

Abstract

This study deals with Czech speakers in Australia, focusing on their use of the Czech and English languages as tools of belonging to a community. Its aim is to discuss the situation of Czech speakers on the continent from the perspective of a small Czech language in an English-speaking country. The starting point for the study is scientific publications on bilingualism, multilingualism and transnationalism issued in the Czech and English-speaking environments. Another source is books about the history of the immigration and language policies in Australia and about the Australian identity. Finally, the methods involve field research based on participant observation of groups of Czechs in social networks and during Czech church services in Sydney in November 2015. Fieldwork is also based on semi-structured interviews which took place in Australia between August 2014 and January 2016. They were intended to study the reality of Czech speakers in Australia and to illustrate the theories on the use of language by bilingual speakers in the Australian context. The first part of this study gives the theoretical background to the notions of transnationalism, belonging to a group, bilingualism and changes in language use. The second part focuses on language and immigration policies of the states of Australia and the situation of community languages in the country. The third part studies the Czech influence on the continent and portrays the lives of some prominent Czechs in the territory. The last part draws on field research and illustrates the situation of Czech speakers in Australia. The result of the study confirmed the assumption that Czech is used as a means of communication with a certain community and serves as a tool for inclusion into a group. The family is an important factor in the continuation of language use and maintenance of transnational relations.

Key words

Adaptation-origin-transnationalism-ethnic identity-revitalisation-vitality-Czechs