Standard Czech and Colloquial Czech

The reasons for the existence of two forms of Czech are historical and they extend long into the past. After the defeat of the Protestants in the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, Czech almost disappeared as an official and literary language and was replaced by German in these functions. A spoken form of the language, however, continued to evolve. During the National Revival in the early 19th century, the standard form of Czech was gradually codified based on an older form of Czech from the 16th century, causing the current differences in the language. In the Bohemian territory there still prevails the so-called **obecná čeština**, while the situation in Moravia is more differentiated and linguistic features typical for dialects significantly appear there.

The Usage of Standard and Colloquial Czech

Standard Czech is used for official or formal communication, such as in the office, during lectures, in formal reports and performances on television and radio, at job interviews or when writing formal documents. Colloquial Czech can be heard in families, at work, on the street, in shops, restaurants and the like. In this course, you learn primarily literary Czech, but you are continually familiarized with elements of colloquial language too.

Please note: some native Czechs consider the colloquial language "wrong" and try to persuade foreigners to use only the standard language. This approach to language is outdated and colloquial Czech is considered legitimate and an entirely proper part of our language.

The Most Common Differences Between Standard and Colloquial Czech

**-é → -ý/-í**
černé pivo → černý pivo

**-ý/-í → ej**
pomerančový džus → pomerančovej džus
být → bejt
vaří → vařej

**o** → **vo**
on → von
ona → vona
oni → voni
okno → vokno

**-í → ~~í~~**
hledají → hledaj
prodají → prodaj
rozumějí → rozuměj

**l → ~~l~~**
řekl → řek
mohl → moh
četl → čet

**-e → ~~e~~**
pracujeme → pracujem
kupujeme → kupujem
sejdeme se → sejdem se

Vocabulary

ano → jo
že ano → že jo
káva → kafe
dům → barák
fotografovat → fotit
kamarád → kámoš

Univerbization

česneková polévka → česnečka
obývací pokoj → obývák
řidičský průkaz → řidičák
Václavské náměstí → Václavák

The vocative

pane Horáku → pane Horák

Filler words

no, hele, jako

Dialects

Besides colloquial Czech, which is spread especially in the territory of Bohemia, you can meet several Czech and Moravian dialects. For example, you can hear in Moravia:
Já su z Moravy. = Já jsem z Moravy.
Nechcu jít do kina. = Nechci jít do kina.
Má 10 let. = Je mu/jí 10 let.

In other parts of the Czech Republic, you can hear various dialects.

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