

Commentaries and Exercises
To be used in conjunction with
viewing of the film
Obecná škola (Jan Svěrák 1991)

Masako U. Fidler
Department of Slavic Languages
Brown University

Not for commercial use

Obsah	str.
Introduction	iii
Representative Features of Colloquial Czech	iv
Číslo handoutu	
1	1
2a.....	4
2b.....	8
3.....	11
4.....	14
5.....	17
6a.....	21
6b.....	24
7.....	28
8.....	30
9.....	33
10.....	37
11.....	39
12.....	44
13.....	47
14.....	50
15.....	53
16/17.....	56
18.....	60
19.....	62
20.....	65
21.....	68
22.....	70
23.....	74
24.....	76
25a.....	80
25b.....	84
25c.....	87
26.....	90
27.....	92
28.....	95
29/30.....	98
31.....	101
32a.....	104
32b.....	109
33.....	113
34.....	116
35.....	119

Introduction to Obecná škola: Exercises based on Jan Svěrák's Obecná škola "Elementary School"

This material was written for second-year Czech students and beyond who need to consolidate the knowledge of Czech grammar and simultaneously be exposed to some important aspects of Czech history and culture. The material also helps students recognize some basic Common Czech features used most frequently in conversational Czech. Each section has three basic parts. For grammar review/information, use Michael Heim's *Contemporary Czech*.

(1) fill-in exercises; (2) questions and answers; (3) exercises on Standard Czech; (4) essay writing mostly in first-person narrative

You will be graded for each part from "1" to "4." See below for details.

(1) fill-in exercises

These exercises should NOT be done by simply listening to the video and intuitively filling the blanks with whatever you feel is there. Careful listening is important, but we must remember that we may recognize sounds in a way that may be different from the Czech native speaker because our native sound system is wired differently from that of a Czech speaker. For example, the sound -ej is often registered by the English native speaker as a long é; the short -y in Czech sounds like a short -e to the English speaker. Note that some blanks may not contain anything (zero-endings).

The most important thing is to *combine* your ear and your grammar knowledge. You must be able to explain why you put down the form. A typical detailed explanation should run like the following:

"this blank should be filled with form X because (a) the word has Y-grammar function in the sentence/has a meaning Y and (b) the word belongs to the Z-type noun/adjective/verb/..."

When filling in the parentheses to explain your choice of words or endings, use abbreviations of the type: "subj. hrad, nom."; "d.o. muž, acc."

(1-more than 80% correct (both explanations and forms); 2-more than 70% correct; 3-more than 60% correct; 4-below 60% correct)

(2) Questions and answers

The exercises help you find useful new expressions to use actively in appropriate situations.

Not all the questions require simple extractions of phrases and sentences out of the text. You will need to modify them somewhat to fit the described situation. The exercises are graded in principle in terms of choice of expressions.

(1 -picking all the correct expressions (with minor mistakes); 2-20% missing or wrong expressions; 3-30% missing or wrong expressions; 4-missing more than 30%)

(3) Exercises "Standard Czech"

The purpose of the exercises entitled "Standard Czech" is not to learn the colloquial forms in addition to the Standard Czech forms. They are yet another way to help you solidify your knowledge of Standard Czech, especially endings. By thinking about what standard Czech forms should be in place of the colloquial forms, you will be actively thinking about the sentence structure, the grammatical function of each element, and the declension and conjugation types of words in the sentence. Read "The Representative Features of Colloquial Czech" on p. ii (READ it, it's important!)

(1- more than 70% correct (forms and explanations); 2 - more than 60% correct; 3- more than 50%correct; 4-less than 50%correct)

(4) Essay writing

Most sections have a 1-2 paragraph length text for you to write. Many of them require that you describe the main events of the scene from the viewpoint of the main protagonist Eda. You will need to adjust the person (first person singular) and present the situation from a viewpoint of a 10-year old boy who is starting to realize the grownup world. Some of the writings have the form of a letter (letters to grandma, a letter to the school principal).

You will be graded mainly in terms of comprehensiveness and use of new vocabulary and expressions that appeared in the scene. (1-85% understandable; 2-some significant portion unclear; 3-my teacher understands me!; 4-incomprehensible.)

