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BULGARIAN LANGUAGE AT THE ACADEMIC LEVEL IN JAPAN – CURRENT STATE AND PERSPECTIVES*

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ОБУЧЕНИЕТО ПО БЪЛГАРСКИ ЕЗИК НА АКАДЕМИЧНО НИВО В ЯПОНИЯ – НАСТОЯЩЕ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ

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Abstract: The information about the Bulgarian language courses taught at the academic level in Japan is limited and we could hardly find any research on the topic. While not as widespread as the study of major global languages such as English, Chinese, or Spanish, Bulgarian language and culture have found their place within certain academic institutions, particularly in the context of Slavic and Eastern European studies. The present study provides an overview of the current state and the future perspectives for Bulgarian language studies in Japan. It aims to identify the academic institutions offering Bulgarian language courses and examines the curriculum design, the instructional methods, and the course materials used in these programs. The analysis is based on academic records from six Japanese universities, supplemented by a review of their syllabi and a questionnaire survey conducted among lecturers of Bulgarian language at these institutions.

Keywords: Bulgarian language, academic level, Japan, Japanese universities

Резюме: Информацията за обучението по български език на академично ниво в Япония е оскъдна и трудно можем да открием научни изследвания по темата. Въпреки че българският език не е толкова популярен в Страната на изгряващото слънце, а

България се асоциира предимно с българската роза и киселото мляко, българският език и култура са намерили своето място в няколко академични институции в контекста на славистичните и източноевропейските изследвания. Настоящото проучване разглежда формите за изучаване на български език и възможностите за развитие на българистиката в Япония. То има за цел да идентифицира академичните институции, предлагащи курсове и програми по български език, и да изследва учебните планове, методите на преподаване и използваните учебни ресурси. В допълнение към анализа на академичните регистри, изследването включва и обзор на учебните програми в шест японски университета, резултати от теренни проучвания, както и резултати от анкета, проведена сред преподаватели по български език в тези академични институции.

Ключови думи: български език, академично ниво, Япония, японски университети

1. INTRODUCTION

A brief look at the foreign population statistics in Japan indicates that the number of foreign residents has been steadily growing, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis (2020 – 2022). This demographic shift has led to changes in the country's economic, legislative, and political systems. Additionally, it has significantly impacted education policy and foreign language learning. On the streets of Tokyo, a variety of foreign languages can now be heard, including those spoken by minority groups. This reflects Japan's evolving linguistic landscape and its efforts to embrace multiculturalism. The shift is particularly notable in the context of Japan's demographic challenges, such as low birth rates and an aging population, which have prompted the government to attract foreign talents and tourists.

According to data from Japan's Ministry of Justice, the number of mid- to long-term foreign residents in the country stood at 2,939,051 as of the end of June 2023. Additionally, the number of foreigners with special permanent resident status was 284,807. This brings the total foreign population in the Land of the Rising Sun to 3,223,858.

Compared to statistics from the previous year, 2022, this represents a significant increase of 148,645 people (4.8%). Notably, a large proportion of foreigners come from Asia, with the top five nationalities being: Chinese (24.5%), Vietnamese (16.1%), South Koreans (12.8%), Filipinos (9.6%), and Brazilians (6.5%). In contrast, individuals from the United States and Europe make up only 1.9% of Japan's total foreign population (**Figure 1**[1]).

[1] <https://www.moj.go.jp/EN/index.html> [25.09.2024]

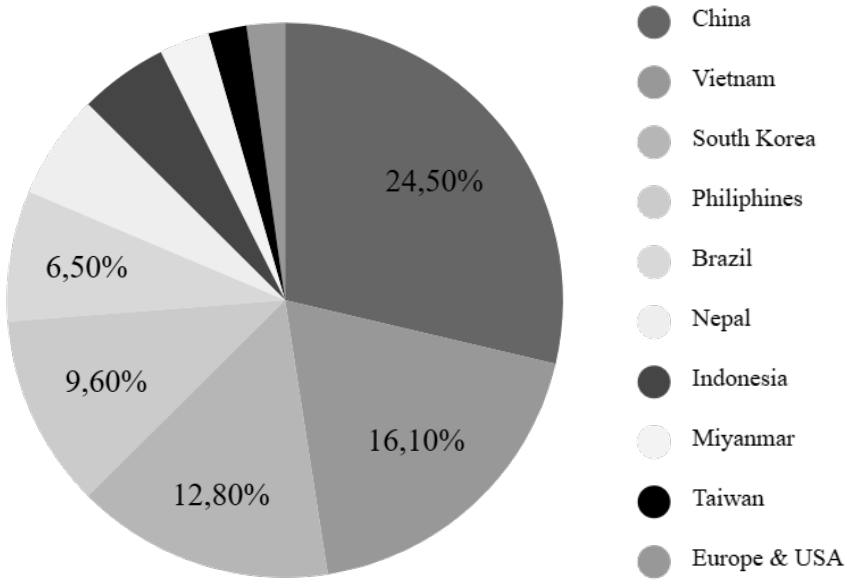

Figure 1. Foreign Population in Japan, 2023 (qtd. in Ministry of Justice of Japan, 2023)

In relation to the Bulgarian population in Japan and according to data from the Japanese government's statistical portal for the same year (2023), the total number of Bulgarians in Japan amounts to 472 people. The largest group consists of permanent residents (181 people), followed by Bulgarian students enrolled in Japanese universities (91 people), and Bulgarians married to Japanese nationals (54 people)[2].

Comparing the current figures to statistics from 2012 and 2013, the Bulgarian resident population was recorded at 393 people in 2012, reflecting an increase of 79 individuals by the following year. This growth is primarily driven by the number of permanent residents, which has been rising slightly but steadily each year since 2012 (Table 1.).

Table 1. Permanent Bulgarian Residents in Japan

year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
people/n	97	101	105	113	125	135	140	156	156	170	177	181

[2] <https://www.e-stat.go.jp/stat-search/> [25.09.2024]

Against the backdrop of this statistical overview, several important questions come to the forefront: To what extent are Bulgarian culture and language recognised, appreciated, and disseminated in Japan? What concrete steps and initiatives are currently being undertaken to promote their visibility and understanding within Japanese society? In what formats are Bulgarian language and culture taught in Japan?

