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Modeling mutual intelligibility between Slavic languages

The aim of Project C4 is to identify the mechanisms by which languages en- and decode information, focusing on the study of receptive multilingualism among speakers of Slavic languages. The key idea is that comprehension of an unknown, but related, language should be better when the language model adapted for understanding the unknown language exhibits relatively low average surprisal. We develop models of mutual intelligibility, framing the problem as one of (statistical) language model adaptation and incorporating results from traditional approaches and comparative historical linguistics. Currently our research focuses on the language pairs Czech-Polish and Bulgarian-Russian: on the basis of orthographic and morphological features, different mappings between pairs of languages are being developed.