

Splicing Instructions

When we create our experiments, we need to be able to play individual words as experiment stimuli. In order to get these individual words, we have a native speaker of whatever language we're working with read a long list of the words we've selected to be in the experiment. To make sure we get a well articulated and easy to understand word, we have our reader read each word three times. This means we end up with a long sound file of the recording session, where each word is repeated three times.

Splicing, your task, consists of going through these word list recordings, listening to each of these three repetitions of a word, and selecting the best version of each word.

Here are some step by step instructions explaining how to do this. Please make sure you follow these instructions carefully, as uniformity is extremely important. (Remember that we usually have a variety of undergraduates and graduate students splicing and it's crucial that everybody does it exactly the same way.)

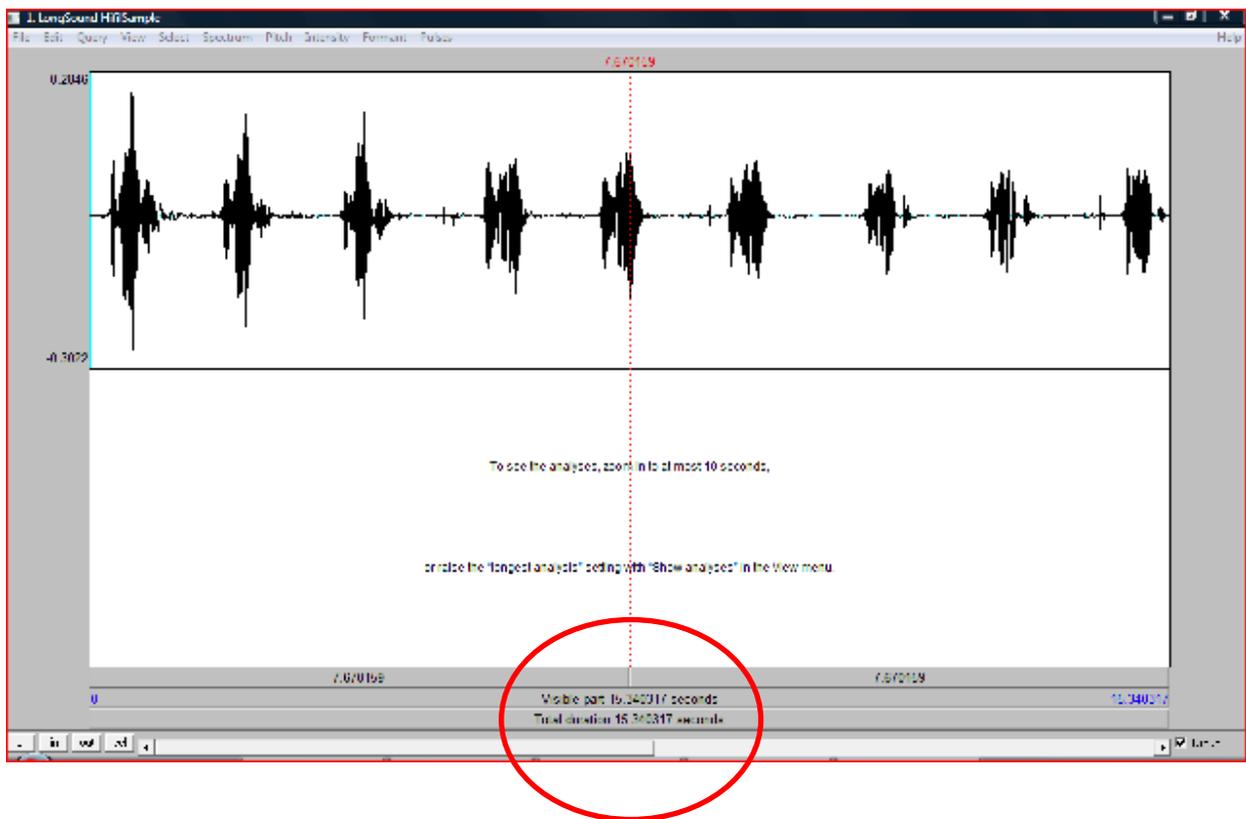
Step 1: Opening your sound file.