Addressing these questions requires a comprehensive exploration not only of existing cultural exchange programs, educational initiatives, and community-building efforts, but also of the various forms of Bulgarian language courses offered at different institutions in Japan. Identifying these needs and opportunities will help pave the way for a more vibrant and sustainable cultural dialogue between the two nations. A brief review of the homepages of the Bulgarian and Japanese Ministries of Education, Japanese universities, cultural centres and institutions in Japan, as well as Japanese private language schools and platforms, reveals the presence of Bulgarian language and culture courses.

In this study we will explore the current state of Bulgarian language courses offered at the academic level in Japan, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges these courses face. By analysing existing programs and their frameworks, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the teaching landscape for Bulgarian in Japan. To guide this exploration, the following research questions are addressed:

1. Which institutions in Japan offer Bulgarian language courses at the academic level?

Research question 1 seeks to identify the academic institutions that provide courses in Bulgarian, focusing on the scope of such offerings and their role in promoting the language within the Japanese educational system.

2. What is the structure, content, and teaching approach employed in these courses?

Research question 2 aims to examine the curriculum design, instructional methods, and course materials used in these programs. It will also clarify how these courses balance linguistic training with cultural education and the extent to which they address the unique needs of Japanese learners.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: THE BULGARIAN STUDIES PROGRAMS ABROAD

The state and development of the Bulgarian language at the university level outside of Bulgaria remain underexplored in academic literature. Existing research tends to focus primarily on the teaching and transmission of the Bulgarian language and culture within the context of Sunday schools in foreign countries, as well as

the language acquisition processes among second and third generation Bulgarian emigrants. These studies typically investigate the pedagogical approaches employed in informal educational settings, the role of family and community in language retention, and the challenges associated with maintaining linguistic and cultural ties across generations. For instance, studies on Bulgarian Sunday schools often highlight their function as cultural hubs that provide language instruction alongside lessons in history, traditions, and folklore. These institutions are crucial for fostering a sense of identity among young Bulgarians born abroad. Researchers such as Gergova and Borisova (Gergova, Borisova 2015), Borisova and Koulov (Borisova, Koulov 2017), Savova (Savova 2017), Prashtilova (Prashtilova 2021), Issa (Issa 2020) have documented the curriculum designs, teaching methods, and outcomes of these programs, emphasising the variability in success depending on factors like teacher training, resources, and parental involvement. Beyond the realm of Sunday schools, scholars have also examined how Bulgarian emigrants maintain their native language within family settings (Nesteruk 2010, Maeva 2012, Slavkov 2014, Vassileva, Yankova 2015, etc.). This body of work explores strategies such as bilingual upbringing, the use of Bulgarian in household communication, and the impact of community networks on linguistic retention. Findings indicate that while children of Bulgarian descent often achieve conversational proficiency, their literacy skills and knowledge of advanced grammatical structures tend to decline without formal instruction.

In contrast, research on the presence of the Bulgarian language at higher educational levels – such as in universities or specialised language programs abroad – is sparse. Preliminary studies (Simeonova-Konach 2017, Issa 2020, Atanasova, Rangelov 2021, Wenshuang 2021, etc.) suggest that Bulgarian is rarely offered as a standalone subject in foreign academic institutions, with exceptions typically found in Slavic studies or Balkan language departments. The availability of advanced level instruction depends on regional interest in Slavic cultures and historical ties to Bulgaria. Furthermore, little is known about the demographics and motivations of students who pursue Bulgarian at this level, nor about the resources and methodologies employed by educators.

The Bulgarian language at the university level is briefly discussed in research related to Bulgarian language policy abroad. Simeonova-Konach discusses the challenges faced by Bulgarian studies in foreign academic institutions, particularly as the field competes with more globally prominent languages and cultures. The work suggests that a strong national brand can help bolster the status of Bulgarian studies abroad by aligning the discipline with national interests and the international promotion of Bulgarian culture. Although seven universities in Poland offer Bulgarian language courses, the traditional structure of the Bulgarian studies program is not followed in all of them (Simeonova-Konach 2017: 11).

K. Issa argues that there has been a dramatic decline in Bulgarian language studies at European universities, including those in Slavic countries. Research on Bulgarian language policy abroad highlights the efforts to promote the language and its cultural significance. However, many lecturers and scholars working in the field express concern over the diminishing interest in Bulgarian language programs. The shift toward more generalised Slavic and Balkan studies has also contributed to the diminished focus on Bulgarian language studies. Despite these challenges, academics continue to advocate for the importance of preserving and promoting Bulgarian language education at the university level abroad (Issa 2020: 55–56).

Atanasova and Rangelov also rethink the reasons for decline of the Bulgarian Studies abroad: "Perhaps the reason for that is the fact that, in the last thirty years, Bulgaria as a nation, has been struggling to find its identity. Under the communist rule, open discussion and vibrant research on the society were impossible because of ideological concerns. Therefore, the sources of what constitutes the core of the Bulgarian nation was sought in the past, often overemphasised and glorified" (Atanasova, Rangelov 2021: 159).

The authors examine the current state of Bulgarian Studies at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in the Republic of Korea and propose new strategies for developing the course. These strategies include adopting a more balanced perspective on the past of the country while emphasising contemporary achievements, clearly defining the role of individuals and the civic identity of Bulgaria, broadening the research scope to address current issues in Bulgarian society, and moving away from the so-called „maximalist" approach. (Atanasova, Rangelov 2021: 159–160).

Information about the Bulgarian Studies major in China is also somewhat limited, but notable developments have occurred over the past 60 years. The Beijing Foreign Studies University offers well-designed Bulgarian courses through its Centre for Bulgarian Studies. This centre focuses on researching and promoting Bulgarian language, culture, and history, while also facilitating academic exchanges and fostering mutual understanding between China and Bulgaria. Additionally, Tianjin University has established a Bulgarian Studies major, making it the first university outside of Beijing to offer such a program.

The Beijing Foreign Studies University offers two types of Bulgarian Studies courses: the courses for general purposes (CGP) and for specialised purposes (CSP). The recent goal of the courses is not only to acquire listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating skills, but also „to draw an as-complete-as-possible picture of the target country, to build up a system of the knowledge about Bulgaria, to master the way of dealing with academic and practical problems" (Wenshuang 2021: 12).

3. THE PRESENT STUDY: THE BULGARIAN LANGUAGE AT THE ACADEMIC LEVEL IN JAPAN

3.1. Background

There is a considerable number of Bulgarian institutions abroad that promote Bulgarian language and culture worldwide. All of them are listed by the Executive Agency for Bulgarian Abroad. Below is a chart showing the number of these institutions (Executive Agency for Bulgarian Abroad)[3].

