

Czech Language Learning Journal

Faculty of Humanities, Jinonice

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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.

16.03.1999

09.10

My mother language is french. I've been learning german for nearly ten years but unfortunately, probably due to wrong teaching methods, I can barely speak it. I can understand while reading but my lack of vocabulary is often a problem. Lastly, my teachers made me be afraid to make mistakes, which paralyzes me and prevent me from speaking and so improving. (vicious circle)

I have started to learn english in high school, and it is the foreign language I feel the most comfortable with. I feel like it truly needs to be improved, as much the vocabulary part as the grammar, though.

I have started to learn norwegian on my own, just because I think it sounds beautiful. Unfortunately, I never had the chance to attend to real course, and I only know a few basics learned on the Duolingo application.

I am learning ancient greek for 2,5 years and although it can be seen as useless, it truly fascinates me. It is an extremely challenging and complicated language, but I don't want to give up. I have also been dreaming of learning arabic languages since childhood, and hebrew since last year.

But I know it would be extremely demanding, and I have to keep in mind that I cannot learn so many languages at the same time. One day, perhaps!

11.10

Learning with movement and playful activities help me remember new words. Everything becomes more concrete, not abstract and distant.

I tried to start learning Czech during the holidays with the Duolingo application, but I found it very difficult. I spent so much time reading grammatical rules without really understanding. Also I thought that the first things they taught us were not the most important. I feel like I have learned much more in class, with a teacher I can ask questions to, with funny activities which make me have pleasure learning a new language than sitting in my room in front of a screen.

15.10

I am still extremely happy to learn more and more. Also, when I am in the street, or in the metro or wherever, I try to listen to the people talking and to understand a few words. Of course I do not understand much, but it still is very satisfying to catch a few words!

However I sometimes have difficulties to practice what I have learned in every day life situation but it is because it goes fast and I panic (but I guess it has more to do with personal social discomfort). Though, I try to practice what we have learned on my own. I hope I'll be more and more comfortable!

18.10

I feel like building sentences up is both exciting and frustrating. Exciting because I feel some kind of progress and because I have more and more tools to express myself. Yet sometimes it is frustrating because I know that I make many mistakes that my sentences are not correct and consist more in a sort of assembled words. But it is normal at this point of the learning process, but I can't help wanting it to be perfect. I perfectly know that we learn through mistakes and in this class I do not feel pressure (thanks to a nice atmosphere)

23.10

Learning new words is really challenging. I am often confused at the beginning and I mix them a lot. In these situations I tend to isolate myself so that I can fix everything in my mind in order to be ready for group activities. Otherwise I feel lost, and panic, and my brain does not remember anything. So I think I will have to go through the words at home, quietly, several times. I will also need to write them again, with colors, and little schemas to make them visual; a clear view is useful for my visual memory.

I still enjoy to try to recall what we have done in class and to listen to people in my daily life.

25.10

Last weekend I tried to practice directions and I asked for the closest restaurant it was really nice to be able to practice with a real Czech person, in the daily life. However I sounded (obviously) as a tourist and he answered me in English. But it was worth trying! Also this morning I was taking a look at what people in the net were reading and I understood the title of a book (Zelená úroda), and it made me happy! I try to keep my eyes and my ears open to learn new words and sounds, and to be more familiar with them. It might help a lot because sometimes I feel like I learn some things more quickly (vocabulary especially) than some others (without any pretension) - yet it was quite hard today with the new numbers!

30.10

I must admit that I did not practice that much these last days but I know I have to try harder. And I need to study a bit more because, since we learn more and more things, I tend to forget some even if I knew them before. However I went to a restaurant with Czech friends and I could translate the menu for them. Sometimes I just forget that I have learned some words which new seem obvious to me, and that some other people don't know them at all. I have to remember that I progressed.

1.11

Yesterday I went to the market and I had to pay attention and open my ears to hear the prices of all the vegetables I bought. Sometimes it was a bit confusing since the merchants thought I was a local and so mumbled - then I could ask "ještě jednou prosím".

6.11

* and that the language is too wide to consider - that there are too many things to know etc

The last days I felt a bit desperate because I felt unable to remember properly or practice any Czech. I felt a bit stuck and demotivated. But actually, the fact of writing this journey made me review it and reflect on it. I guess that this phase of feeling disheartened happens when you learn a language. But after this class I feel better. It reassured me; I can learn some Czech, a bit of this language, and that is great. I can understand even more than I can speak.

8.11

Yesterday I had the chance to go to the opera to see Edelstein by Dvořák, and I loved it so much. First, the singers were extremely talented, but also I was surprised how beautiful Czech language sounds when it is sung. I mean, I've always loved

But yet, I'm really happy to learn more words! especially new verbs - I feel like I am able to say more things, and that is really satisfying!

29.11

I was really tired and distracted those past days, so I felt a little bit behind in today's class. I am making really silly mistakes whereas I know the answer, but I'm just not focused enough. I need to study this weekend and review everything that we have done so far, especially the verbs and conjugations etc.
Also, I'm getting better at numbers because I understand better when I go to shop and the cashier tell me the price.

4.12

Sometimes people in the street, metro or theater (public spaces in general) talk to me in Czech, and I like to pretend that I understand; more seriously, I also try to recognize a few words, even if what they say is really above my level/ Czech capital and I have to say to them that I don't really understand.
I think that the situation also helps a lot: for example, I went to the opera yesterday, and because I was sitting at the end of the row, I had to stand up to let people go during the breaks. When it was the last break, a lady told me that this was the last time she was bothering me tonight.

6.12

I stayed indoors to study so had very few contacts with the Czech world. Yet I studied a lot. But I feel like I need to practice more and that my knowledge is only "theoretical". Yet, when I read a word I don't know I usually try to search for it (but its reverse is sometimes not that easy, unfortunately).
Also, I am really sad to realize that in a few weeks it would be the end of the Czech course!

11.12

It is really hard for me to remember to add the "jeem" after a verb in past tense but I think it is because it never happens in my mother language or in any other language I know.
I had a lot of fun with today's exercise about the past tense, with the dictionary, the owner and the secretary. It was challenging on many aspects. The fact that we needed to memorize the sentences was helpful. And it allowed to get familiar with the sentences in many different ways.
Also, when I came back from Budapest on Monday, I was delighted to feel that when I arrived in Slovakia and then in Czech Republic I could understand and

somehow understand the language. I didn't expect it to happen!
 I really feel like studying for the test, because I really have... pleasure when
 learning the language - I will miss it for sure.

13.12

This class with the other group was a bit stressful at first, but turned out to be
 extremely interesting and enriching. I think I learned a lot of new words, because they
 obviously { know more than our group.
 (are more advanced)

But I was also reassured to see, during the exercise, that I am able to understand and
 respond.

It truly was a pleasure to attend to this course, thank you so much for making it
 so interesting and playful! I wish you good luck for your thesis!

PHN Elem. 2019

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: French

Mother tongue French

Age 20

Major: Humanities

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!