

Czech Language Learning Journal

Faculty of Humanities, Jinonice

Fall 2019



This journal is a part of data collection on the motivation and attitudes of students learning Czech during their study abroad. I am trying to discover what influences the students, what they think and how their motivation develops and changes. You can write in Czech or English regularly about your learning experience. Please write your comments and feelings in as much detail as possible, honestly and openly as if you were keeping your own personal, confidential diary. You will not be evaluated on the content of your journal and everything you write is confidential.

Here are some questions to ponder while writing your journal:

1. What are you learning, how are you learning, what do you think about it?
2. Describe experiences during the learning process both in class and outside.
3. How do you feel about learning Czech at each point of the semester? What makes you feel like that?
4. What do you enjoy about the learning process, the language and the use of it?
5. How would you describe your motivation? What motivates you to learn more?
6. Are there any factors that demotivate you? If so, what are they?
7. What aspects of the class would you like to comment on?

Initially, you will be given time at the end of each class. Later on, you should record the entries at a time and place convenient for you. If you hand in your complete journal at the end of the semester, you can receive as much as 5% extra in the final evaluation.

Research has shown (Brown, 1985) that journaling helps students reflect on their own language learning. As you write about what you think and feel as a language learner, you will understand yourself and your experience better. Secondly, by participating in this project, you contribute to the overall knowledge on the psychology of the language learner.

09.10.2019

I speak Dutch and English very well. In highschool I learned German and French as well, but that is 3 years ago. So now I can understand it, but speaking takes a little bit more time. Also I went to Spain for 2 months to learn Spanish and took some classes afterwards in the Netherlands. I want to learn Czech because I think it is important to learn the language of the country you live in. Only a few people in the Netherlands do that, so and I think that is very annoying. So I don't want to be one of those people.

16.10.19

Last week I missed a class and at the beginning of the class I immediately noticed this. So today I had the feeling I had to put a lot more effort in it. But that is okay. Today we learned about asking directions, it is hard but this is useful. It is nice that we have to speak a lot and pronounce all the words several times, it helps overcoming "the bridge of shame" people always have when learning a new language.

23.10.19

Again, I missed Friday's class. So I still feel like I miss out on a lot. I would not recommend to miss this much in the beginning, where everything is new and ~~you~~ every small ~~part~~ thing we learn feels as a big step. But today we learned some verbs. And how to change them. This helps a lot, I like to learn the structure of a language because then it makes a lot more sense to me. The only thing is now that I have to remember it, and that is the hardest part since the words are very new to me and I cannot make a connection with other languages (so far).

25.10.19.

Today we did numbers (10-199) and food. Since I missed the class where they practiced the numbers I was behind the others. This made it more difficult for me, because I needed to think twice as hard, when I had to say a number out loud. I liked the bingo very much, because that is a fun way to learn numbers. When we stepped over to H

Restaurant, I was very happy. I think this is the most useful in a new language. Nobody asks direction anymore because almost everyone uses Google Maps. But since I spent a lot of time in bars and restaurants I'm very happy to finally learn this.

30. 10. 19

Today we repeated the restaurant. This was very helpful and fun. *Dam si...*, I will use that a lot I think. Also we did a word finder, to look for words that are foods or drinks. This was more difficult than I thought, it is still hard to make the connection ~~to~~ to the words when there are many other letters around. We also learned a little bit about the genders of words, which this is a lot easier in Czech than in French or German.

06. 11. 19

Last Friday I forgot to write down what we learned, but we started to do more restaurant things in a playful way. We made a conversation in Czech in a restaurant with the help of Cego puppers. Today we listened to a conversation and again had to write our own. Listening helps a lot! We practised some words you can use on a party and in a restaurant. Also we practised how to say 'I don't eat/drink...', very helpful if you are a vegetarian! (11)

08. 11. 19

Today we practised sentences that come in handy in places where you come a lot. It was fun. I once tried it in a restaurant, or bar actually. I wanted to order 4 beers but I actually got 3 because I did something wrong with the numbers. But I will try to use Czech more, and I will say *Dobry den* a lot since that is necessary according to Silvie.

13. 11. 19

Today was nice. We talked to a lot of different classmates and had to do exercises with them which made me come out of my comfort zone everytime a little more. We did this game where other people need to guess the words you showed in a drawing or having to explain in words.

This is very nice because in real life, when you cannot find a word you need to use other methods to explain what you want. I like it how playful the classes are. Also we talked about what we need to know for the test next week, which ~~was~~ made me a little nervous. I need to ~~stg~~ study a lot haha. Yesterday for the first time I ordered my coffee to go. In Czech. Only at one point, she asked me something that I did not understand. So instead of turning into English, I pretended to not hear her and just smiled and waited until I got my coffee....