Figure 2. Bulgarian Language and Culture Institutions Worldwide
(Executive Agency for Bulgarian Abroad, [28.12.2024.])

As shown in Figure 2., only two institutions are identified in Japan: the Sunday School at the Embassy of Bulgaria, Tokyo, and the non-profit organisation „Snowdrop", Osaka.

Regarding Slavic languages and cultures, there are also several organisations and associations in Japan dedicated to promoting Slavic cultural heritage. These institutions typically foster the study, understanding, and exchange of knowledge about Slavic languages (such as Russian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, and others) and Slavic countries. Notable examples are:

[3] <https://www.aba.government.bg/map> [28.12.2024]

1. The Japanese Council of Russian and East European Studies: This organisation was established to address the need for intensified interdisciplinary cooperation across various research areas of Slavic languages and cultures, as well as to provide a legitimate representative for Japan‘s Slavist community within the global Slavist organization, ICCEES. It unites five Slavist associations in Japan: the Japanese Association for Russian and East European Studies, the Japan Association for the Study of Russian Language and Literature, the Japanese Society for Slavic and East European Studies, the Japanese Society for the Study of Russian History, and the Russian and East European Division of the Japan Association for International Relations (JCREES: The Japan Council of Russian and East European Studies)[4].

2. Institute for Russian and East European Studies: The institute is based in Waseda University which has a long history and tradition of research on Russia and Eastern Europe in the humanities and social sciences The research at the institute addresses recent issues such as economic, political and cultural topics (Institute for Russian and East European Studies – Comprehensive Research Organization, Waseda University)[5].

3. Russian Research Centre, Hitotsubashi University: The centre is widely recognised as a leader of Japan‘s research activities in the field of theoretical and empirical studies on the transition process of the former communist economic systems, which started with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Therefore, the research studies focus on the present Russian Federation[6] that used to be the core of the Soviet Union.

According to information presented in the academic registers of several state universities in Japan and the official HP of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of September 2024, academic Bulgarian language courses are offered at the following institutions: The University of Tokyo, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Soka University, Jouchi University, Tokai University, Osaka University, Kyoto University, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies and Hokkaido University[7].

Additionally, Kyoai University, a private institution in Gunma Prefecture, offered a one semester introductory Bulgarian language course focused on Bulgarian culture from 2015 to 2019. Negotiations are currently underway to introduce a Bulgarian

[4] <https://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/jcrees/aboutUs-e.html> [11.01.2025]

[5] <https://www.waseda.jp/inst/cro/en/institutes-list/institute-for-russian-and-easteuropean-studies/> [10.08.2024]

[6] <https://www.ier.hit-u.ac.jp/rrc/English/aboutrrc/index.html> [28.12.2024]

[7] <https://www.mfa.bg/ja/embassies/japan/news/43212> [21.12. 2024]

language course at Hagoromo University, another private university in Osaka. Until the late 1990s, there was a Bulgarian language course at Chiba University, too, which was taught by a Japanese lecturer specialising in Bulgarian. Bulgarian is also taught at several private language schools. Notably, on September 15, 2024, the first Bulgarian Sunday school affiliated with the Bulgarian Embassy in Japan opened its doors.

3.2. Method and Tools

The present research focuses on the current situation regarding the courses in contemporary Bulgarian language offered at six national universities in Japan: The University of Tokyo, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), Osaka University, Kyoto University, and Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, as well as Hokkaido University (Table 2.).

Table 2. General Information

University	*Region*	*Faculties/n*	*Bulgarian Language Course/Format*
Tokyo University	Kanto	10	selective
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies	Kanto	3	selective
Osaka University	Kansai	12	selective
Kyoto University	Kansai	10	selective
Kobe City University of Foreign Studies	Kansai	1	selective
Hokkaido University	Hokkaido Island	12	selective

To examine the current state of Bulgarian language courses at the aforementioned universities, we explored their academic registers, corresponding syllabi, and information posted in Japanese and Bulgarian media. Additionally, we conducted fieldwork and a questionnaire survey among lecturers of Bulgarian language in these Japanese universities. The questionnaire consisted of 22 questions divided into sections: 1) Structure and format of the course, 2) Learning materials and target groups and 3) Teaching approach and design of the course (Appendix 1). Following the analysis of the questionnaire survey results, further communication with the lecturers was initiated via email to seek clarification and address ambiguities in the responses, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the data.

3.3. Tokyo University

Tokyo University[8] is one of the most prestigious higher education institutions in Japan, renowned not only for its high academic standards but also for offering a diverse range of specialties and disciplines across various fields of science, along with numerous opportunities for research and scientific development. Language courses in Slavic Studies are available for undergraduates, graduates, and doctoral students, covering languages such as Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Czech, Serbian, and Bulgarian. Classes are held at the Laboratory of Slavic Languages and Slavic Literature, primarily in the form of practical exercises. In these sessions, students deliver lectures on specific texts and present their own research related to the course topics. Traditionally, the department has placed strong emphasis on Russian and Polish literature due to the specialties of the full-time faculty. However, to complement this focus it has broadened its curriculum to include other Slavic languages and literatures. Since 2013, alongside Russian and Slavic literature, the program has positioned Slavic linguistics, especially studies of South Slavic languages, as one of its core pillars (Department of Slavic Language and Literature[9]).

Over the past two years (2023 and 2024), the University of Tokyo has offered two courses related to the Bulgarian language: 1) Introduction to Bulgarian Language (ブルガリア語入門) and 2) Study of Slavic Languages (スラブ語学研究). These courses are held weekly in Japanese and are conducted in a seminar format by a Bulgarian lecturer.

The first course, Introduction to Bulgarian Language, is designed for beginners and utilises the textbook ニューエクスプレスプラスブルガリア語 (*New Express Bulgarian*[10]) by K. Terajima (Terajima 2019). Its goal is to teach the fundamentals of Bulgarian grammar and vocabulary, familiarise students with the language's pronunciation, and enable them to read, write, and participate in simple Bulgarian conversations.

The second course, Study of Slavic Languages, takes a more advanced and specialised approach. Rather than relying on a conventional textbook, the lecturer curates and provides a variety of printed and multimedia materials. The curriculum is enriched by discussions on cultural topics, such as shared traditions and common history between Bulgaria and North Macedonia. By integrating language study with cultural and historical perspectives, the course offers a holistic understanding of these interconnected Slavic regions (Appendix 2).

