it, you can respond rather than learning all of the grammar and all the numbers and all the colours or whatever it is you do [unint], um,

focussing on situations

TC 00:12:11.779 - 00:13:04.640

Researcher yeah I think situational -

TC 00:13:03.357 - 00:13:07.271

P8 so that's what I do, and I mean that's why people say to me oh your Czech's really good, and no it's not, it's A2, it's not B2 or whatever you think it is because all I'm doing is being

a parrot and repeating certain phrases which I've learnt for that situation, I've just happened to get the endings right, you know

TC 00:13:04.707 - 00:13:24.197

Researcher yeah, I think actually that's one of the best ways to learn the endings is through situational use so yeah

TC 00:13:23.052 - 00:13:32.653

SD (0.24)

Researcher erm ok so we've just got a few more, um, do you feel more relaxed in speaking when you can use both languages interchangeably, or just English or just Czech?

TC 00:13:32.902 - 00:13:45.455

P8 definitely when I can use them both, I mean I was on a course in Beskidy, um, protected landscape area, teaching them there, there was a couple of guys on the course who didn't have

particularly good English, they were ok, so we were doing that Czenglish thing, where they were trying their best but every now and again they said I can't, ok let me, let me explain it

in Czech and I more or less got what they're saying, a little bit of interpretation of what they were saying, and that was fine, um, if I'm in a situation where I know they've got no

English and I'm going to have to rely on my Czech, no it's not very comfortable and it's like yeah, to start with in the pharmacy last night, I knew this lady - but luckily the other

girl who was there, spoke really good English and when she was available she came and helped out a bit, and it was quite difficult, I wouldn't say it was stressful I don't get stressed

about these things, I mean it's not the end of the world but yeah, it's more relaxed if you can throw in a few words whether it's German or English, just to keep the conversation moving

TC 00:13:43.037 - 00:14:40.745

Researcher keep it going, mm

TC 00:14:38.840 - 00:14:40.281

SD (0.46)

P8 get the message across, yeah

TC 00:14:40.745 - 00:14:43.011

Researcher we had that at the pharmacy as well but I actually said- I spoke to them in Czech and then she like told us the dosage and everything in English [laughs]

TC 00:14:41.989 - 00:14:53.549

P8 it happens so often you go in and you say dobrý den and they go yes how can I help you, and I think my dobrý den was so bad, you instantly knew that I'm English

TC 00:14:51.251 - 00:15:02.929

Researcher yeah, oh goodness me, um and how long have you been speaking Czech or learning Czech?

TC 00:15:00.999 - 00:15:08.363

P8 Well I've been here 17 years and uh actually before then I had a Czech girlfriend so 20 years ago and I tried sort of vainly to learn a few words and, I managed to get a few basic things going but I think I realised straightaway that it was going to be very difficult to put sentences together so I had the language lessons which I mentioned and then really, I realised that I

TC 00:15:06.535 - 00:15:30.315

SD (0.23)

P8 maybe like a lot of people, unless I really make the effort I'm not going to get above a certain level, so, actively learning, well since my daughter was born two and a half years ago, everyone said your Czech will improve because you'll have to understand what she's saying to her Mum and it's true I think I'm really starting to pick up a lot more, recognise a lot more things which are going on, I'm still making mistakes about words which sound like something else so, but so actively learning in a more serious way, only really in the last three or four years I would say, I think it's been a gradual process of soaking things up um but you know on my day to day you know I get on the tram I go somewhere I buy something, and then I'm teaching English most of the day so I don't have that many active situations

TC 00:15:30.548 - 00:16:19.482

P8 when I'm using the language or I have to use the language um, the hospital, as long as you make a bit of an effort and they understand you, you can get by, they'll very often revert to English more or less straightaway, there's only a few situations like if you get stopped by the police, they get a bit narky if you ask them if they speak English or German, they say no you're in the Czech Republic you have to speak Czech and, so there's sometimes that scenario but most of the time there's a way to survive