Representative Features of Colloquial Czech

These are only pointers for doing the exercises. For a comprehensive description, see Charles Townsend *Spoken Prague Czech*.

Adjectives and other modifiers:

(1) endings containing -ý- in the dobrý-type adjectives go to -ej-
dobrý --> dobrej; dobrých - dobrejch

(2) endings containing -ě- in the dobrý-type adjectives go to -ý-
dobré --> dobrý; dobrého --> dobrýho
mého kamaráda --> mýho kamaráda
o té knize --> o tý knize

(3) masc. Npl. animate mutations are often suppressed:

dobří kamarádi --> dobrý kamarádi
čeští profesoři --> český profesoři
ti kamarádi --> ty kamarádi

Nouns:

(1) Ipl. of all nouns have -ma

for pán, hrad, žena and město types --> -ama
s pány, hrady, ženami, městy --> s pánama, hradama, ženama, městama

for muž, stroj, růže, píseň and moře types --> -e/ěma

s muži, stroji, růžemi, mořemi --> s mužema, strojema, růžema, mořema

for nádraží type --> -íma

s nádražími --> s nádražíma

for kost-type --> -ma

s kostmi --> s kostma

(2) Asg of masculine inanimate nouns (hrad, stroj) may get the animate-like ending -a/e in some situations:

dej si prcka (prcek - a small shot glass)

mám jeepa (jeep - a car)

(3) vocative case for male names may be replaced by the nominative (the function and implication of each instance varies)

pane Součku --> pane Souček

pane učiteli --> pane učitel

pane Louko --> pane Louka

a bare nominative last name used as a term of address is extremely forceful (used in army units)

Pronouns

(1) I. case for plural pronouns take -ma

s námi, vámi, nimi --> s náma, váma, nima

(2) There is no gender distinction in N for 3 person pronouns in colloquial Czech:

holky --> (v)oni kluci --> (v)oni města --> (v)oni

Demonstrative pronouns *tenhle*

tenhle "this here" is often pronounced *tendle*, and may be even accompanied by an additional *ten* at the end: *tendleten*

Verbs

(1) 3pl. forms of dělat-type drop the last vowel - dělají --> dělaj

(2) 3pl. forms of mluvit-type has -e/ěj - mluví --> mluvěj

(3) vzít has a special set of present tense forms:

instead of vezmu, vezmeš... vezmou; impv. vezmi/vezměte --> vemu, vemeš... vemou; impv. vem/te

(4) the helping verb *jsi* can stick to the main verb:

ty *jsi* ho nařídila --> *tys* ho nařídila

(5) the 2sg present tense for být is often seš in coll. Czech; seš is not used as a helping verb
Ty jsi ale blbec. --> Ty seš ale blbec.

(6) the short PPP form in the passive construction of the type "X was killed by Y" is often replaced by a long form:
Stará paní byla přejeta neznámým autem. --> Stará paní byla přejetá neznámým autem.
Recall that the PPP short form ending in -án has a short -a- in long forms (udělán - udělaný, zalogována - zalogovaná)

(7) masculine singular l-participle ending with a consonant and -l may drop the last -l:
řekl --> řek; propadl --> propad

(8) the present tense 1st pers. pl. ending with -eme tends to be simplified to -em:
poneseeme --> poneseem; jdeme --> jdem

(9) the conditional form of být in the 1st pers. pl. is bysme instead of bychom
Šli bychom na koncert --> Šli bysme na koncert.

Words starting with o- and preposition "o"

these tend to have an additional v-. This is most common in prepositions and pronouns:
oni --> voni; o naší škole --> vo naší škole
some nouns never get this initial v-: otec

Stem changes

(1) ý to ej changes may occur in some verb/nominal/adjectival stems containing a long -ý (sometimes -í): být --> bejt,
bývat --> bejvat

(2) -é in some stems may change to -í
obléknout se --> oblíknout se
přilétnout --> přilítnout

(3) -i- (short) may change to -e- (the conversational -i- or -y- is very close to -e- in Czech)
vylijeme to --> vylejeme to