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[8] Slavic Languages and Cultures Department <https://www.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/slav/history/> [17.10. 2024]

[9] https://www.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/laboratory/database/21.html, [17.10. 2024]

[10] All translations from Japanese have been done by the author.

3.4. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies[11]

The directives of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology emphasise the concept of Lifelong Learning and the creation of a society that embraces this mindset. In alignment with these goals, the „Open Academy" project at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies offers a diverse selection of courses – approximately 300 annually, spanning various languages and cultures. Since 2020, the program has introduced interactive online courses, which have attracted over 4,000 participants each year, including both Japanese and international students.

The Bulgarian language course is offered remotely, featuring lectures and seminars at two levels: beginner and advanced. In recent years, the course has been taught by a Bulgarian instructor specialising in Japanese literature. Both levels use the textbook 『ゼロから話せるブルガリア語』 (*Speak Bulgarian from Scratch* (Sugai 2020)), with additional authentic learning materials incorporated at the advanced level. The language of instruction for all courses is Japanese. There are no official requirements for evaluating students' language acquisition at the „Open Academy", but the lecturer focuses on the practical aspects of the language and its usage in real-life situations.

Unlike Bulgarian language courses at other universities, the classes at TUFS attract students from diverse social backgrounds, including university students, postgraduates, children, business professionals, diplomats and retirees. The lecturer's comments on the background and diverse interests of the students are reflected in the excerpts from the survey below:

> *I teach several types of students: undergraduate students who have an interest in Bulgarian or, in some cases, more specific topics such as Bulgarian history; working professionals and retirees who are passionate about Bulgarian folk music, sing in Bulgarian folk music choirs, and wish to understand the meaning of the songs more deeply; former volunteers in Bulgaria who want to maintain their language skills; individuals with Bulgarian partners, and in some cases children, who want to learn Bulgarian for better communication within the family; diplomats; and others – such as people with Bulgarian friends or those who have had some prior exposure to Bulgaria and now have the opportunity to learn the language.*

[11] Depending on academic resources and the academic year, the courses offered may vary. <https://www.tufs.ac.jp/visitors/oa/tufsoa.html> [10.12.2024]

The „Open Academy" also offers a course for advanced learners, serving as a sequel to a previously held Bulgarian language course at the same institution, which has since concluded. The beginner and intermediate courses are conducted once per week, with each class lasting 90 minutes, while the advanced course is held twice a month, also in 90-minute sessions. Below is a summary of the syllabus for the beginner and intermediate courses offered by the „Open Academy"[12]:

● Beginner Course, CEFR A1 ブルガリア語初級I

This course is designed for beginners and provides a general overview of the language structure. It focuses on the writing system and pronunciation while introducing basic grammatical structures and vocabulary. Exercises in grammar, reading, and writing are included, along with audio-visual materials.

● Beginner Course, CEFR A2 ブルガリア語初級II

This course is also for beginners but serves as a continuation of the A1 level. It covers lessons 9 to 14 from the textbook 『ゼロから話せるブルガリア語』 (Speak Bulgarian from Scratch (Sugai 2020)), deepening knowledge in grammar, vocabulary, and reading while utilising audio-visual materials.

● Intermediate Course, CEFR B1 ブルガリア語中級以上I

Targeted at intermediate learners, this course emphasises practical application. It uses the same textbook as the one used at the beginner level but includes more language exercises and audio-visual materials.

● Intermediate Course, CEFR B2 ブルガリア語中級以上II

This course continues from the B1 level. In addition to using the textbook 『ゼロから話せるブルガリア語』(*Speak Bulgarian from Scratch* (Sugai 2020)), it incorporates various practical learning materials such as texts in Bulgarian, Bulgarian films, broadcasts, and songs.

The intermediate and advanced courses are built on authentic materials as well as resources adapted by the lecturer to suit the corresponding proficiency level. Students are encouraged to suggest themes, songs, and even authors that interest them, ensuring a personalised and engaging learning experience. Insights from surveys provide valuable information about the design of these materials, as shared by the lecturer:

[12] <tufsoa.jp> [10.12.2024]

The reading materials range from song lyrics to short stories, texts about Bulgarian literature, nature and culture, traditions, and recipes. In most cases, I gather information and write the texts when it comes to a specific topic, as there are rarely well-written articles on the internet that can be used without editing. Overall, I always give students the opportunity to suggest topics, songs, authors, etc., that they find interesting for translation.

A distinctive feature of the Bulgarian language teaching methodology at TUFS is its strong emphasis on practical application. The courses are specifically designed to equip students with language skills that are directly applicable in real-world situations. This includes the ability to communicate effectively with local Bulgarians or marriage partners, carry out job-related tasks in Bulgaria, and actively participate in workshops or professional settings there. Furthermore, students are encouraged to engage with Bulgarian culture on a deeper level, such as by understanding and appreciating the nuances of folk songs or other cultural texts. This pragmatic approach ensures that students not only acquire linguistic competence but also gain the cultural and contextual knowledge necessary for meaningful interactions in Bulgaria.

According to the lecturer, the remote format (online courses) of education is another distinctive feature of TUFS. This approach not only offers students the convenience of easy access to the courses, regardless of their location, but also proves to be a highly effective strategy for reaching a broader audience. By making the Bulgarian language and culture more accessible, the online format has helped attract a diverse range of individuals outside and inside Japan.

3.5. Osaka University

A distinctive feature of Osaka University[13] is its dedicated Faculty of Foreign Languages, which is the largest humanities faculty within the university. It offers over 25 language specialisations, including Chinese, Korean, Mongolian, Indonesian, Filipino, Thai, Vietnamese, Burmese, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Swahili, Russian, Hungarian, Danish, Swedish, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Japanese. The education provided is multidisciplinary, with the goal of enabling students to acquire the taught language not only as a means of communication but also to gain theoretical and practical knowledge about the culture and society of the region where the language is spoken. The objectives of each specialisation

[13] sfs.osaka-u.ac.jp/user/kyoumu/ns/st.html> [28.09.2024]

are aligned with the requirements set by relevant educational frameworks for each language category[14].

Bulgarian is an elective course offered at the beginner level. The instructor is a Bulgarian specialist in philosophy, and the language of instruction is Japanese. The primary textbook used for the course is ニューエクスプレスプラスブルガリア語 (*New Express Bulgarian* (Terajima, 2019)). Classes are held once a week over two consecutive semesters. In addition to the Bulgarian language, Old Bulgarian is taught as a separate course, and Balkan Studies has been introduced in collaboration with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Sokolova 2024).