TC 00:16:19.482 - 00:16:48.954

Researcher yeah, that's um, interesting about your daughter because I presume that most of the time when you're speaking with your wife you would be speaking English so in the home and stuff, so with your daughter though you would hear your wife speak a lot more Czech to your daughter so I suppose that would be helping as well as hearing her speak more Czech

TC 00:16:47.693 - 00:17:08.943

P8 what I'm doing is I'm starting to hone- I always used to say I never listen to Czech people and it's great because you get on the bus and there's all these people talking Czech and you can just switch off 'cause you don't understand a word of what they're saying, it's really relaxing, and then when you get back home suddenly you can understand everybody and it's really disconcerting but now I am starting to eavesdrop a bit more on what they're saying, now I've been away a couple of times recently as I mentioned, so when I came back I found that my daughter was talking to me in Czech straightaway and it took her a day or so to start reusing English again 'cause she really wanted to say things to me, especially when I'd been in Germany for 10 days and she was talking to me talking to me talking to me in Czech Czech Czech she was really wanting to say things and tell me stuff and yeah

TC 00:17:07.552 - 00:17:51.621

P8 now we're back to uh, back to mostly English which again she used this phrase today, she's been copying me, you know you flick through a book and all the pages, she sees me do that, she's trying to do that and she's saying 'Daddy this doesn't fungovat', it's this wonderful expression and uh, yeah, I've gotta try and get that through to her, 'this doesn't work', but

it's quite fun

TC 00:17:51.621 - 00:18:16.151

Researcher yeah it, it would be definitely, um do you ever feel any form of societal or community pressure to not mix the languages when you're speaking?

TC 00:18:15.129 - 00:18:28.510

P8 I don't think so, because the circles I'm in which are academic a lot of the time, and the conservation people like, I teach, I think they're fairly relaxed about that, they don't - no I don't get that um, a couple of times when I've been to family parties, like my wife's side of the family, there's a couple of uncles who don't really speak English and I think they sometimes think why don't you speak English, ah sorry, why don't you speak Czech a bit better, we're all speaking Czech, you should be, but I'm quite relaxed at just sitting outside that conversation, I don't feel- maybe because I'm a bit older now, I don't feel any great desire or responsibility to join in, I'm quite relaxed in my own company

TC 00:18:25.766 - 00:19:12.115

Researcher yep and do you like, when you're out and about and stuff, do you feel any social pressure to conform to the majority language of Czech?

TC 00:19:09.379 - 00:19:20.571

P8 I wouldn't say pressure, I like to do it, if I hear Czechs around me talking, like we're gonna go visit a couple of pubs later on, and if people are speaking Czech around us, I'll feel happy to interact with them in Czech in the basic level I've got, out of politeness or out of just you know, trying to practice a little bit, but when we sit down and have our beers together we'll be speaking in English, but no I don't feel pressure definitely don't feel pressure but I like to if I can

TC 00:19:18.472 - 00:19:48.438

Researcher but so say when you're talking to P11 like you don't feel like people might be annoyed that the two of you are speaking in English or anything like that?

TC 00:19:46.585 - 00:19:57.412

P8 no, not in the places we go to, I mean Prague's got a lot of tourists, and, I think, yeah, I mean for example we might sit down and say na zdraví with, to each other and we've spoken to the barman in Czech before we really start going for it in English, I think people around us recognise and respect the fact that we've got a bit of Czech, but we're going to speak English now, and if they come over and talk to us, which often happens, they wanna practice their English, which is great, yeah

TC 00:19:55.412 - 00:20:26.701

Researcher yeah yeah, it would be, what language do you- do you feel any language pride for your native language?