- a. Double click on the Praat icon
- b. Two windows will open. You can close the window with a pink frame in it. You won't need it.
- c. From the "Read" menu select the command "Open long sound file..."
- d. Select the sound file you've been assigned.
- e. It will appear in the Object menu in Praat, labeled "LongSound"
- f. You can view the waveform and spectrogram of this file by clicking "View" on the right hand side

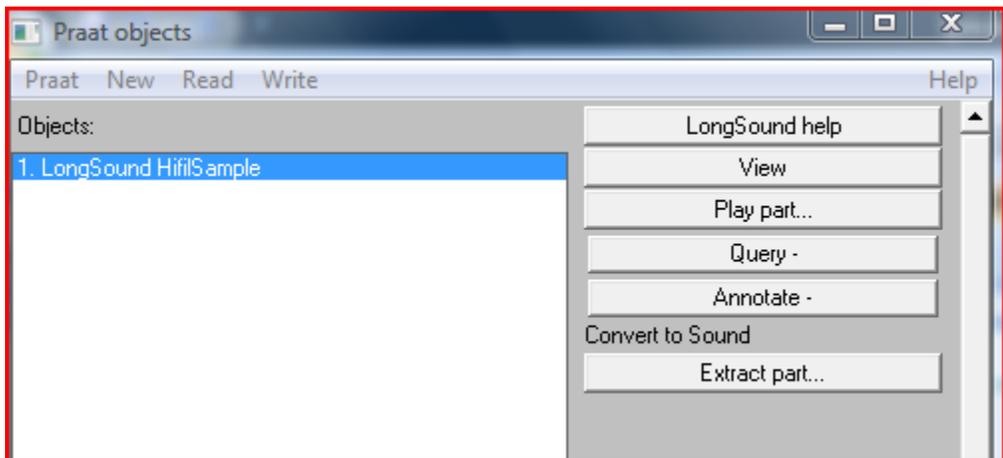
Step 2: Creating a TextGrid (You will only do this step once, the first time you work on your soundfile)

When you listen to the sound file, your task is to select the best and most clearly articulated version of each word. In order for you to be able to indicate which word you've selected, you need some way of marking on the sound file. A textgrid allows you to do this. **You will only need to create a textgrid once, at the beginning of each sound file. You should save it often while you're working to ensure that you won't lose any work (more details on this to follow).**

- a. Open your sound file (see instructions above).
- b. At the bottom of the screen, in the middle, Praat indicates how many seconds the current window selection is and how long the entire sound file is.