3.6. Kyoto University

At Kyoto University, the Faculty of Letters offers a variety of Slavonic language courses that focus not only on linguistic aspects but also on the literature and culture of the corresponding regions. Russian literature, language, and culture form the core of the Slavonic study programs, but in recent years, research has expanded to include other Slavic regions. As a result, a diverse range of courses has been developed, covering topics such as the languages and cultures of Poland and Bulgaria, Old Bulgarian language, and more. Both undergraduate and graduate students have the opportunity to explore beyond Russian studies, delving into areas like Polish and Czech studies, or engaging in comparative analyses of film, painting, and Japanese literature. Students specialising in Slavic linguistics and literature are encouraged to develop the language skills necessary for text analysis, cultivate a strong desire to broaden their academic horizons, and adopt an independent, open-minded attitude – willing to engage in thoughtful discussions with faculty (Slavic Language and Literature Department[15]).

The Bulgarian language course is an elective designed for beginners and is taught over two semesters by a native Bulgarian lecturer. The textbooks ニューエクスプレスプラスブルガリア語 (New Express Bulgarian (Terajima, 2019) and „Здравейте A1-A2“ (Kurteva et al. 2013)) are used.

● Beginner Course, CEFR A1 ブルガリア語初級I

This introductory course focuses on learning the modern Bulgarian language. Students begin by mastering the Cyrillic alphabet, then progress to studying basic

[14]<sfs.osaka-u.ac.jp/user/kyoumu/ns/st.html> [28.09.2024]

[15] <https://www.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp/slavic-languages-literatures/> [12.11.2024].

grammar, foundational vocabulary, and common expressions. The course also includes lectures that explore the history, religion, and culture essential for a deeper understanding of the Bulgarian language. Evaluation is based on students' submitted assignments and their performance in the final exam (Appendix 3).

● Beginner Course, CEFR A2 ブルガリア語初級II

Building on the first semester, this course continues with the study of Bulgarian grammar, commonly used vocabulary, and everyday expressions. Special emphasis is placed on mastering the extensive variety of verb forms in Bulgarian. As in the previous semester, lectures will also provide deeper insights into Bulgarian history, religion, and culture. The overall evaluation is based on attendance, submitted assignments, and class participation, as well as the final exam (Appendix 3).

3.7. Kobe City University of Foreign Studies (KCUFS)[16]

The university is a leading institution in the Kansai region offering Slavic studies courses alongside other language programs for undergraduate students. It features departments for English, Russian, Chinese, and Spanish Studies, as well as a Department of International Relations. Students in these programs can also choose a Slavic language course as an elective, further expanding their linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Kobe City University of Foreign Studies offers a Bulgarian language course designed for beginners and intermediate learners. As of the academic year 2023 – 2024, the course is taught by a native Bulgarian speaker who specialises in philosophy. The structure of the seminars emphasises practical usage of the language, encouraging student interaction throughout the learning process. The course utilises the following textbooks:

● ニューエクスプレスプラスブルガリア語 (*New Express Bulgarian* (Terajima 2019))

● „Здравейте A1-A2“ (Kurteva et al. 2013)

These materials are chosen to facilitate effective learning and to help students engage with the language in a meaningful way. The focus on interaction and practical application aims to enhance students‘ conversational skills and overall proficiency in Bulgarian.

[16]<https://www.kobe-cufs.ac.jp/department/course2021.html> [18.11.2024]

One lecturer is responsible for the Bulgarian language courses at Osaka University, Kyoto University, and Kobe City University of Foreign Studies (KCUFS), suggesting a consistent teaching approach across these three institutions. According to an interview with the lecturer published in the „Borba“ newspaper (Vladimirov 2019), the interactive communicative method appears to be the most effective for Japanese students. This method encourages active participation and engagement, allowing students to practice speaking and thinking in Bulgarian. The lecturer emphasises the importance of reciting Bulgarian poems, which helps students immerse themselves in the language and culture. By adopting this interactive approach, the courses not only focus on language acquisition but also foster a deeper understanding of Bulgarian heritage. Overall, the shared teaching methodology among these universities enhances the learning experience for students, making it more dynamic and culturally enriching. The teaching approach is clearly explained by the lecturer in the interview excerpt below:

> *I walk from desk to desk for the entire 90 minutes (※ the duration of one seminar in Japanese universities), ensuring that every student participates actively, and no one ever sleeps in my classes. In addition to Japanese, I also teach the Bulgarian language and Bulgarian culture. Students need to speak, think, and recite Bulgarian poems; they must become Bulgarians, at least for the duration of the class. In my Bulgarian classes, we memorise vocabulary, practice the definite article, and conjugate verbs. In the lectures titled „Getting to Know Bulgaria,“ we discuss why the ancient capital Veliko Tarnovo is significant and explore the connection between art and ideology* (qtd. in „Borba” 2019).

3.8. Hokkaido University[17]

The university is a leading institution on the island of Hokkaido, with the Faculty of Letters emphasising *language education* as the foundation for all knowledge and skills related to recognition and expression. This approach focuses on cultivating individuals through small-group education, allowing for deep specialisation in individual research fields. The students are encouraged to engage in comprehensive learning across various disciplines, which helps them develop critical thinking,

[17] Department of Slavic-Eurasian Studies – Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences, Graduate School of Humanities and Human Sciences, and School of Humanities and Human Sciences, Hokkaido University <https://www.let.hokudai.ac.jp/en/general/department-of-slavic-eurasian-studies> [23.10.2024]

judgment, and expressive skills. They are expected to adopt a proactive attitude towards learning, collaborating with diverse individuals while being equipped to address contemporary culture and society-related issues from a critical perspective. This educational philosophy aims to produce well-rounded graduates capable of navigating the complex challenges of today‘s world.

What makes Hokkaido University an outstanding institution for Slavic studies is its affiliated Slavic-Eurasian Research Centre (SRC)[18]. The SRC collaborates with various institutions to offer educational programs, including seminars and courses aimed at fostering young scholars in the fields of area studies, public policy, and governance. Notably, it co-hosts events such as the Hokkaido Summer Institute, which focuses on global issues like migration and security.

In the Linguistics and Literature Department[19] of Hokkaido University, a wide range of courses is offered, including the opportunity for students to learn the Bulgarian language as a selective subject. The course is taught by a Japanese lecturer who specialises in Bulgarian dialects spoken outside of Bulgaria. With over 10 years of professional experience teaching the language at various academic institutions in Japan, the lecturer brings a wealth of expertise to the program. This unique offering highlights the department‘s dedication to delivering diverse linguistic education and promoting an appreciation of different languages and cultures. Through such specialised courses, students can deepen their knowledge and skills in less commonly taught languages, enhancing their overall linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness.

