Towards mutual intelligibility between closely related languages
in real-world communication context: the preparation of speech stimuli

Mutual intelligibility between languages allows people to directly communicate using their own languages. Studying mutual intelligibility is particularly interesting in the European Union (EU) because it can help understand the communication barriers and the opportunities offered by linguistic diversity in the EU. Existing studies on mutual intelligibility have two important limitations: a) they rarely consider real-world communication contexts, and b) they generally address mutual intelligibility only for native speakers. To address these limitations, this research project aims to investigate mutual intelligibility for both native and non-native speakers in real-world communication contexts. This project will study the effects of noisy environments and contextual predictability on mutual intelligibility between Dutch and German/English and investigate the impact of both linguistic similarities and individual variables including prior language exposure. Linguistic similarities will be examined in terms of various metrics, e.g., lexical distance and phonetic distance, between words in two languages, and the effect of prior language exposure will be investigated in two real-world scenarios: (1) comparing native and non-native speakers of German, and (2) comparing non-native speakers of German and English. In this talk, I will further explain the idea of this project, the design of the intended experiments, and the current progress of preparing the speech stimuli.