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ONE MIND, MANY LANGUAGES: CZECH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE IN PLURILINGUAL REPERTOIRES

Annotation. Plurilingualism goes beyond the mere ability to use multiple languages; it emphasizes the interconnected nature of languages within an individual's linguistic competence. In line with the European language policy, university students are becoming users of several languages, and international university students in Czech universities often learn Czech as their fourth language or beyond (L4+). Understanding how their linguistic competencies interact can impact their language acquisition experience. Learners may perceive interactions among the languages within their linguistic repertoire. The concept of Perceived Positive Language Interaction (PPLI, Thompson, 2016) pertains to the perception that languages previously studied are interrelated in a positive way, ultimately enhancing a plurilingual's ability to acquire additional languages. This study explores the relationships between Czech as an additional language and the learners' prior languages. The research aims to answer three main questions: Do learners of Czech as L4+ perceive positive interactions among their learned languages? In what areas do these interactions manifest? How does Czech relate to their other languages? The study was conducted at a Czech university that provides optional introductory Czech courses (A1/A2), primarily to students in the Erasmus+ program. Fifty-four international students filled in an open-ended online questionnaire over two consecutive semesters. The analysis revealed that while students perceived positive interactions among some of the languages they had learned, especially within language families, interactions across typologically different languages occurred, particularly between Czech and German. The participants' mother tongue also emerged as a significant factor. While language instruction often follows a monolingual approach, where the target language is the primary mode of classroom interaction (Woll, 2020), learners may significantly benefit from their previous language learning experiences when learning an additional language. Despite the relatively limited research sample, this study suggests the didactic potential of positive language interaction in language teaching and learning and highlights further research opportunities.

Keywords: additional language; Czech; study-abroad; plurilingualism; multilingualism; perceived positive language interaction; PPLI; cross-linguistic influence.

Introduction

In today's interconnected and culturally diverse world, the significance of plurilingualism¹ emerges as a vital aspect of language education, and

¹ Note on terminology: The precise differentiation between multilingualism and plurilingualism remains an ongoing matter within applied linguistics. While plurilingualism

the promotion of plurilingualism stands as a significant aspect of academic life. European universities embrace a multilingual ethos, offering programs in their official local and other languages. The role of plurilingualism in shaping educational experiences has become increasingly salient and further accentuated by the rising trend of university students participating in international exchange programs such as Erasmus or pursuing complete degrees abroad.

The languages individuals acquire are not isolated entities within separate boxes in their minds. Instead, they intertwine, forming a rich network of linguistic connections (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 13). This integrated plurilingual competence significantly influences learning an additional language, shaping cognitive abilities, learning strategies, and linguistic perspectives employed during language acquisition. Within this interconnected pattern of languages, individuals may perceive positive interactions across various linguistic domains, impacting individual learner differences in language learning. Recognizing these positive language interactions has been shown to foster motivation and positive attitudes toward language learning (Henry, 2011, 2017) while mitigating anxiety levels often associated with language acquisition (Thompson & Khawaja, 2016).

In language learning and teaching research, the monolingual principle (Cook, 2016) as the traditional framework prevails, wherein the primary distinction is made between an individual's mother tongue (native language, first language, L1) and any languages acquired subsequently, typically referred to as the second language (L2). However, within the context of plurilingualism, scholars highlight the importance of distinguishing between the acquisition of

generally pertains to the individual level and multilingualism is associated with societies and nations (Council of Europe, 2007), specific theoretical frameworks extend the notion of multilingualism to the individual level. While this paper maintains the principle of plurilingualism at the individual level, it preserves the original wording when referencing previous studies on multilingualism.

Another terminological issue emerges from the distinction between second, foreign, and additional languages. Although "second language" traditionally denotes learning a language in a country where it is spoken, and "foreign language" pertains to learning in a nation where the official language differs, the demarcation between these terms can sometimes become indistinct. For the purposes of this article, this distinction is not of primary importance. The term "additional language" in this paper refers to any language an individual learns after their mother tongue and any second or foreign language(s) they may have acquired.

languages learned subsequently (L3, L4, L5, or additional languages) as the process of acquiring the additional languages differs (De Angelis, 2007; Aronin & Hufeisen, 2009). This recognition urges a deeper examination of the acquisition of languages beyond the second. Furthermore, delving into learners' plurilingual repertoires positively affects their comprehension of other target language features (Polzin-Haumann & Reissner, 2020).

Learning an additional language opens up space for the use of various pluralistic approaches (Piccardo, 2018, 2021). These approaches encompass acquiring knowledge and awareness of different languages and cultures and attitudes towards them. Moreover, they extend to developing skills that enable learners to observe, analyze, and compare languages and cultures (Candelier, 2010). This can contribute to a more inclusive and dynamic language learning environment, promoting language acquisition, intercultural competence, and respect for diverse ways of communicating.

The exploration of individual plurilingual experience gains significance as a lens to understand the dynamics of language learning, particularly in the distinctive context of acquiring a less commonly taught language as an additional language in higher education study-abroad programs. Nevertheless, research investigating the dynamics of Czech within the broader landscape of plurilingualism has been scarce, with studies exploring language transfer from L1 to L2. Melnikova (2022), for example, examined language transfer among advanced learners of Czech with Hindi/Urdu native language, Parashchak (2021) explored interference in the syntax of Ukrainian learners of Czech, and Kotková (2017) described the interference between Czech and a non-Slavic language in Czech language learners. These papers tackle the issue of language transfer through the perspective of error analysis and contrastive analysis. To date, there has been a notable absence of empirical investigations exploring the role of the Czech language within the plurilingual repertoires of language learners.