The university offers Bulgarian language courses tailored to the students‘ schedules and their primary field of study. The preferred forms of study are full-time and part-time. The courses include lectures and seminars and are designed for 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-year students, as well as those enrolled in master‘s programs. The courses related to Bulgarian language and culture at Hokkaido University are for beginners and fall into three types: 1) Bulgarian for Beginners, 2) Bulgarian Language and Culture and 3) Old Bulgarian Language. The three courses are taught by the same lecturer.

● Bulgarian for Beginners (ブルガリア語入門、初級)

The language of instruction for this course is Japanese. Authentic materials and worksheets designed by the lecturer are utilised, with the main textbook being 『ゼロから話せるブルガリア語』 (*Speak Bulgarian from Scratch* (Sugai 2020)). While the core materials remain consistent across classes, the lecturer updates or redesigns parts of them each year. Evaluation is based on a written exam conducted at the end

[18] <Slavic-Eurasian Research Center> [23.10.2024]
[19] <https://www.let.hokudai.ac.jp/general/course-linguistics-literature> [23.10.2024]

of the semester. The course focuses on developing knowledge of the language and culture rather than practical application, although some dialogue practice is included in the learning process. Leveraging his extensive expertise, the lecturer introduces engaging linguistic facts, allocates time for interactions and casual conversations with Bulgarian students, and organises activities like Bulgarian food tastings to further inspire and motivate students.

● Bulgarian Language and Culture (ブルガリアの言語と文化)

The language of instruction for this course is also Japanese. The lecturer uses authentic materials and presentations related to Bulgarian lifestyle and culture, which act as a gateway for writing a report on the culture at the end of the semester. The report is used as a means of evaluation, along with a comment sheet that students must submit after each class.

● Old Church Slavonic Language (Old Bulgarian) (古代教会スラブ語)

The language of instruction for this course is also Japanese. The main textbook is 古代教会スラブ語入門 (*Introduction to Old Church Slavonic Language*) (Kimura 2003). In the latter half of the semester, the focus is primarily on text reading, and each student is required to analyse texts as homework in advance. The students' efforts and the content of their analyses are assessed, and at the end of the semester, they are tasked with analysing a manuscript text that was not covered in class. This serves as a final evaluation of their ability to interpret Old Bulgarian language.

Since Hokkaido University is the centre of Slavonic Studies in Japan, the courses related to Bulgarian language and culture also emphasise the acquisition of linguistic knowledge, the development of analytical skills, and the cultivation of future academics and researchers in the field. Below, we present the lecturer's perspective on the current state of the Bulgarian courses and the strategies that are adopted at Hokkaido University:

> *The number of Japanese students enrolling in Bulgarian language classes, offered solely as elective courses, remains quite limited. Considering this, it seems more meaningful to focus on fostering a deeper understanding of language, while encouraging a broader appreciation of the diverse cultures around the world. This can be achieved through the study of Bulgaria, its language, and its culture.*
>
> *Hoping that even one or two specialists might emerge in the future, we continue to sow the seeds each year by offering courses designed as gateways into this field…After all, seeds will never grow unless they are sown.*

4. DISCUSSION

Common feature of the Bulgarian language courses at the discussed universities is that the lecturers use Japanese as a language of instruction and the target groups include BA, MA and PhD students. In relation to the academic registers and syllabi of the examined universities we may say there is a clear indication of a structured approach to teaching Bulgarian language. The syllabi typically include:

● Language knowledge and practical skills: Focus on developing speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in Bulgarian.

● Cultural Context: Integration of Bulgarian culture, history, and literature into the curriculum to provide students with a holistic understanding of the language.

● Interactive Methods: Adoption of interactive communicative methods that encourage student participation and engagement.

● Usage of authentic materials in addition to the main textbooks.

While the three universities in the Kansai region and the courses offered at the „Open Academy" of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies take a more practical approach to the Bulgarian language, Tokyo University and Hokkaido University place greater emphasis on fostering linguistic proficiency and nurturing the analytical skills of their students, recognising these as essential tools for academic growth and research development.

Hokkaido University as a leader in the field of Slavonic Studies, focuses on slightly different key aspects, too:

● Language Acquisition: Courses are designed to provide students with a strong foundation in the Bulgarian language, facilitating effective communication and comprehension of cultural nuances.

● Analytical Skills: Students engage in critical analysis of texts and cultural artifacts, fostering their ability to interpret and evaluate diverse materials related to Slavic studies and Old Bulgarian Language.

● Academic Development: The program aims to cultivate future scholars and researchers by encouraging participation in seminars, workshops, and collaborative projects with both local and international academics.

● Research Opportunities: The SRC collaborates with various universities and research institutes globally, offering students exposure to a wide range of scholarly perspectives and methodologies.

● Cultural Engagement: Students are encouraged to explore the cultural contexts of the Bulgarian language, enhancing their understanding of its significance within the broader Slavic cultural landscape.

This comprehensive educational approach ensures that graduates are well-equipped for careers in academia, research, and cultural exchange related to Slavonic studies.

When examining the learning materials used across the discussed six academic institutions, a variety of resources can be identified. These include three textbooks authored by Japanese writers: ニューエクスプレスプラス ブルガリア語 (*New Express Bulgarian*) by K. Terajima (Terajima 2019), 『ゼロから話せるブルガリア語』 (*Speak Bulgarian from Scratch*) by K. Sugai (Sugai 2020) and 古代教会スラブ語入門 (*Introduction to Old Church Slavonic (Old Bulgarian) Language*) by S. Kimura (Kimura 2003), as well as one authored by Bulgarian writers – „Здравейте A1-A2“ (Kurteva et al. 2013). Scientific research by Sugai (Sugai 2019) indicates that additional textbooks for Japanese learners of Bulgarian, also written by Japanese authors, are utilised in some private academic institutions and organisations.

The earliest books on Bulgarian grammar for Japanese learners were published in 1984 (現代ブルガリア語入門』 *Introduction to Contemporary Bulgarian* by H. Yajima (Yajima 1984)) and『現代ブルガリア語』 *Contemporary Bulgarian* by K. Yamazaki (Yamazaki 1985). While these older works are now rarely used as teaching materials, they remain of significant interest to Japanese researchers studying the Bulgarian language. Sugai (Sugai 2019) also provides a comparative analysis of several Bulgarian textbooks currently in use in Japan.

