

## **Mutual intelligibility in the Slavic language area measured by cloze test**

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Not much is known about the level of mutual intelligibility between different Slavic languages and the potential for using receptive multilingualism as a way of communicating. In most studies conducted so far, the focus is on Czech and Slovak (Budovičová, 1987a, Nábělková, 2007), whereas there is only anecdotal evidence available for other languages. Therefore, we decided to fill that gap by investigating the level of mutual intelligibility between Czech, Slovak, Polish, Slovene, Croatian and Bulgarian.

The level of intelligibility of both text and speech is measured using the cloze test, a text in which a number of words is replaced by a gap (in the written version) or a beer of uniform length (in the spoken version). The words are presented separately and the participants' task is to place them back into the right gaps. In order to do the task successfully, a participant must understand the words as well as the general context around each gap.

We found that:

1. West Slavic languages (Czech, Slovak and Polish) are generally more mutually intelligible than South Slavic languages (Croatian, Slovene, Bulgarian);
2. The intelligibility between Croatian and Slovene seems promising for receptive multilingualism, however, Slovene speakers understand Croatian much better than the other way around;
3. In the spoken cloze test, only the combinations involving West Slavic languages between them and Croatian-Slovene have the level of intelligibility above 30
4. Bulgarian is the least intelligible language in our study.

Since this is the first study quantifying the level of intelligibility between six different Slavic languages, the results have implications not only for the field of Slavic language teaching but also for translation studies and policy making within the Slavic language area.