The current study explores language learning in the context of higher education in a Czech university setting. Despite Czech being the official language of instruction at Czech universities, multilingualism is actively encouraged and promoted in the academic landscape. Alongside courses conducted in Czech, students can study in other languages, and certain

institutions extend programs taught in languages other than Czech (for further insights into language management practices at Czech universities, refer to Sherman, 2020). Within this context, the study explores the interplay of languages in the plurilingual repertoires of international students coming to study in the Czech Republic, learning Czech as an additional language. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Do learners of Czech as L4+ perceive positive interactions among the languages they have learned?
2. In which specific areas do these interactions manifest?
3. How does Czech relate to the other languages learned?

Theoretical Framework:

Perceived Positive Language Interaction (PPLI)

Plurilingualism exerts a positive impact upon learner differences, enhancing the overall attitudes towards languages and their learning: plurilingual individuals often demonstrate heightened tolerance for ambiguity (Dewaele & Wei, 2013) and increased language learning motivation (Thompson, 2017, 2020). Moreover, they tend to experience reduced language learning anxiety (Dewaele et al., 2008) and enhanced metalinguistic awareness (Jessner, 2008). Collectively, these factors contribute to a significantly enhanced language learning experience for plurilingual individuals.

PPLI is a concept that refers "to the perception held by many (but not all) multilinguals that languages studied in the past are interrelated in a positive way that can support and expand a multilingual's ability to learn subsequent languages" (Thompson, 2016, p. 91). The roots of this concept trace back to earlier studies in linguistics, particularly the contrastive analysis (Lado, 1957), cross-linguistic influence in second language acquisition (McManus, 2022), and perceived language distance (Kellerman, 1983). The goal of contrastive analysis was to predict and explain the difficulties that learners of a second language might encounter based on the linguistic features of their native language. Areas where languages differ, such as phonology, grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, play a critical role in determining the errors or challenges for language learners (Ellis, 1994, p. 306). Similarly, the theory

of language transfers aims to unveil the potential of errors in the target language (negative transfer) or facilitation of learning (Odlin, 1989). The notion of perceived language distance highlights how learners' perceptions of linguistic similarities and differences between their languages can affect the transfer process and language acquisition. When languages appear akin, learners may anticipate smoother learning due to shared traits. Conversely, languages perceived as distant can pose more significant challenges. This perception influences learners' attitudes, motivations, and expectations, guiding their approach to acquiring a new language.

While the early approaches to language comparison focused on transfer between a learner's L1 and L2, this concept has extended to learning L2 and L3, and numerous studies demonstrated that knowledge from the L2 could transfer to the L3 on various levels of language (De Angelis, 2007; De Angelis & Dewaele, 2011; De Angelis et al., 2015). Jessner (2008) argues that multilingual competence forms a complex dynamic system wherein alterations in one element trigger changes throughout the framework. Consequently, the evolving understanding of how languages interact within the mind of a plurilingual individual can significantly exert impact on the overall system.

Drawing on previous studies on cross-linguistic influence and perceived language distance, Thompson (2016) introduced the framework of PPLI in the Turkish context. She defined the concept by gauging how learners viewed their past interactions with foreign languages. In an open-ended questionnaire, participants regarded their prior experiences with foreign languages. If those were positive, the learners classified PPLI. Conversely, if they felt no or negative interaction between the languages, they belonged to the NPPLI (No Perceived Positive Language Interaction) group. Multilingual speakers scored notably higher language aptitude scores. In further studies on PPLI, learners with PPLI displayed higher levels of motivation to learn the target language (Thompson & Aslan, 2014), less fear of ambiguity (Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2014), and less anxiety (Thompson & Khawaja, 2015) when compared to the NPPLI.

The empirical research targeting the PPLI is still relatively limited; numerous studies have examined cross-linguistic influence in plurilingual speakers on various linguistic areas. Dewaele (1998) investigated the sources

of cross-linguistic influence in multilingual language learners, particularly in lexical inventions in the interlanguage of Dutch L1 speakers learning French as an L2 and English as an L3. Contrary to the assumption that the L1 is the primary source of cross-linguistic influence in L3 acquisition, the study revealed that French L3 speakers drew on their English L2 knowledge when creating lexical inventions. In contrast, French L2 speakers tended to rely on their Dutch L1. These results highlighted the role of the L2 lexicon in learning the L3.

Furthermore, empirical research has also recognized the impact of L2 on the acquisition of L3 grammar. Bardel and Falk's (2007) research on syntactic transfer revealed that L2 knowledge significantly influenced the acquisition of L3 grammar, indicating that syntactic structures were more easily transferred from the L2 to the L3 than from the L1. The role of L2 (German) syntax on L3 (English) syntactic development was observed in a study by Sánchez (2020).

In the phonological aspects of third language acquisition, Llama et al. (2010) conducted a study elucidating the factors having impact on the choice of a source language for phonological influence in L3 Spanish with diverse L1 and L2 backgrounds. The study compared the roles of language distance and language status (L1, L2, and L3). Their findings revealed that language status was the principal determinant for phonological choices, indicating that learners predominantly drew upon their L2 experiences when shaping their L3 phonological patterns. This observation prompts a deeper consideration of how the individuals navigate their linguistic repertoire, highlighting that, in some instances, the influence of language status can prevail over language distance.