> *Five years later after Yamazaki (1985), a new textbook of Bulgarian language written by Kenji Terajima, Express Burugaria-go, was published in 1990 (※first edition) by the publishing company Hakusui-sha as part of its Express series of foreign language textbooks. This textbook is different from the two earlier books on Bulgarian grammar above in having conversations and grammar exercises besides explanations of grammar […] In 1991, Burugaria-go Bumpo was published by Rokuya Matsunaga. As the author writes in the preface (Matsunaga 1991: i), this book is designed for learners at an intermediate level who have completed basic Bulgarian grammar. Thus, this book is obviously intended for reference […] Finally, Mazuhakoredake Burugaria-go, written by Yumi Ninomiya, was published in 2006 as part of a series of foreign language textbooks by the publishing company Kokusai Gogaku-sha. This textbook is exclusively for be ginners and is intended to be used as a phrase book as well* (Sugai 2019: 235–234).

In addition to the textbooks mentioned above, lecturers at the universities under examination also incorporate authentic materials, as well as resources they design and adapt themselves to meet the specific needs of their courses. This approach ensures a tailored learning experience that aligns with the objectives and linguistic requirements of the students.

Maintaining the interest and motivation of the Japanese students is closely tied to the selection of materials and the teaching approach adopted by the lecturer. Carefully chosen resources and engaging methodologies play a crucial role in fostering a stimulating and effective learning environment. Some lecturers have also shared their strategies for actively engaging students‘ interest:

> *1. During one lecture, I announced that we would learn the song „Let It Be Summer.“ The students genuinely enjoyed my loud and spirited performance. After the semester ended, a colleague wrote to me from a restaurant in Tokyo, where she had spotted a shelf filled with volumes of „The Little Prince" in various translations. Among them, she found a Bulgarian edition, which made her feel nostalgic for the university lectures. Our language is rich and beautiful enough to captivate interest on its own. However, nothing motivates more than an outstretched hand* (Genkov 2020).
>
> *2. In general, students are encouraged to ask questions at any time during the lesson, and I frequently ask if anyone has questions. They are also given the opportunity to select the topics of the texts we will translate and discuss* (from questionnaire survey in Apendix 1).
>
> *3. Whenever possible, I incorporate cultural activities into the lessons, such as offering Bulgarian food and drinks to students, involving exchange students from Sofia University as teaching assistants for conversation practice, or organising traditional Bulgarian dance (horo) sessions (from questionnaire survey in Apendix 1)*

5. CONCLUSION

Contrary to the trends outlined in the literature review (see Section 2: Literature Review) regarding Bulgarian language courses at universities abroad, Japan has witnessed a noticeable surge in interest and enthusiasm for the language. Despite the absence of dedicated Bulgarian Studies programs, this growing interest continues to gain momentum, reflecting a unique development in the academic landscape. As discussed in the data above, not only the selection of learning materials, the structured syllabus, and the adopted approach are essential for the development of Bulgarian studies in Japan, but the human factor, the personal approach and attitude of the lecturer also play a significant role.

In addition, as Japan continues to globalise and engage more with countries outside of its immediate geographical region, there may be a growing interest in languages and cultures from Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria. This could lead to an increase in the number of students studying the Bulgarian language at the academic level, particularly as interest in cultural exchanges, trade, and tourism between Japan and Bulgaria grows.

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Appendix 1

Българският език в Япония (пилотно проучване)

1. Къде (име на институция/университет и др.) преподавате бълг. език?
2. Под каква форма (редовно/задочно/дистанционно и др.) преподавате бълг. език?
3. Занятията по български езика са: □ лекции; □ упражнения
4. На какви студенти (бакалавър/магистър/доктор/работещи или др.) преподавате бълг. език?
5. В какъв курс са студентите, на които преподавате бълг. език? (1, 2, 3, 4, магистър, докторант, специализант, др.)
6. Какво е нивото на владеене на бълг. езика на Вашите студенти?
7. Какъв е общият брой на студентите, на които преподавате бълг. език към декември 2024?
8. Колко часа седмично преподавате бълг. език с всеки курс/група и каква е продължителността на един учебен час?
9. Какви дисциплини преподавате във всеки един курс/група? (Напр. Съвременен бълг. език, Разговорен бълг. език, Граматика, Четене с разбиране, Църковнославянски език, Българска култура и др.)
10. Моля, опишете накратко в какво се изразява подготовката Ви за всяка една дисциплина от т. 9. или как подготвяте всеки един урок?
11. Какви учебни материали (учебници/помагала/работни листове и др.) ползвате за всяка една дисциплина от т. 9.?
12. На какъв език преподавате изброените в т. 9. дисциплини?
13. Каква форма/формат за проверка на знанията на студентите използвате? (Напр. писмен тест, устен изпит, събеседване, презентация, доклад и др.)
14. Моля, опишете Вашите критерии при оценяване на знанията на студентите? (Напр. 1. добре познава теорията, 2. добре владее граматиката, 3. използва правилно лексиката и др.)
15. Колко пъти по време на една учебна година правите проверка на знанията на студентите?
16. Организирате ли други – извънучебни форми, на обучение по бълг. език и какви?
17. Организирате ли културни и образователни събития, свързани с бълг. език и култура?
18. От колко време преподавате български език?
19. Преподавали ли Сте на друго място (институция/университет и др.) бълг. език и къде?
20. Като преподавател по бълг. език на какво най-много държите при преподаването? (Напр. да обясня добре граматиката, да предоставя много граматически примери, да обърна внимание на говоримия бълг. език, да акцентирам върху практиката и разговорите на български език, дискусии и др.)

21. По какъв начин мотивирате студентите да участват активно в учебния процес?

22. На какво според Вас се дължи интересът към българския език в Япония?

Appendix 2

Tokyo University, Slavonic Lnaguages and Literatures Department <https://www.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/slav/classes/>[17.10.2024.]

