

THE MULTILINGUAL EDUCATIONAL WEBSITE MLUVTECESKY.NET AS A TOOL FOR TEACHING LANGUAGE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Abstract: This paper presents the multilingual website mluvtecesky.net, currently available in ten language versions: Czech, Arabic, Chinese, English, German, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Slovak and Spanish. The website offers an online course of general language Czech consisting of 30 units (levels A1 and A2) as well as a detailed course of medical Czech, which has been reviewed by medical experts. This innovative language course contains 37 units and is divided into three main modules: *Internal Propaedeutics*, *Internal Medicine* and *Further Clinical Departments*. Completely new interactive materials are accompanied by over seven hours of audio recordings, a useful dictionary, a grammar summary, a discussion forum, and invaluable information about the Czech Republic (culture, history, and geography). The website was developed primarily for healthcare professionals who need to use Czech in their professional life. However, it has become an integral part of teaching Czech to foreign medical students at Masaryk University. The website is user-friendly and free of charge.

Keywords: language for specific purposes, Czech as a foreign language, medical Czech, patient's history, doctor-patient communication, e-learning in language learning and teaching

WIELOJĘZYCZNY PORTAL JĘZYKOWY EDUKACYJNY MLUVTECESKY.NET JAKO NARZĘDZIE DO NAUKI JĘZYKÓW DLA OKREŚLONYCH CELÓW

Streszczenie: Wielojęzyczny portal mluvtecesky.net jest przeznaczony do nauczania i uczenia się czeskiego jako języka obcego. Obecnie jest dostępny w 10 językach: czeskim, angielskim, arabskim, chińskim, niemieckim, polskim, rumuńskim, rosyjskim, słowackim i hiszpańskim. Portal obejmuje ogólny kurs językowy na poziomie A1/A2 zgodnie z CEFR oraz kurs medyczny na poziomie B1/B2 według CEFR, który został opracowany po raz pierwszy w takim zakresie. Oprócz nauczania języka popartego przeglądem gramatyki czeskiej jako języka obcego użytkownik ma możliwość zapoznania się z klasyfikacją języka czeskiego wśród języków słowiańskich oraz czeską historią, geografią i kulturą, co przyczynia się do budowania jego kompetencji społeczno-kulturowych. Obecni lub przyszli studenci medycyny i pracownicy służby zdrowia z zagranicy znajdą tutaj informacje o systemie opieki zdrowotnej,

studiach medycznych na czeskich uniwersytetach oraz wsparciu zagranicznych ekspertów w Czechach.

Słowa kluczowe: język dla określonych celów, czeski jako język obcy, język czeski medyczny, anamneza pacjenta, komunikacja lekarz–pacjent, e-learning w uczeniu się i nauczaniu języka

1. Introduction

There are two elementary reasons why a teacher of language for specific purposes in the 21st century can no longer rely solely on printed educational materials. For certain fields, either no textbooks have yet been written, or the existing textbooks no longer correspond to contemporary syllabuses of tertiary education. On the Czech market, a textbook of the national language for foreign speakers containing day-to-day communication as well as medical Czech is not yet available. The Medical Faculty of Masaryk University teaches three English-language programmes for foreign students: General Medicine, Dentistry, and Physiotherapy.¹ Even though the courses are led in English in both pre-clinical and clinical subjects, students will have to be able to communicate with patients in Czech during their clinical training. Students attending the 6-year programmes General Medicine and Dentistry take a mandatory subject Czech for Foreigners during their first eight semesters. Students of the shorter Physiotherapy programme take six semesters of Czech for Foreigners. These semesters of Czech culminate in either a written examination (fall semester) or an oral examination (spring semester). Assuming an average time allotment of 250 teaching hours, completion of this course should result in the B1/B2 CEFR level.²

The aim of language education at the Medical Faculty is to provide students with a command of practical professional language, especially communication strategies contributing towards the goal of meaningful student-patient communication.