Another study on phonological proximity (Nelson et al., 2021) involved participants with L2 English and German or Polish as their L1 or L3. The findings indicated that, unsurprisingly, English-German was perceived as the most similar language pair. However, an L1 effect was also observed, with the L1 Polish group perceiving the three language pairs as more equidistant, while the L1 German group clearly distinguished between them. This suggests that language proximity and the influence of one's native language play a role in how individuals perceive the similarity between languages in their linguistic repertoire. Moreover, this study highlighted the significant role of L1, although

the concept of PPLI would classify positive interactions between L1 and subsequently acquired languages as NPPLI (Thompson, 2016). This finding underscores the need to consider the influence of one's native language, not only in terms of potential transfer but also in understanding the dynamics of language interactions in a multilingual context.

Chau et al. (2022) emphasized the need for further investigation into cross-linguistic transfer in the context of third language acquisition, highlighting that the existing body of L3 research has primarily concentrated on low-level language components, such as vocabulary and syntax, as evidenced by the studies discussed above. Their study explored the text quality of master's students in professional communication as they engaged in reading-to-write integrated tasks in their L1 (Dutch), L2 (English), and L3 (French). The findings illuminated disparities across these languages, with source interaction significantly influencing text quality in L1 and L3. This underscores the necessity for more comprehensive research targeting higher-level language components within the L3 acquisition.

Studies consistently highlight the significance of language distance in language learning, suggesting that languages sharing typological origins facilitate understanding, with language typology emerging as a pivotal factor in perceiving positive influence. Specifically, languages within the same family exhibit a heightened potential for favorable transfer and intercomprehension (Mewald, 2019; Polzin-Haumann & Reissner, 2020). However, learners demonstrated that effective transfer could occur even across distinct language families, challenging the limitations of typology-based models. These findings underscored the need to reevaluate how typology-based models account for the complexities of cross-linguistic influence.

Westergaard et al. (2017) introduced the Language Proximity Model (LPM), which offers an alternative to typology-based language acquisition models. The LPM suggests that learning a new language involves a gradual, step-by-step process where previously acquired languages play a role. This process can result in both helpful (facilitative) and potentially challenging (non-facilitative) influences from the learner's prior language knowledge.

In this model, cross-linguistic influence occurs when a new language feature bears structural similarities to linguistic aspects found in the learner's

earlier languages. This implies that when acquiring an L3, learners can benefit from the linguistic resources of their known languages. However, they may also encounter challenges stemming from these languages. The LPM predicts unique learning patterns for different linguistic phenomena, emphasizing the importance of the similarity of abstract linguistic properties rather than solely typological proximity. This highlights the interplay between a specific feature in one language and its impact on the structural aspects shared with previously acquired languages.

Unlike Thompson's PPLI model, research on cross-linguistic influence and language proximity recognizes the L1 as a significant contributing factor. This body of research highlights that many learners identify interactions between their L1 and subsequent languages. In contrast, Thompson's framework explicitly excludes responses involving interactions between the L1 and L2, categorizing them as NPPLI, stating that these responses are intriguing but outside the scope of the PPLI framework (Thompson, 2016, p. 97).

The study examined perceived language interactions in plurilingual students, including the understanding how the Czech language interacts with the languages they had previously learned. As part of their Czech language courses, students received open-ended questionnaires to express their perceptions of language interactions, including the Czech language, in their linguistic repertoires.

Methodology

Participants

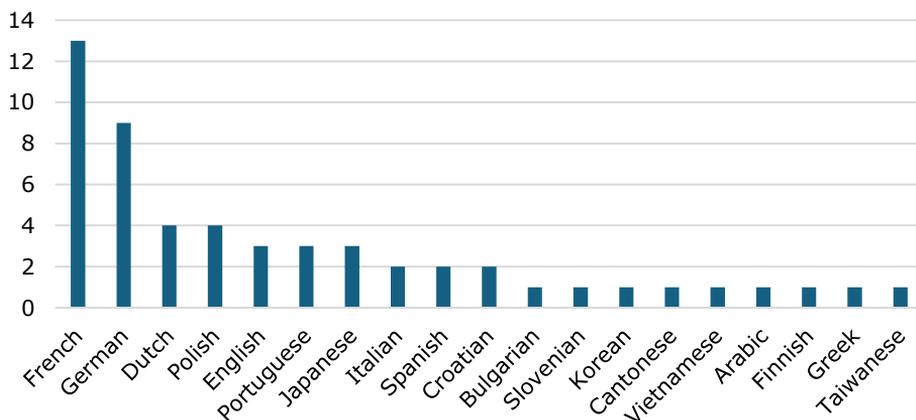
The study took place in the Czech language courses offered by a local university at two faculties: Arts and Humanities. These courses cater to international students participating in study-abroad exchange programs, primarily Erasmus+. However, full-degree students with longer-term academic sojourns can also enroll. The two faculties offer elementary Czech courses, specifically at the A1 and A2 levels, and do not provide higher-level language courses. These courses typically comprise around fifteen students per group. The groups in this study convened twice a week, except for two courses that

frequented only one meeting per week, and each session lasted for ninety minutes. The courses adhered to the standard semester duration of thirteen weeks and employed a communicative teaching method without incorporating specific plurilingual language learning strategies. Students from seven courses spanning two consecutive semesters were requested to complete an online questionnaire, resulting in fifty-four responses.

The study's focus on plurilingual university students in low-level Czech courses within the study abroad context resulted in a homogeneous sample: the participants represented various, mostly European universities, aged 22 years on average, with an age range between 22 and 28, and more than 90% of them had learned Czech for less than a year. This targeted approach to the research sample helped reduce the potential for excessive diversity, primarily concerning the Czech language proficiency, language backgrounds, and academic experiences.