22. 11. 19

~~Today~~ Two day ago we had our midterm. This ~~was~~ was a lot easier than I expected (but I still made some mistakes, all with the multiple choice). I really like it how much time we get to understand the language. I am so used to very fast learning. Here we really take time for the grammar. Today we repeated the verbs. Repetition is I think the key for learning a language. We played a board game where you had to conjugate the verbs. This was fun. We finished with the days of the Týden. This I really like, because now when I am walking through town I can see which day a certain event is.

27. 11. 19

Silvi, I really want to complement you on your classes. The way you teach Czech is the most amazing way I have ever learned a language (And I have ~~learned~~ had a lot of language classes). You make it fun, you have patience. You give us time to process, you make up fun games. Everytime I need to remind myself of a certain word, I think of the games we play. It works!

Today we repeated the weekdays and how we can tell what we are planning to do. Also we learned some new verbs. I noticed a lot of people think you are going too slow fast, while for me it can go a little faster. I think because I learned a lot of ~~great~~ languages that focus on understanding the grammar, the gramm

part in Czech is not that hard for me. I only find difficulties in remembering the words.

Wednesday 04.12.19

Last week I was really sick so I did not come to class. Today I noticed again that if you miss one class and you don't practice the language in between you forget a lot. Language is repeating.

Today we learned some new verbs and how to connect verbs with *musím* (I ^{must} can) and *musím* (I can). This is interesting and very confusing, since the words look really similar so it is easy to mix them up. But again, that will mean we have to practice a lot!

06.12.19

Today we learned the difference between 'do' and 'na'. This is easy, I think, for now. But as you said, it is probably harder than it looks now.

Then we did the past, which is very easy compared to any other language I ever learned. But because it is easy, I am afraid I will make a lot of mistakes. So I should watch out not to overestimate myself.

06.11.12.19

Today we went over the past ~~tense~~ again. This is a lot easier than the present, but maybe because when we learn the present, Czech was new. Now we are already a little familiar with it. I love to learn this, it feels like getting to know the language better.

We had to read sentences out loud, which is very hard. Knowing how to write some Czech words is still very difficult, especially when all the other students have an accent from their mother tongue. The board-game was also very nice. This makes learning the language so much more fun.

13. 12. 19

The last class is a fact. ~~It~~ So weird. We repeat a lot of things that we need to know for the exam. I am a little nervous for it, but I think it will be fine. Only the talking part is going to be difficult. But if I look back on when I first came into town, and how I just did not even know how to pronounce words which right now that is not something I worry about anymore. Silvo, you are definitely the best language teacher I ever had! Děkuju moc!!

Czech Learner Survey

This survey is a part of research on the motivation to study Czech during Erasmus stay at the Charles University. It is anonymous, so be honest please. Read the following statements and write how much you agree or disagree with them. Please, do not leave out any items.

strongly disagree	disagree	not sure	agree	strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I like learning new languages.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My university requires me to take a Czech language course.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I would have signed up for the course if it was optional only.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My university validates the Czech language course credits.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Learning the local language is important when you study abroad.	1	2	3	4	5
6. At the start, I was excited to start learning Czech.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am learning Czech in order to understand Czech culture better.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I study hard because I am afraid of getting a bad mark.	1	2	3	4	5
9. At the beginning I thought learning Czech was important.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I felt uneasy at the start of the course.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Learning languages is a burden for me.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Learning Czech is important for living in the Czech Republic.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I like the atmosphere of my Czech classes.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I use Czech outside class.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am good at learning languages.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I enjoy learning Czech.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The course meets the needs of the students.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I like the teaching method used in the Czech course.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I find Czech a hard language.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I often feel overwhelmed in class.	1	2	3	4	5
21. At the start of the course, I was afraid.	1	2	3	4	5
22. My final grade in the Czech course is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I look forward to my Czech classes.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I would like to be able to communicate with locals in Czech.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Having learnt Czech may be useful for me in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I am glad that I have taken the course.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I like my Czech teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I think that the Czech for beginners course should be mandatory.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Learning Czech enhanced my study abroad experience.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I plan to continue learning Czech after I leave the Czech Republic.	1	2	3	4	5

Please provide the following information:

Gender: male female

Erasmus student: yes no

Nationality: Dutch

Mother tongue: Dutch

Age: 23

Major: Philosophy

Czech is the 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th or further foreign language I have taken up (please circle).

Did you have any contact with Czech prior to your arrival? No. Yes. Specify:

Thank you very much, your help is highly appreciated!