2. Mluvtecesky.net content

The aim of the international project³ *CZKey-Online Platform for Learning Medical Czech* was to create a website for teaching and learning Czech as a second language.

¹ In the academic year 2019/2020, the Masaryk University Medical Faculty has a total 564 students enrolled in English language programmes: 502 in General Medicine, 45 in Dentistry, and 17 in Physiotherapy.

² Achieving *Threshold Level for Czech as a Foreign Language* or a higher CEFR level is influenced by a variety of factors. Among the most common ones are motivation, study methods, the ability of using the target language in real life, etc.

³ *CZKey-Online Platform for Learning Medical Czech* was realised during 2013–2015 with financial support from the EU as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

For the first time, this includes language for specific purposes as well as general language. The website offers a course of 30 general language lessons at the A1 and A2 CEFR levels and a course of medical Czech. On top of the language-learning itself, users can learn more about how Czech is related to other Slavic languages, about Czech history and culture, and last but not least, they are provided with an exhaustive list of further textbooks and literature on the topic of learning Czech as a foreign language. For both future and current foreign medical students as well as for foreign professionals already working in healthcare, there are modules available about the Czech healthcare system, about studying medicine at Czech universities, and about working as a foreign healthcare professional. As the main contributor, Masaryk University has collaborated with five other partners on the project.⁴

The mluvtcesky.net website is not based on any existing e-learning systems – rather it utilises its own custom interface optimised for online language learning. The courses contain texts, dialogues, illustrations, audio recordings, and different types of exercises to practise vocabulary and various language phenomena. The user can also listen to the pronunciation of any target-language word, as well as display the word's basic form, its basic grammar categories, and a table of declensions or conjugations.

I would like to focus on the medical Czech course in greater detail, for two reasons: I worked on this segment as the coordinator as well as a contributor, and I also frequently make use of this course in my own classes teaching Czech language to future physicians.

3. Medical Czech on mluvtcesky.net

The innovative course of language for specific purposes contains a total of 37 lessons and is divided into 3 modules: *Clinical Propaedeutics*, *Internal Medicine*, and *Other Clinical Fields*. All used materials were expertly reviewed by physicians from internal, surgical, and non-surgical fields.

Clinical Propaedeutics contains 10 topics: besides *Doctor–Patient Communication*, *Symptoms of Diseases*, *Pain*, and *Current Diseases and Pharmacology*, which contain essential introductions to basic terminology, *Clinical Propaedeutics* teaches users about anamnesis. Gathering information for anamnesis is an essential skill for any physician, therefore, the course contains topics such as *Family History*, *Personal History*, *Work*, and *Social History*. The topic *Physical Examination of Patient* is also covered.

The *Internal Medicine* module contains 10 topics: *Cardiology*, *Haematology*, *Oncology*, *Pulmonology*, *Endocrinology*, *Gastroenterology*, *Diabetology*, *Urology*, *Rheumatology*, and *Gerontology*.

⁴ Masaryk University Language Centre, The Association of Teachers of Czech as a Foreign Language (Czech Republic), The University of Applied Sciences Burgenland (Fachhochschule Burgenland, Austria), The University of Silesia (Katowice, Poland), Studio Gauss (Germany), Edukácia@Internet (Slovakia).

Sixteen topics can be found in the module *Other Clinical Fields: Surgery, Resuscitation Care, Gynaecology, Obstetrics, Orthopaedics, Physiotherapy, Neurology, Psychiatry, Paediatrics, Dermatology, Ophthalmology, Otorhinolaryngology, Stomatology, Nursing Care, and Medical Ethics*.

All individual lessons share a uniform structure: the doctor's questions and the patient's answers are followed by texts serving as sources of technical vocabulary and various doctor–patient dialogues. Every lesson contains an explication of grammatical phenomena, case studies, and a short test.