Figure 1

Participants' Native Languages



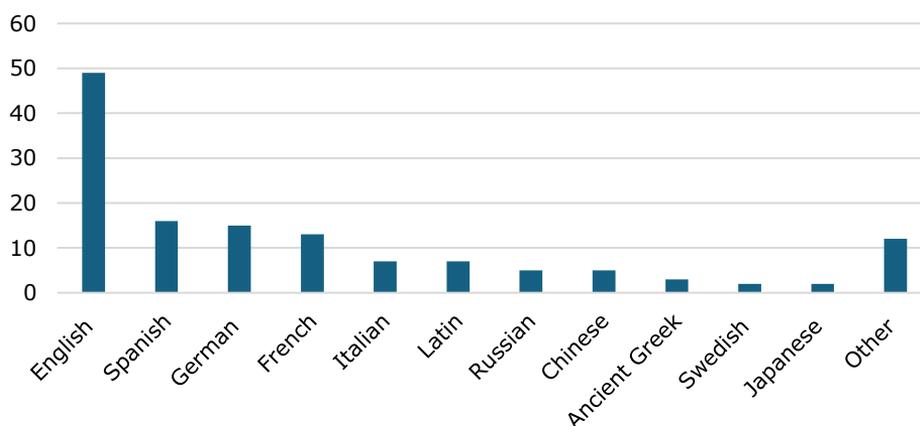
The learners came from various countries and cultural backgrounds, contributing to the diversity of the learning environment. A notable segment of participants (approximately one-third) had mother tongues belonging to the Romance language family, namely French, but Italian and Portuguese were also present. Another significant cohort had mother tongues rooted in

Germanic languages (22%), including German, Dutch, and English. While Romance and Germanic languages emerged as predominant, the sample also included Slavic speakers, specifically Polish and Croatian (7%). The Czech language courses offered at both faculties are accessible to all international students. While Erasmus students from European nations dominated, the learners showcased diverse mother tongues, encompassing Korean, Taiwanese, Finnish, Greek, and more. Figure 1 presents all the native languages that appeared in the sample.

In terms of languages learned, the participants' backgrounds were also diverse. As anticipated, most of them identified English as their initial foreign language. On average, they began learning English at approximately nine years of age, three of them were native English speakers. As study-abroad students, they used English daily in communication and academic pursuits. The other most learned languages were Spanish, mentioned by 16 learners, German by 15, and French by 13. In addition to living languages, they stated Latin and Ancient Greek. One participant hesitated to list a dead language, which raises the possibility that others may have omitted them, too—although this cannot be confirmed. Figure 2 presents all the non-native languages studied by the participants, ranked by frequency among them.

Figure 2

Languages Learned Before Czech



Czech served as the L3+ for all of them, with more than 90% indicating

that Czech was their L4+ (50 participants), but there were also instances where individuals studied Czech as their L5 to L9, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1

The Order of Czech Learned as an Additional Language in the Sample

Order of learning	Number of learners
Czech as L2	0
Czech as L3	4
Czech as L4	10
Czech as L5	22
Czech as L6	9
Czech as L7	4
Czech as L8	3
Czech as L9	2

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process involved administering a Google Form questionnaire to participants at the end of two academic semesters. The researcher asked the teachers to inform the students about the empirical study and encourage participation. This approach involved a personal connection between the students and their instructors, aiming to enhance their engagement and increase their willingness to participate. Students then filled out the questionnaire in their free time. In line with the principles of research ethics, the introduction to the questionnaire outlined the study objectives and purpose, together with the procedures for data handling and treatment, ensuring data privacy and confidentiality. The final question of the questionnaire sought participants' explicit agreement to partake in the study, reinforcing their voluntary participation and informed consent.

In addition to collecting demographic information, the questionnaire incorporated three open-ended questions designed to prompt the learners to reflect on their perceived language interactions. One of these questions aimed to elicit insights into how their knowledge of other languages influenced their

learning of Czech. The questionnaire drew inspiration from Thompson's work on PPLI (2016), exemplified by the question: "If you have studied other languages in the past, do you think that this has helped or hindered your ability to learn subsequent languages?" After this binary question, the participants were asked to provide specific examples of such interactions. The questionnaire encouraged them to consider various aspects of language, potentially extending to areas such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Furthermore, they could comment on other facets of language that they found pertinent. To collect data relevant to the research question addressing the role of Czech in language interactions, the concluding question, "Do you feel that the previous languages helped you in any way when learning Czech? How?" allowed to provide more detailed insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding the impact of their previous languages on learning Czech.

The data analysis process encompassed a series of sequential steps. The initial review and compilation phase involved examining the data downloaded from the online data collection sheet by two researchers. Following this, a list of participants with their respective answers provided the foundational basis for the analysis procedure. The analysis concentrated on the languages learned and the interactions between them, with particular attention paid to interactions involving the Czech language.

The initial analysis stage encompassed data coding, during which two researchers reviewed the responses and determined whether they qualified as instances of PPLI or NPPLI, following Thompson's guidelines (Thompson, 2016, p. 97). Responses indicating uncertainty about the positive impact of languages fell into the NPPLI category. The two researchers discussed the instances that lacked clarity, leaning on the coding guidelines providing a foundational framework for final resolution. For instance, when learners expressed uncertainty, they were categorized as NPPLI. When a response contained a mix of positive and negative interactions, the researchers followed Thompson's guidance, considering the predominant sentiment for coding purposes. Thus, a meticulous evaluation of responses was required to determine whether they represented PPLI or NPPLI.