TC 00:20:22.829 - 00:20:35.209

P8 language pride? I'm not sure I do, if I'd call it pride um, I'm very happy with the fact that English is this international language now, and um that everyone's learning it, not because we're from England but because it's this universal language, which sailors and airmen and businessmen whoever, are all using it and, I wouldn't call it pride, no not at all, it's probably relief actually, that um, you know I've got this job, wonderful job which I can do anywhere, more or less um, what I do like is this international English which is developing because native English is quite different to European English, I dunno if you guys find the same, but some of the people back home, you think oh god if you were in Prague, people wouldn't understand your English

TC 00:20:33.580 - 00:21:23.491

Researcher mm yeah, exactly

TC 00:21:22.329 - 00:21:24.644

P8 there's a lot of, not strong accents but quiet accents, like, Estuary English and a lot of TV English and it's like whoa, sometimes I have to re-tune myself when I go home, 'cause the younger people are talking and it's like whoa, what happened to the, the real English you know?

TC 00:21:23.759 - 00:21:41.505

Researcher it's um, quite similar with like, still world English but Asian Englishes too, it's really interesting to see how the grammar and things have changed um, based on their native languages and stuff as well for sure

TC 00:21:39.511 - 00:21:55.203

P8 well it's a lot of these international words which keep coming in, I mean again in my particular profession, uh the Germans use this word renaturation, which means the restoration of habitats, we had this word, restoration, renaturation, when you think about it, makes sense as an adjective, but it's not - ah but they, it's very similar to the German word, but when they use it, like a French man or an Italian man, understands them and they all use the same word, but we don't understand it, you know what is, there's not one in here but, a projector, they call it a beamer

TC 00:21:52.023 - 00:22:25.385

SD (0.03)

P8 beamer? I mean it makes sense, but for me, a beamer, that's British slang for a BMW car, so whenever I go on a course, do you need a beamer for the course? Yeah, well, I'll have one of them. And but this is- and again, the Czechs and the French, they all use the word beamer, because they think it's an English word, but what I quite like about that is - this International English is quite logical, so I have to adapt to understand that, and I don't mind if that becomes the standard because - so yeah I'm not proud at all necessarily about the English I'm just really happy that there's this International language developing

TC 00:22:25.417 - 00:23:02.256

Researcher mm it's cool isn't it, and what language do you listen to most of your media in, like TV books Netflix?

TC 00:23:01.142 - 00:23:08.716

P8 it's all English, I mean I do sometimes flick the television channels and, I occasionally watch the Czech news, because you've got the visuals as well as the language so you can pick up a little bit of it, but I don't really watch a lot of television, very little, but reading is normally in English

TC 00:23:07.304 - 00:23:25.043

Researcher yep, ok, and what language do you most often speak with friends, at home, you've already sort of said with your wife, [unint] English, yep yep

TC 00:23:23.376 - 00:23:33.920

P8 yeah it's English all the time really, yeah, I'm in a different situation to P11 where he's got this Czech around him all the time, yeah

TC 00:23:31.186 - 00:23:39.982

Researcher yeah yeah definitely, and how often do you visit home or an English speaking country?

TC 00:23:37.664 - 00:23:43.663

P8 I used to go back once a year, every year, but now again it's the daughter- changes things a bit because she's got her, her Mum's family here and I've got my family in England, so it's going to be every two years now, we haven't been to England this year, and that's the first time in 17 years I haven't been back, so I would normally go back once a year for a couple of weeks, and but now yeah it's gonna be every two years I guess



TC 00:23:43.055 - 00:24:07.517

Researcher yep yep, ok, erm well that's pretty much it for the interview, so if you think of any instances of any interesting things, feel free to email it through to me but apart from that we're

all done, thank you so so much for coming in and participating

TC 00:24:06.473 - 00:24:21.724

P8 mmhmm

TC 00:24:14.691 - 00:24:18.271

SD (0.85)

P8 pleasure

TC 00:24:19.126 - 00:24:20.864

P8 I'm glad it's nice and convenient for me 'cause it's just across the way there

TC 00:24:20.864 - 00:24:24.754

TC 00:24:23.610 - 00:24:32.640