Language Group Specific Informational Reports

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In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Language Group: Bulgarian
Author: Alison Stott

Program Contact Person: Nancy Cloud (ncloud@ric.edu)
Bulgarian Informational Report

By: Alison M. Stott
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Where is Bulgarian Spoken?

- Bulgaria is located in Southeastern Europe, bordering the Black Sea, between Romania and Greece

- The Bulgarian language is part of the Slavic language family (others include Russian, Polish, Czech, and Macedonian)

  - There are 12 million Bulgarian Speakers around the world, of which 7.4 million reside in the country of Bulgaria

- Bulgarian is spoken by 85% of people who live in the country of Bulgaria

- Bulgarian is widely spoken in the bordering countries of Greece, Turkey, Macedonia, also in the Ukraine

- Many Bulgarian speakers have immigrated over the years to counties such as Canada, Germany, UK and USA.

http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/
Bulgarian in the United States...

- According to the 2000 United States Census Report (most recent published)...  
  - 63,000 U.S. Citizens were of Bulgarian Descent  
  - 28,500 Citizens indicated they speak Bulgarian in their household  
  - In the recent years the number has grown significantly to over 250,000 Bulgarian-Americans living in the United States

- What states have the largest number of Bulgarian Speakers?  
  - California  
  - Illinois  
  - New York  
  - Florida  
  - Ohio
Dialects within Bulgaria...

- Regional variations of the language is primarily based on the different reflexes of the “yat” vowel (Ѣ). ...

  ➢ Western Dialect
  - Informally called “hard speech”
  -Ѣ is pronounced "e" in all positions

  ➢ Eastern Dialect
  - Informally called “soft speech”
  -Ѣ alternates between "ya" and "e". It is pronounced "ya" if it is under stress and the next syllable does not contain a front vowel (e or i)

The Bulgarian dialects. Within the borders of Bulgaria.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

- The written Bulgarian language is the same for the whole country of Bulgaria
Bulgarian Alphabet...

• Bulgarian was the first Slavic language to be written.

• In 886AD, Bulgaria introduced the Glagolitic Alphabet.

• The Glagolitic Alphabet was replaced by the Cyrillic alphabet a few centuries later.

• Many of the Cyrillic letters were borrowed from the Glagolitic and Greek Alphabet.

• Today, the Bulgarian Alphabet is written in the Cyrillic script, and occasionally in Latin.

Common Mistakes for Bulgarian English Language Learners...

♦ Phonology Errors
  ♦ **Consonants** of the Bulgarian Alphabet stand for only one specific sound, while a letter in the English Alphabet can have numerous sounds...
  ♦ For example: /C/ in English can sound like *cat* or *city*
  ♦ The eight **vowels** in the Bulgarian Alphabet are *lax* (meaning short), while the five English vowels all have *lax* (short) and *tense* (long) pronunciations.

♦ The difference between the consonants and vowels in the English and Bulgarian language can cause difficulties for Bulgarians trying to obtain the English language. This is because they have to learn that consonants can have more than one sound in the English language, and learn the tense pronunciations for the eight English vowels.
More confusion with sounds and letters...

• Mastering Letter Forms

• Bulgarian English Language Learners confuse the Bulgarian letter “g” with the English letter “d”

• They also tend to confuse the Bulgarian “u” for the English short vowel “i”

• These two errors not only interfere with spelling but also the meaning of English Words

• “Mirror” Letters are usually an error because of the different language scripts (ex. “b and d” and “p and q”)

Common Mistakes within Verbal Morphology

♦ In some cases, the Bulgarian verb can take up to 3,000 different forms
  ♦ It can vary in...person, number, voice, aspect, mood, tense, and even gender
  ♦ This forces the Bulgarian English Language Learner to simplify their knowledge of verb conjugation as it applies to the English Language

♦ There are several Bulgarian conjunctions all translating into English as the word "but"...
  ♦ All of these translations are used in different situations
    ♦ ама (amà): means “to provide extra information”
    ♦ а (a): provides a contrast between two situations
    ♦ ами (ami): means “really?!?”
    ♦ но (no): means “however”
  ♦ This would produce confusion since the English word “but” only has one meaning
Common Mistakes within Syntax

- Asking Questions
  - Bulgarians struggle with “question words” (who? what? why? etc.) when learning English because they are non-existent in the Bulgarian language.
  - Bulgarians form questions by attaching a particle after the verb
    - Ex) Идваш – “You are coming.”
      Идваш ли? – “Are you coming?”

- Pronouns
  - Bulgarian has several pronouns of “quality”, which has no parallel meaning in English
    - Ex) kakuv (“what sort of”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word</th>
<th>literal meaning</th>
<th>sentence</th>
<th>meaning of sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>takava</td>
<td>this sort of</td>
<td>edna takava kola...</td>
<td>this car <em>(that I'm trying to describe)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nikakva</td>
<td>no sort of</td>
<td>edna takava nikakva kola</td>
<td>this worthless car <em>(that I'm trying to describe)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyakakva</td>
<td>some sort of</td>
<td>edna takava nyakakva nikakva kola</td>
<td>this sort of worthless car <em>(that I'm trying to describe)</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
More Common Difficulties...

- The gestures of “yes” and “no” are completely opposite in the Bulgarian and English Languages...
  - When gesturing “yes”, Bulgarians shake their head from side to side
  - When gesturing “no”, Bulgarians nod their head up and down, sometimes making a loud “clicking” sound
  - This would pose to be extremely confusing for an English Language Learner, mainly due to the fact that the gestures are completely opposite in English.

- Bulgarians have a much more extensive vocabulary for family relationships...
  - Ex) In English, we refer to “aunts and uncles” in a broad sense that could apply to extended people in a family
  - In Bulgarian, there are specifications such as:
    - *chicho* (your father's brother)
    - *vuicho* (your mother's brother)
    - *svako* (your aunt's husband)
  - This might cause Bulgarian English language Learners to over explain relationships as compared to common relationship terms used in English.
Hello!
How are you?
Have a nice day!
Goodbye!

Click here to find other useful Bulgarian Phrases and their English Translations: Useful Bulgarian phrases

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
Bulgarian Customs and Etiquette

- Bulgaria is a country that has a very formal society...

  - Greetings:
    - Bulgarians use a firm handshake and direct eye contact when greeting each other
    - Titles (Mr. & Mrs.) are always used when addressing someone, unless they are considered family or a very close friend

  - Communication:
    - Bulgarian conversation would be considered “very loud” by Americans. A typical Bulgarian conversation would appear to be a loud argument with raised voices, but is very typical and normal of Bulgarians
    - Titles (Mr. & Mrs.) are always used when addressing someone, unless they are considered family or a very close friend

  - Personal Space:
    - When speaking to family or friends, Bulgarians tend to leave very little personal space between each other. When speaking to people they do not know personally, 3 feet would be considered a respectful amount of personal space.


Sources

Maps & Images


Audio Sources

M.Ed. in TESL Program
Nancy Cloud, Director
Educational Studies Department
Rhode Island College, HBS 206 #5
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
Phone (401) 456-8789
Fax (401) 456-8284
ncloud@ric.edu

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is Nationally Recognized by TESOL and NCATE