The second phase of analysis encompassed the extraction of

the languages studied and the interactions observed among them. Subsequently, the examination shifted towards exploring the interaction dynamics between Czech and other foreign languages.

Results

The perceptions of language interaction underscored a notable degree of PPLI. In the data, PPLI was indicated when the learners responded affirmatively to the question, "If you have studied other languages in the past, do you think that this has helped or hindered your ability to learn subsequent languages?" While almost 90% responses concurred that prior knowledge of another language aided in learning an additional language, four participants opted not to answer the question PPLI. Two mentioned not perceiving any correlation between the languages they studied, and two acknowledged that they were unsure. Several believed that the presence of PPLI varied depending on the languages involved, with PPLI being more prevalent, as expected, among languages from the same language families. Similarly, in considering the interactions between Czech and other languages, the learners who had not previously encountered a Slavic language agreed that their familiarity with languages from different language families had a marginal impact on their acquisition of the Czech language.

When prompted to provide specific instances of PPLI within their language repertoires, examples involving specific languages occurred. However, some referred to languages they learned as an entire repertoire and did not compare them individually.

As expected, the identification of PPLI was more frequent among typologically similar languages: Germanic languages - English, German, Dutch, or Swedish; Romance languages - Latin, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian; and Slavic languages: Russian, Polish, Croatian, Slovenian, and Czech.

For me, it helped to learn other languages if they had the same language family. For example, it is easier to learn Spanish if you already speak French because both languages are Romance languages (Participant 3, German).

Slavic languages, like Croatian and Russian, share similar words and grammar with Czech. Knowledge of Latin helped with Romance languages (Participant 12, Croatian).

Nevertheless, some learners also recognized instances of PPLI extending across typologically distinct languages:

For example, in Japanese, words do not have gender, but in French and Czech, they do. Having learned that in French, it was quite easy to think about it in Czech as well (Participant 8, Japanese).

Pronunciations of some letters are similar between some languages: some Chinese accents with Czech accents, or the French "g" sound for the Czech "ř"; some Czech words look French to me, so I can manage to pronounce them right (Participant 33, French).

My knowledge of French grammar has helped me to learn Czech grammar in terms of the gender of words (Participant 49, Dutch).

I learned to use cases studying Latin and Greek, and it was useful for Czech (Participant 16, French).

The question about PPLI further prompted specific examples in terms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and other areas of the language. The examples underscored the learners' inclination to explore diverse facets of grammar in their language comparisons, noticing similarities in how different languages handle aspects of morphology and syntax. For instance, they highlighted that German and Czech share similarities in noun declensions and cases or that the presence of grammatical gender in German or French helped them understand Czech, as illustrated by Participant 8 above.

In terms of sentence structure, they found word order and prepositions puzzling, whereas the omission of personal pronouns in Italian and Spanish resonated with the Czech language structure:

The unnecessary use of personal pronouns in sentences is common in both Czech and Italian languages. It can also be easier to adapt to some specifically Czech word orders when you are familiar with languages that all have different ways of ordering words (German, Dutch, and Italian are all very different in this regard) (Participant 15, French).

Regarding vocabulary, the learners recognized similarities between English and French, particularly in the academic domain, and also noted the presence of loan words in languages:

Latin-origin vocabulary is commonly shared in many languages in medicine/academic fields, while English loan words dominate tech vocab (Participant 48, German).

Once more, instances of vocabulary resemblances within language families were a recurring theme:

English made it easier to learn some Norwegian words. And Polish can sometimes be helpful with Czech words. German words were also sometimes helpful in Norwegian (Participant 40, Polish).

Furthermore, the topic of word formation surfaced two times in the data. One person (Participant 45) identified the word formation process in German as similar to Slovenian. At the same time, however, word formation represented a hindrance in language learning for another person:

For me, creating nouns in different languages is always a struggle. For example, if you know a word in the form of an adjective or adverb and need to change it into a noun, or if you know the word in another language and need to translate, I get very easily confused and use incorrect noun forms, which makes me continue creating non-existent words (Participant 26, Spanish).

While the learners recognized the facilitative influence of common vocabulary and grammar within language families, the presence of distinct pronunciation patterns presented a challenge:

In terms of vocabulary and grammar, all my Romance languages relate to each other, so it's been easier, but in terms of pronunciation, they are all different (Participant 36, Spanish).

The pronunciation of all the languages I know is different, especially Czech pronunciation, which was completely new to me (Participant 49, Dutch).

However, even within a diversity of pronunciation, some learners recognized some phonetic connections as illustrated here:

None of them have the same pronunciation, but Spanish and Czech both have the same "r" pronunciation most of the time (Participant 37, French).

In the pronunciation, I can associate the sounds of the letters (Participant 43, French).

The influence of prior knowledge of Russian on learning Czech was a dual-edged experience for one person. While certain aspects, such as declensions and shared vocabulary like numbers, provided a helpful foundation, the distinctive pronunciation proved to be a hurdle:

Having learned some Russian in the past both helped and hindered me in learning Czech. On one hand, I was familiar with declension, and some words are very similar (numbers, for example), but on the other hand, the pronunciation really is different and hindered me in learning Czech vocabulary (sounds u, y, e...) (Participant 41, French).