7 Gastroenterologia

1. Pytania lekarza i odpowiedzi pacjenta
2. Choroba biegunkowa
3. Problemy z żołądkiem
4. Mukozektomia endoskopowa
5. Choroba żołądkowo-jelitowa: Biegunka
6. W szpitalu na oddziale wewnętrznym
7. Kazyistyka
8. Gramatyka
9. Ćwiczenie
10. Test

8 Diabetologia

1. Pytania lekarza i odpowiedzi pacjenta (wywiad diabetologiczny)
2. Pacjent dziecięcy z cukrzycą
3. Stopa cukrzycowa
4. Cukrzyca typu 1 (DM1)
5. Cukrzyca typu 2 (DM2)
6. Diagnostyka
7. Powikłania
8. Ostre zaburzenia
9. Kazyistyka
10. Gramatyka
11. Ćwiczenie
12. Test

Figure 1. Preview of lessons from the Polish language version of Clinical Propaedeutics

Source: CZKey-Online Platform for Learning Medical Czech.

Completely original interactive educational materials are supplemented by over seven hours of audio recordings. The extensive module *Grammar* contains an overview of learning Czech as a foreign language in 31 chapters. On top of being explained from a linguistic viewpoint, most grammatical phenomena are also showcased via examples of real-life medical terms.⁵

4. Benefits and challenges of a multilingual platform

As mentioned previously, the result of the international CZKey project is *mluvtecesky.net*, a multilingual website for learning and teaching Czech. In the beginning, five language versions were available: Czech, English, German, Polish, and Slovak. During 2016–2019, other versions were gradually added: Arabic, Chinese, Romanian, Russian, and Spanish. The free-of-charge website is based on the principle of equal access to education. It allows users to select whichever initial (mediatory) language they are most comfortable with. Each individually themed lesson can be accessed separately – users are not forced to follow a specific pattern or progression route. Lessons follow the CEFR guidelines from level 0 to levels

5 E.g., by using the names of conditions and diseases to demonstrate possessive adjectives: *Bechtěrevova nemoc* (Bekhterev disease), *Parkinsonova choroba* (Parkinson's disease), *Aspergerův syndrom* (Asperger syndrome), etc.

B1–B2. This allows participation of those interested in more technical language, as well as users with no prior Czech language experience. From the beginning, the lessons cover various real-life situations in which the users can find themselves and where knowledge of Czech language, culture, and environment will help them better integrate into Czech society. This includes not only visits to a doctor’s surgery, but also making friends, navigating a city or a medical facility, job-hunting and job interviews, communication in the workplace, and many more. Gradually, lessons also cover basic medical and healthcare knowledge – for the B1/B2 level, there are 37 lessons covering individual medical fields.

Technical texts and doctor-patient dialogues have been translated into 9 languages so far. Czech is the default language version of the website. From a didactic point of view, it is interesting to note that a number of advanced students have decided to switch the website’s interface from their mediatory language to Czech in order to continue studying in their target language.

Lekcja 8 - 4: Udar mózgu

Przeczytaj tekst i napisz, z jakimi rzeczownikami łączy się słowo porucha.

1 / 3 -



Cévní mozkové příhody = CMP (ictus)

Termin CMP označuje náhle se rozvíjející postižení určité části mozkové tkáně, které vzniklo poruchou prokrvení. Dle mechanismu vzniku dělíme cmp na ischemické (iCMP) a hemoragické (hCMP). Ischemická cmp vzniká na podkladě trombozy na ateroskleroticky změněné cévě či na podkladě embolie. Hemoragická cmp je způsobena rupturou cévy. Příznaky cmp vznikají náhle a jsou různorodé v závislosti na lokalizaci postižení. Patří mezi ně hemiparézy, hemiplegie, afázie, parézy pohledu, poruchy vědomí, závratě, vzrácení, poruchy rovnováhy, nystagmus, ataxie, diplopie, dysartrie a jiné. Základní diagnostickou metodou je CT, které pomůže rozlišit, zda jde o iCMP či hCMP, a tím i určí terapii, která je u obou forem ictu rozdílná. Při léčbě iCMP používáme antiagregační, antikoagulační, neuroprotektivní a trombolytickou terapii, možná je i rekanalizační terapie. U hCMP můžeme pacientovi chirurgicky ošetřit krvácení nebo postupujeme konzervativně. [↗](#)