授業計画	
1	イントロダクション
2	マケドニアとブルガリアの近代事情
3	ブルガリア語とマケドニア語の標準語の比較　文字体系 音韻論など
4	ブルガリア語とマケドニア語の標準語の比較　文法　（1）
5	ブルガリア語とマケドニア語の標準語の比較　文法　（2）
6	ブルガリア語とマケドニア語の標準語の比較　語彙　（1）
7	ブルガリア語とマケドニア語の標準語の比較　語彙　（2）
8	ブルガリアとマケドニアの方言分布　論
9	ブルガリアとマケドニアの方言分布　格変化と代名詞の進化
10	ブルガリアとマケドニアの方言分布　代名詞の二重使用
11	方言のケ┌ススタディ：ブルガリア&マケドニア国境付近の方言（1）
12	方言のケ┌ススタディ：ブルガリア&マケドニア国境付近の方言（2）
13	まとめ：南スラブ言語体進化の可能性

Appendix 3

Kyoto University, Slavic Languages and Literatures <http://www.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp/slavic-languages-literatures/ [17.10.2024.]

Subject Number	G-LET49 69679 LJ48
Subject	Bulgarian, Beginners II
Credits	2
Academic Year/Semester	2024, Fall
Day	Wednesday, 4
Language of Instruction	Japanese
Annotation	Continuing from the previous semester, students will learn Bulgarian grammar, commonly used vocabulary, and expressions. Since Bulgarian has many verb forms, these will be studied thoroughly. As in the previous semester, the course will also deepen understanding of Bulgarian history, religion, and culture through the lectures.
Objectives	As in the previous semester, the goal is to acquire basic grammar, vocabulary, and expressions.
Course Schedule & Content	Session 1: Orientation Session 2: Lesson 7 Plural forms (masculine nouns), future tense, postposed definite articles for adjectives and nouns (plural), *трябва да* (must/need to) Session 3: Lesson 7 Review of Lesson 7, numerals (part 2), using *Zdraveyte!* Session 4: Lecture, “Getting to Know Bulgaria (Part 3)” Session 5: Lesson 8, Imperative mood, numerals for people (masculine), interrogative word *какъв* Session 6: Lesson 8 Review of Lesson 8, using *Zdraveyte!* Session 7: Lesson 9, Comparative and superlative forms, interrogative pronoun *кой* (“who”), relative pronoun *който*, demonstrative pronouns, *Какво е това?* (“What is this?”) Session 8: Lesson 9 Review of Lesson 9, vocabulary related to family, ethnicity, and countries, using *Zdraveyte!* Session 9: Lecture, “Getting to Know Bulgaria (Part 4)”

	Session 10: Lesson 10 Expressions for physical condition, sentences with short-form pronouns, personal pronouns in accusative and dative long forms, *отивам на* (“to go to”) Session 11: Lesson 10 Review of Lesson 10, using *Zdraveyte!* Session 12: Lesson 11, Past tense, possessive pronouns (long form) and their postposed definite forms Session 13: Lesson 11 Review of Lesson 11, using *Zdraveyte!* Session 14: Lesson 12, Perfect tense, reflexive pronouns *cu*, *ce* Session 15: Comprehensive Review, Review using prepared materials
Evaluation Criteria	Overall evaluation will be based on attendance, submitted assignments, and class participation (50%), as well as the regular examination (50%).
Textbooks	Kenji Terashima, *New Express Plus: Bulgarian* (Hakusuisha, 2019) ISBN: 9784560088258 G. Kurteva, Kr. Bumbarova, St. Băchvarova, *Zdraveyte A1–A2: Textbook of Bulgarian for Foreigners* (Publisher: NBU, 2013) ISBN: 9789545357374 Students are required to purchase *New Express Plus: Bulgarian*. *Zdraveyte* does not need to be purchased; copies will be distributed as needed.

Subject Number	U-LET49 19678 LJ48
Subject	Bulgarian, Beginners I
Credits	2
Academic Year/Semester	2024, Spring
Day	Wednesday, 4
Language of Instruction	Japanese

Annotation	Bulgaria, the birthplace of the Cyrillic script, was once a vast medieval empire and a cultural and literary center. In this introductory course, students will learn modern Bulgarian, a language that inherits this rich cultural and linguistic heritage. Bulgarian is often referred to as the ‚classical Slavic language.' At the same time, as part of the Balkan Peninsula linguistic area, it shares many features with other Balkan languages that are absent in other Slavic languages, earning it the reputation of an ‚exotic' Slavic language. The course begins with learning the Cyrillic alphabet, followed by the study of basic grammar, along with essential vocabulary and expressions. In addition to language instruction, lectures will be given to explore key topics such as Bulgarian history, religion, and culture – important elements in understanding and appreciating the language.
Objectives	The goal of this course is to master the Cyrillic alphabet, as well as basic grammar, vocabulary, and expressions.
Course Schedule & Content	Session 1: Orientation. Practice in pronunciation and writing of the Cyrillic alphabet Session 2: Lesson 1, Greetings upon meeting (1), honorifics, *моля* ("please"), *ето* ("here you are," "look") Session 3: Review of Lesson 1, using *Zdraveyte!* Session 4: Lesson 2, Greetings upon meeting (2), subject personal pronouns, the verb *съм*, self-introductions, interrogative particle *ли* Session 5: Review of Lesson 2, using *Zdraveyte!* Session 6: Lecture, "Getting to Know Bulgaria (Part 1)" Session 7: Lesson 3 Gender of nouns, verbs (a-conjugation), impersonal verbs *има* and *няма* ("there is/there isn't"), prepositions Session 8: Review of Lesson 3, using *Zdraveyte!* Session 9: Lesson 4 Verbs (i-conjugation), plural forms (feminine and neuter nouns), adjective declension Session 10: Review of Lesson 4, using *Zdraveyte!* Session 11: Lecture, "Getting to Know Bulgaria (Part 2)"

	Session 12: Lesson 5 Vocative forms (masculine and feminine nouns), verbs (e-conjugation), postposed definite articles (feminine and neuter nouns), short forms of personal pronouns (dative and accusative) Session 13: Review of Lesson 5, Numerals (part 1), also using *Zdraveyte!* Session 14: Lesson 6, (Content to be covered based on textbook progression) Session 15: Comprehensive Review, Review using prepared materials
Evaluation Criteria	Overall evaluation will be based on attendance, submitted assignments, and class participation (50%), as well as the regular examination (50%).
Textbooks	Kenji Terashima, *New Express Plus: Bulgarian* (Hakusuisha, 2019) ISBN: 9784560088258 G. Kurteva, Kr. Bumbarova, St. Băchvarova, *Zdraveyte A1–A2: Textbook of Bulgarian for Foreigners* (Publisher: NBU, 2013) ISBN: 9789545357374 Students are required to purchase *New Express Plus: Bulgarian*. *Zdraveyte* does not need to be purchased; copies will be distributed as needed.

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