These quotes underscore the interplay between phonetics, vocabulary,

and grammar within the language interactions. While vocabulary and grammar connections offered familiar ground, pronunciation stood out as a factor distinguishing between languages.

Figure 3

Types of Interaction Perceived Among Languages

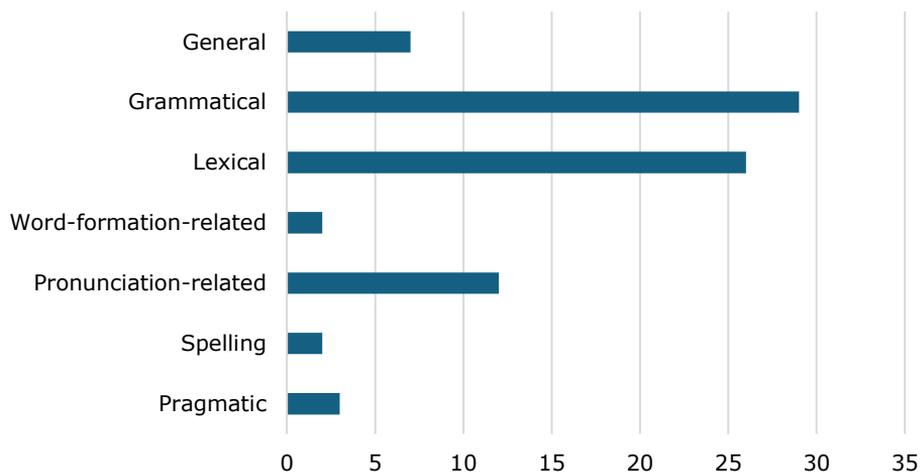


Figure 3 summarizes the areas where the learners perceived the interaction of languages, encompassing a range of linguistic dimensions. The most prominent interactions observed in the study were related to grammar and lexis, followed by pronunciation-related instances. The fourth type of interaction noted in the study encompassed general observations, where the learners pointed out resemblances between languages without providing specific examples related to particular language areas.

Analyzing specific interactions between Czech and other languages yielded compelling language dynamics, as shown in Table 2. While the presence of a significant number of interactions between Czech and other Slavic languages was expected (7 mentions), the notable prevalence of interactions with German with 12 mentions, followed by French with 5 mentions, introduces a dimension verifying the assumption that structural affinities within one language can be mirrored in another, even if the languages belong to distinct language families. Nevertheless, the correlations found were minor, such as

certain shared words or similarities in specific grammatical structures. Overall, the consensus remained that the Slavic languages aided the learning process of learning Czech more significantly.

Table 2

Perceived Interactions of Czech and Other Languages

Languages	Number of interactions
Slavic language/Czech	7
German/Czech	12
French/Czech	5
Italian/Czech	2
Latin/Czech	3
Latin+Greek/Czech	1
French+Spanish/Czech	1

While participants compared the languages learned, the influence of their mother tongue emerged as a significant factor. A notable subset was the responses from native Polish, Croatian, and Slovenian speakers, who unanimously highlighted the linguistic similarities between Czech and their respective mother tongues, underscoring how this resemblance facilitated their language acquisition process. The influence of L1 extended beyond Slavic language speakers, as evidenced by several non-Slavic learners who also acknowledged its role as a contributing factor to PPLI.

An additional noteworthy theme emerged from the dataset concerning sociocultural awareness as an integral facet of linguistic competence when one person underscored the shared utilization of language in formal and informal contexts, observed in German, French, or Russian. This spontaneous recognition highlights the holistic nature of language acquisition and its interconnectedness with diverse cultural contexts.

The following quote illustrates the holistic perspective through which one person perceived their plurilingual system:

They intertwine, they co-exist, and complete each other. If you change one of them, then the language is no longer the same; it's still called the same

language and understood, but the personality is changed (Participant 53, Vietnamese).

This response underscores the interconnectedness of languages and their profound role in shaping the plurilingual speaker's identity. It reveals that the language user's linguistic repertoire is a cohesive and intertwined whole.

In summary, the participants in this study demonstrated a significant degree of PPLI. While most of them acknowledged that prior knowledge of another language aided their acquisition of additional languages, it is essential to note that a few refrained from responding to the PPLI question or were uncertain about the relationship between their studied languages. The learners recognized the presence of PPLI prevalent among languages from the same language families, reaffirming the expected interactions between Czech and other Slavic languages. However, the surprising prevalence of interactions with German and sometimes French demonstrated that structural affinities within one language can be mirrored in another, even if they belong to distinct language families. Furthermore, the sociocultural context emerged as an integral facet of linguistic competence, with learners recognizing the shared use of language in formal and informal settings across languages, relating to language pragmatics. This observation emphasizes the interconnectedness of language acquisition with diverse cultural contexts, underscoring the holistic nature of plurilingual language use.

Discussion

The study examined PPLI among Czech language learners hailing from diverse linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds. The initial research question sought to unveil whether the participants discerned positive interactions within their array of languages. The results consistently reinforced the existence of PPLI within the learners' language repertoires. While some admitted difficulty recognizing these interactions, the prevailing affirmation underscored the pivotal role of prior language knowledge as a facilitator in acquiring additional languages, corroborating empirical studies (De Angelis & Dewaele, 2011).

Furthermore, the findings offered a variety of language comparisons.

The responses identified PPLI in diverse linguistic facets, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling, and word formation, aligning with the existing body of research on cross-linguistic influence (Gutierrez-Mangado et al., 2019). These interactions transcended not only among typologically similar languages but also extended across different language families when participants compared Czech to languages they had previously studied. This observation highlights the potential for the Language Proximity Model, which underscores structural commonalities over language typology (Westergaard et al., 2017).

