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A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!



Lesson 1: Thank You!

мерси merci

LESSON NOTES

In Bulgarian, "thank you" is "blagodaria" (благодаря). This compound word is made up of two parts. The first, "blago" (благо), means "prosperity" or "well-being". This is followed by "daria" (даря), which in Bulgarian means, "to give a gift". This phrase is widely used, neither excessively formal nor too informal and will be your safe bet in situations where you are not to sure what way of saying "thank you" would be most appropriate. Just go with "blagodaria" (благодаря) and you will be fine!

There are other ways to express one's gratitude. There is one formal and one casual way that we will explore next. Let's take a look at the casual expression first.

In Bulgarian, the casual way of expressing gratitude, for example, "thanks" is "merci" (мерси). Yes, that's right! It seems like French and this is exactly where this word was borrowed from. Keep in mind that the original French pronunciation has mutated and Bulgarians say it using the hard Slavic "r".

You will hear Bulgarians using "merci" (мерси) with friends and in other casual situations, for example, when getting their change from the cashier at a supermarket or when picking up their mail at the post office. A word of caution: a limited number of Bulgarians still consider "merci" (мерси) a foreign word which shouldn't be used as there are enough "pure" Bulgarian expressions available. Also, to be on the safe side, make sure you use the higher-level expression "blagodaria" (благодаря) when dealing with officials at a formal level.

On the other hand, for very special occasions when someone goes above and beyond the call of being kind, when someone is extremely generous, or for any other time you're extremely grateful, Bulgarians have the following phrase to express deep gratitude: the equivalent of "thank you very much", is "blagodaria vi mnogo" (благодаря ви много). The first word "blagodaria" (благодаря), as we already know means, "to give prosperity". The second, "vi" (Ви), is the polite second person plural of the English "you".

If the person you are thanking is a friend, switch to a deeper level of closeness by using "ti" (ти), the second person singular equivalent of the English "you". Then the whole phrase becomes "blagodaria ti mnogo" (благодаря ти много). The last word in our expression is "mного" (много), which in Bulgarian is "much". To recap, the formal version of the phrase is "blagodaria vi mnogo" (благодаря ви много) while the version to use with friends or people you know well and feel you can be informal with is "blagodaria ti mnogo" (благодаря ти много).

PHRASES

Bulgarian	Romanized	English
благодаря ти много	blagodaria ti mnogo	thank you very much (expressing deep gratitude to a close person)
благодаря ви много	blagodaria vi mnogo	thank you very much (very formal)

VOCABULARY

Bulgarian	Romanized	English
мерси	merci	Thanks (informal)
благодаря	blagodaria	thank you (formal)

QUICK TIP

What to do when someone thanks you in Bulgarian using one of the phrases we just learned? Very easy: just say “molyah” /mo-lyah/ (моля) which literally means “please” but has the effect of “you are welcome”.

QUICK TIP 2

As we saw in the case of “merci” (мерси), Bulgarian has borrowed words from many European languages like French, German, Italian, and English. Their original pronunciation, however, was “Bulgarianized”. Hence, if you want to be understood in Bulgaria, make sure that you know how to say those foreign words with Bulgarian accent.