

Čeština — The Czech Language

DIMACS REU

July 11, 2006

History and Relationships

- ▶ Indo-European language

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- ▶ Mutually intelligible with Slovak, Upper Sorbian, similar to Polish

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- ▶ Stress is on the first syllable
- ▶ Few exceptions

Czech letters

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G Go	H Ham	CH loCH	I blt	J Yell	K Kid	L Low	M Mop
N No	Ň ŇiŇo	O rOck	P Pit	R Rid	Ř	S Sea	Š SHop
T Tip	Ť	U bOOk	V Van	X boX	Y verY	Z Zip	Ž viSlon

Notes:

- ▶ “Accents” on vowels (Á É Í Ó Ú Ý) make them longer

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- ▶ I and Y are pronounced in the same way

Difficulties and special rules

- ▶ Ě is pronounced like E but modifies the preceding consonant:
DĚ, NĚ, TĚ is like ĎE, ŇE, ŤE
BĚ, FĚ, PĚ, VĚ is like BJE, FJE, PJE, VJE
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- ▶ Verbs have (nontrivial) conjugations: lots of conjugation paradigms (I don't know how many), irregular verbs.
- ▶ Words often take prefixes, which modify the meaning, often in a nonintuitive way: být (to be), nabýt (to obtain), ubýt (to diminish), pobýt (to stay), dobýt (to conquer), pozbýt (to lose), zbýt (to remain), přebýt (to be a surplus).

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- ▶ Flexible word order

Flexible word order

English: Alice gave Bob a book.

Czech:

Alice dala Bobovi knihu.	Bobovi dala Alice knihu.
Alice knihu dala Bobovi.	Bobovi knihu dala Alice.
Alice Bobovi dala knihu.	Bobovi Alice dala knihu.
Knihu Alice dala Bobovi.	Knihu Bobovi dala Alice.
Alice Bobovi knihu dala.	Bobovi Alice knihu dala.
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Knihu Alice Bobovi dala.	Knihu Bobovi Alice dala.
Alice knihu Bobovi dala.	Bobovi knihu Alice dala.

Word order changes emphasis

Dala Alice Bobovi knihu? (Did Alice give Bob a book?)

Dala Alice knihu Bobovi? (Did Alice give the book to Bob?)

Dala Bobovi Alice knihu? (Did Alice give the book to Bob?)

Dala Bobovi knihu Alice? (Was it Alice, who gave a book to Bob?)

Dala knihu Alice Bobovi? (Was it Bob, who got Alice's book?)

Dala knihu Bobovi Alice? (Was it Alice, who gave a book to Bob?)

Words of Czech origin

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- ▶ dollar: from the word “tolar” (or “taler” in German) – a coin made in Joachimsthal.

Links

www.omniglot.com

www.locallingo.com

www.bohemica.com