In addition to the areas of language addressed by the questionnaire, the learners' spontaneous reference to the sociocultural dimension of communication underscores the importance of sociocultural awareness in developing effective language skills. This result encourages further exploration of higher-level language competencies, such as strategic dimensions and pragmatics, in line with suggestions by Chau et al. (2022).

This study bears pedagogical significance in the broader context of plurilingual language education. Recognizing positive interactions between languages can inform the development of effective learning strategies suitable for various language learning contexts, aligning with the recommendations on plurilingualism by the Council of Europe (2007). From a learner's perspective, this study provides insights that can inspire educators to raise awareness of potential positive language interactions. Educators can encourage students to actively seek and share instances of these interactions in various classroom activities. Leveraging the expertise of students with advanced plurilingual skills to assist their peers in understanding and acquiring additional languages can foster a collaborative and supportive learning environment. Educational institutions should also incorporate plurilingual approaches into their curricula and provide professional development opportunities for educators to equip them with a deeper understanding of plurilingualism and effective pedagogical strategies extending beyond intercomprehension (De Carlo & Garbarino, 2021; North et al., 2022; Piccardo et al., 2021). This ongoing professional growth empowers teachers to adapt their teaching methods to cater to the diverse language backgrounds of their students, ultimately fostering inclusive plurilingual classrooms and enhancing the multiple-language learning

experiences of students.

Furthermore, drawing from Thompson's research (2016, 2017), it is evident that a substantial link exists between PPLI and language learning motivation. Her studies revealed that learners who experienced PPLI demonstrated higher motivation to acquire additional languages. Thus, it is plausible to suggest that by promoting awareness of language interactions and incorporating a plurilingual approach into language curricula, educators have the potential to foster more positive attitudes toward language learning in general. However, it is essential to acknowledge that this proposition is speculative and requires empirical validation through further research among plurilingual learners.

This study offers valuable insights into PPLI and its implications for language learning, yet it is crucial to acknowledge its limitations as they provide avenues for future research on PPLI. First, the study's sample primarily consisted of Erasmus students, representing a fraction of the broader language-learning population. Study-abroad university students may have unique language backgrounds, motivations, and learning experiences that could differ from those of other language learner cohorts. Furthermore, the study's focus on low-level Czech language courses restricts the research scope to specific proficiency levels. Nonetheless, previous studies suggest that language transfer dynamics may vary across proficiency levels (Sánchez, 2017). Therefore, future research involving more advanced Czech learners must validate the perceived linguistic interactions among plurilingual speakers at higher proficiency levels.

Additionally, this study primarily featured plurilingual university students who voluntarily enrolled in a Czech language course, suggesting intrinsic motivation to acquire another language. It remains speculative whether international students not participating in the Czech course exhibit lower levels of PPLI, and further investigation is needed for a comprehensive understanding.

Finally, this study did not address the potential impact of external factors, such as individual motivation or specific language teaching methodologies, which can shape language learning outcomes and attitudes towards learning languages. Those could be addressed in future, qualitative

studies on PPLI, allowing for in-depth exploration and comprehensive understanding of external influences on PPLI.

In conclusion, these limitations underscore that while this study offers valuable insights into PPLI, its findings should be considered in light of these constraints. Future research should aim for more extensive and diverse samples, encompass learners at various proficiency levels, and explore the interplay between external factors and PPLI in greater depth.

Conclusion

In the global landscape of plurilingualism, this study offers a unique exploration of the plurilingual linguistic competencies of university students studying Czech, a less commonly taught language, as an additional language. The research objectives were to examine whether learners perceive positive interactions among their languages and pinpoint the domains where these interactions manifest. Additionally, the study sought to unravel the role of Czech within the broader realm of plurilingualism.

The interconnectedness of languages is a vital aspect of plurilingual competence that significantly shapes cognitive abilities, learning strategies, and linguistic perspectives in language acquisition. This study reveals that learners often recognize positive interactions within their linguistic repertoires, validating the existence of PPLI in learning Czech as an additional language. Such interactions span language families and transcend language typologies, proposing a comprehensive picture of how languages interact within the plurilingual mind.

While conventional language instruction predominantly follows a monolingual approach, focusing on the target language as the primary mode of classroom interaction, this study highlights the invaluable role of previous language learning experiences when acquiring an additional language. Recognizing and leveraging positive language interactions can significantly enhance language learning experiences. The potential of PPLI to foster motivation and positive attitudes toward language learning, and mitigate the anxiety associated with language acquisition cannot be understated. Hence, the didactic implications of this research call for an innovative approach

to language teaching and learning, challenging the rooted monolingual paradigm. Moreover, this study underscores the value of incorporating plurilingual approaches into educational institutions' curricula, cultivating professional development opportunities for educators to gain a deeper understanding of plurilingualism and effective pedagogical strategies. This approach enables educators to cater to the diverse language backgrounds of students, fostering plurilingual classrooms and enriching the language learning experiences.

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Appendix

Questions for the questionnaire:

1. How old are you?
2. What is your mother tongue?
3. How long have you been learning Czech?
4. How many foreign languages have you learned since your childhood? When was it, and what level have you achieved?
5. If you have studied other languages in the past, do you think that this has helped or hindered your ability to learn subsequent languages?
6. Comment on the following aspects of how the languages you have learned interact in terms of
 - vocabulary:
 - grammar:
 - pronunciation:
 - other aspect of the language:

ONE MIND, MANY LANGUAGES: CZECH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
IN PLURILINGUAL REPERTOIRES

7. How do the languages you have learned relate to the Czech language?
8. Czech is the (first, second, third...) language I have learned.