Termin udar mózgu označuje náhle se rozvíjící se úpadek části mozkové tkáně, které vzniklo v důsledku poruchy prokrvení. V závislosti od mechanismu powstania dzielimy udar mózgu na niedokrwienny i krwotoczny. Niedokrwienny udar powstaje na bazie skrzepu na miażdżycowo zmienionym naczyniu krwionośnym lub w wyniku embolii. Objawy udaru mózgu pojawiają się nagle i są różnorodne w zależności od lokalizacji upośledzenia. Należą do nich niedowład połowicy, porażenie, afazja, zaburzenia wzroku, świadomości, zawroty głowy, wymioty, zaburzenia równowagi, odczupięs, ataksja, podwójne widzenie, dyszartria i inne. Podstawową metodą diagnostyczną jest TK, która pomaga stwierdzić, czy chodzi o udar niedokrwienny, czy krwotoczny i tym samym wskazuje terapię, która jest różna u obu form udaru. Przy leczeniu niedokrwiennego udaru mózgu stosuje się terapię antyagregacyjną, antykoagulacyjną, neuroprotektynną i trombolityczną. W przypadku krwotocznego udaru mózgu można opatryć pacjentowi krwawienie chirurgicznie lub podjąć leczenie zachowawcze.

Figure 2. Preview of a Neurology lesson with Polish translation toggled on

Source: CZKey-Online Platform for Learning Medical Czech.

5. Target user audience

The project targets a rather broad spectrum of users: no prior knowledge of Czech language is required for lessons available at the A1/A2 levels. Foreign nationals studying full-time at Czech universities, exchange students, and even applicants for international protection can make use of the day-to-day language course. Meanwhile, the *Survival Czech* module is intended to help users in their first encounter with Czech, and can be especially useful for tourists and other short-term visitors. The largest part, *Medical Czech*, was created for current and future foreign physicians and other healthcare professionals working in the Czech Republic. As previously mentioned, it is also being used by foreign medical students studying in English language programmes at various medical faculties in the country. The

integration process is facilitated by information about the Czech healthcare system and being a foreign medical professional in the Czech Republic, and this is available in all the language versions. It is also necessary to mention that some international students attend university programmes led in Czech, where mastery of both written and spoken Czech is imperative.

6. Application and sustainability of *mluvtecesky.net*

The sustainability of *CZKey-Online Platform for Learning Medical Czech* is being continuously ensured by all the consortium partners. Unlimited access to the *mluvtecesky.net* website is available to anyone, free of charge. Based on user feedback, the contents are always being updated and any potential errors immediately corrected. In collaboration with volunteers, a Facebook page is being maintained as well, and the number of users is growing every day. Online courses have become an integral part of the syllabus for *Czech for Foreigners* taught at Czech medical faculties. The website is being used in teaching general and technical Czech to foreigners not only within the country, but abroad as well. Future prospects include the addition of further language versions, such as Vietnamese, Hebrew, and more.

7. Conclusion

The progressively increasing number of international medical students and foreign medical professionals in Czech healthcare poses a great challenge for authors of language-learning materials. By creating a completely original interactive Czech language course, the international team led by Masaryk University has proven their ability to adopt a complex approach to language education in the 21st century. On top of the language course itself, the multimedia platform offers miscellaneous information about Czech history, culture, and society, significantly contributing to the users' sociocultural aptitude. *Online Platform for Learning Medical Czech* was awarded the European Language Label in 2017.

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