

#### 4.5 Starý × starší, tlustý × silnější

When we describe people we try not to be offensive. This is why we don't say *starý*, but we say *starší* ("older", elderly), we don't say *tlustý*, but we say *silnější* ("stronger", stout, plump).

#### 4.6 The model of conjugation: -OVAT verbs

From the previous lessons you already know the -Á, -Í and -E\* models of conjugation. Here you can see the last model of conjugation: so called -OVAT verbs, represented by the verb **pracovat** to work. All the verbs ending in -ovat<sup>2</sup> are conjugated like this.

	-OVAT verbs
	pracovat (to work)
já	pracuju/pracuji <sup>1</sup>
ty	pracuješ
on, ona, to	pracuje
my	pracujeme
vy	pracujete
oni	pracujou/pracují <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The forms *pracuji*, *pracují* are used in formal or written Czech.

<sup>2</sup> Note that many "international" verbs coming from Latin and Greek follow this model of conjugation: *sportovat*, *telefonovat*, *organizovat*, *komunikovat*, *diskutovat*, *analyzovat*, *protestovat*, *testovat* ...

#### 4.7 Subject (nominative singular) × object (accusative singular)

As you already know from lesson 3, the direct object is expressed with the accusative with its endings in Czech. You have learned that in this case the feminine changes its ending from the nominative singular (*černá káva* × *dám si černou kávu*). In this lesson you'll learn that in the accusative singular the masculine animate (that means people and animals) also changes its ending. Compare these sentences:

Můj **bratr** je mladší. (My brother is younger.) × **Mám mladšího bratra.** (I have a younger brother.)

Můj **pes** je velký. (My dog is big.) × **Mám velkého psa.** (I have a big dog.)

In the first sentences *mladší* and *bratr* and *velký* and *pes* are in the nominative, in the second sentences they are in the accusative. Look again at paragraph 3.3 on page 21 dealing with the accusative. In this phase of study we are concentrating on practising and mastering the 1st declension group of nouns.

#### 4.8 Czech habits, traditions and conventions

##### Czech names

##### a) Czech Christian/first name (křestní jméno)

Like all Slavonic languages, Czech has a rich system of family and pet names. For example, **Marie** can be called **Mařenka**, **Maruška**, **Majka**, **Majda**..., **Jan** can be called **Jenda**, **Jeník**, **Jeníček**, **Honza**, **Honzíček**... (from the German *Hans*) and **Josef** can be called **Jožin**, **Pepa**, **Pepíček**... (from the Italian *Pepé*). Note that many Czechs celebrate not only their birthday (**narození**), but also their name day (**svátek**), which is, the day when their name appears in the calendar. This tradition originated in the Catholic liturgical calendar in which each day is sacred to a saint or patron.

##### b) Czech surname/last name (příjmení)

Czech last names can sometimes sound funny. You can come across **slečna Zajíčková** (Miss Bunny), **paní Hrubá** (Mrs. Rough), **paní Slabá** (Mrs. Weak), **pan Beránek** (Mr. Lamb), **pan Mizera** (Mr. Rascal), **pan Polívka** (Mr. Soup) or **pan Nohavica** (Mr. Trouserleg). Some of the male last names ending in -l are in fact the so-called -l form, with which we form the past tense. **Pan Vyskočil** is Mr. Jumped Out and **pan Koukal** is the man who stared, Mr. Stared. Naturally, **paní Koukalová** is the "Man-Who-Stared's" wife.