List of languages learned:

Language	Number of Learners
English	51
Spanish	16
German	15
French	13
Italian	7
Latin	7
Russian	5
Chinese	5
Greek	3
Japanese	2
Swedish	2
Dutch	1
Macedonian	1
Norwegian	1
Korean	1
Hungarian	1
Polish	1
Irish	1
Esperanto	1
Kichwa	1
Toki Pona	1
Galician	1
Hindi	1
Galician	1
Farsi	1
Esperanto	1

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JEDNA MYSL, MNOHO JAZYKŮ: ČEŠTINA JAKO DALŠÍ JAZYK VE VÍCEJAZYČNÉM REPERTOÁRU

Shrnutí. Vícejazyčnost přesahuje pouhou schopnost používat více jazyků a zdůrazňuje vzájemnou propojenost jazyků v rámci jazykové kompetence jednotlivce. V souladu s jazykovou politikou Rady Evropy se vysokoškolští studenti stávají uživateli více jazyků a zahraniční vysokoškolští studenti na českých vysokých školách se často učí češtinu jako čtvrtý nebo další jazyk (L4+). Studující mohou v rámci svého jazykového repertoáru vnímat interakce mezi jazyky, kterým se učili, a to jak pozitivní (Perceived Positive Language Interaction, PPLI, Thompson, 2016), tak negativní. Cílem výzkumu je odpovědět na tři hlavní otázky: Vnímají studenti češtiny jako L4+ pozitivní interakce mezi svými osvojovanými jazyky? V jakých oblastech se tyto interakce projevují? Jaký je vztah češtiny k jejich dalším jazykům? Výzkum byl proveden na české univerzitě ve volitelných kurzech češtiny pro začátečníky (A1/A2). Během dvou po sobě jdoucích semestrů vyplnilo padesát čtyři zahraničních studentů (zejména studujících v rámci programu Erasmus+) otevřený online dotazník. Analýza ukázala, že většina dotázaných (90 %) vnímala mezi studovanými jazyky pozitivní interakce, a to zejména v rámci jazykových rodin. Mezi typologicky odlišnými jazyky však také docházelo k interakcím, zejména mezi češtinou a němčinou. Jako významný faktor se ukázal také mateřský jazyk účastníků. Navzdory relativně omezenému výzkumnému vzorku studie naznačuje didaktický potenciál pozitivní jazykové interakce ve výuce a učení se jazykům a navrhuje další možnosti výzkumu.

Klíčová slova: další jazyk; čeština; studium v zahraničí; vícejazyčnost; mnohojazyčnost; vnímaná pozitivní jazyková interakce; PPLI; mezijazykový vliv.

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**VIENA GALVA, DAUG KALBŲ: ČEKŲ KALBA KAIP PRIDĖTINĖ
KALBA DAUGIAKALBIUOSE REPERTUARUOSE**

Anotacija. Daugiakalbystė nėra vien tik gebėjimas vartoti kelias kalbas – ji reiškia kalbų tarpusavio ryšį asmens kalbinėje kompetencijoje. Pagal Europos kalbų politiką universitetų studentai yra kelių kalbų vartotojai. Tarptautiniai universitetų studentai, besimokantys čekų kalbos kursuose, dažniausiai mokosi čekų kalbos kaip L4+. Tyrimu siekiama atsakyti į tris pagrindinius klausimus: Ar čekų kalbos L4+ besimokantieji suvokia teigiamą sąveiką tarp savo išmoktų kalbų? Kokiose srityse šios sąveikos pasireiškia? Kaip čekų kalba siejasi su kitomis kalbomis? Tyrime dalyvavo 54 užsienio studentai, besimokantys čekų kalbos žemesniu nei A1/A2 kalbos mokėjimo lygiu. Tyrime nagrinėjama, ar ir kaip šie besimokantieji suvokia savo daugiakalbio repertuaro kalbų sąveiką. 54 užsienio studentai, du semestrus iš eilės studijuodami pasirenkamuosiuose čekų kalbos kursuose, pildė atvirą internetinį klausimyną. Analizė atskleidė, kad dalyvių repertuaruose gana aiškiai suvokiama teigiama kalbinė sąvoka. Besimokantieji pastebėjo teigiamą gramatikos, žodyno, tarimo ir kitų kalbos sričių sąveiką. Teigiama sąveika ypač pasireiškė kalbų šeimose. Tačiau pasitaikydavo sąveikų ir tarp tipologiškai skirtingų kalbų, būtent tarp čekų ir vokiečių kalbų. Dalyvių gimtoji kalba taip pat išryškėjo kaip veiksnys. Ankstesni tyrimai parodė, kad suvokta teigiama kalbinė sąveika yra susijusi su didesne besimokančiųjų kalbų mokymosi motyvacija arba mažesniu kalbiniu nerimu. Šiame kontekste, nepaisant palyginti nedidelės tyrimo imties, tyrimas rodo teigiamos kalbinės sąveikos panaudojimo didaktinį potencialą mokant kalbų.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: pridėtinė kalba; čekų kalba; individuali daugiakalbystė; visuotinė daugiakalbystė; suvokta teigiama kalbinė sąveika; kryžminė kalbinė įtaka; tarpkalbinė sąveika.