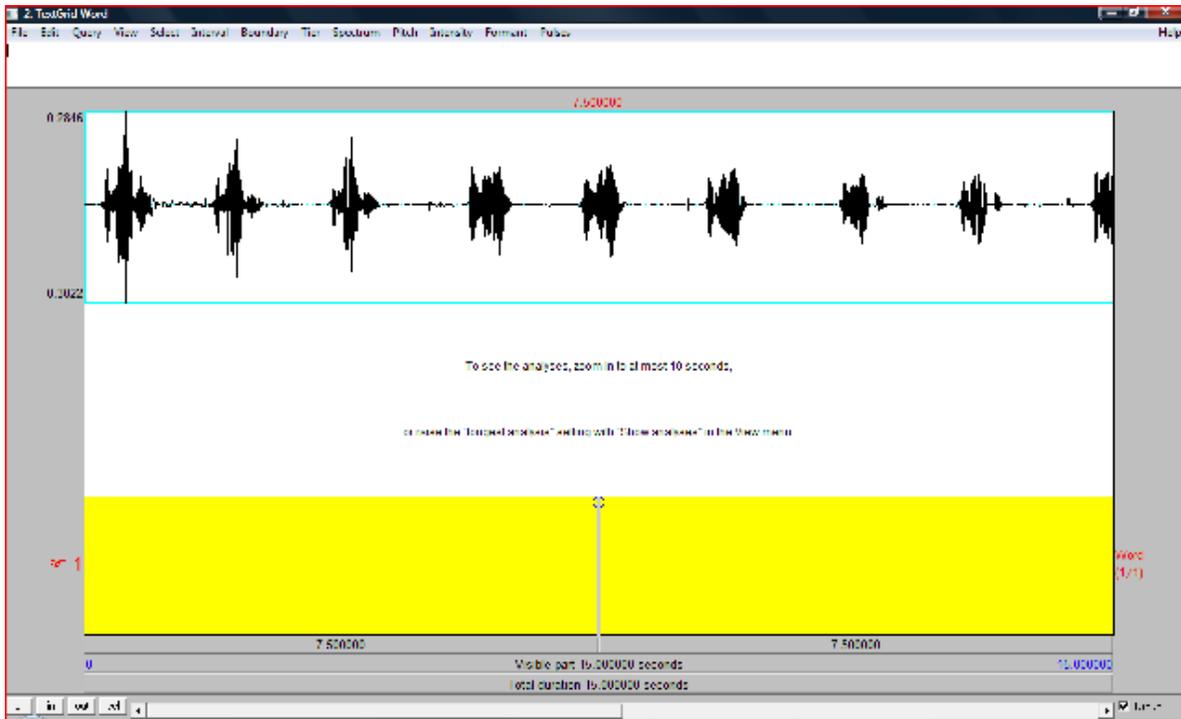


- c. Note how long the entire file is. (Here, it is just over 15 seconds long. Yours will probably be longer.)
- d. Close the sound file.
- e. Select the name of the sound file in the Praat object window. Like this:

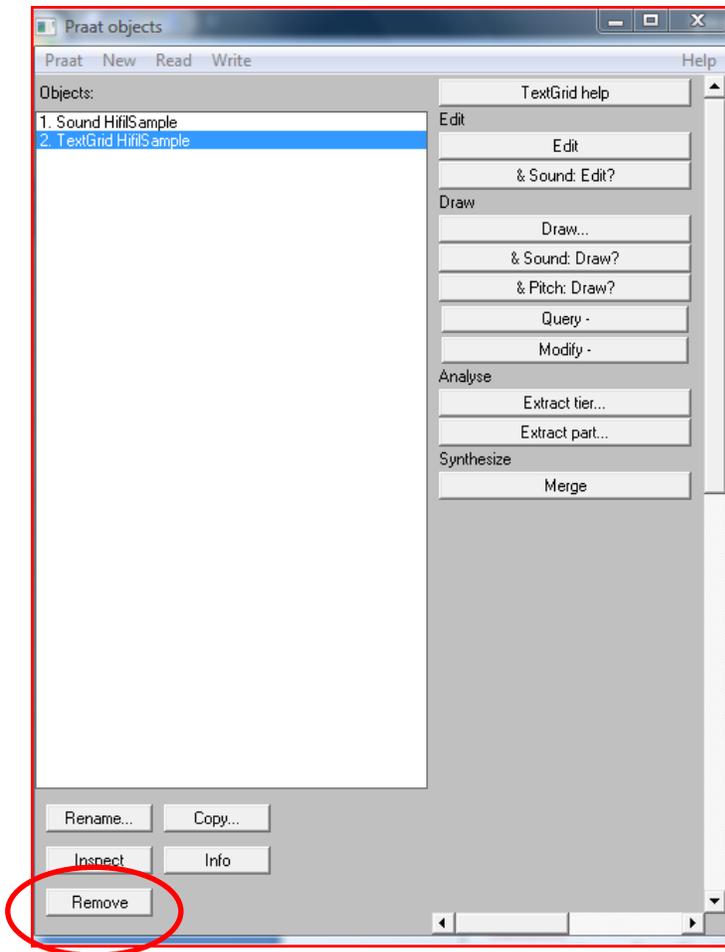


- f. From the "New" menu, select "Create text grid..."
- g. A dialogue box will prompt you to indicate how long the textgrid should be. It will look like this:

- o. You will now see a screen which contains both your sound file and a large yellow (it may be some other colour as well) field below it. The coloured field is your Text Grid.



- p. There is a way to write in this field. This is how you will indicate your selection of the best version of each word. Before you do this, however, save the textgrid.
- q. There is no “Save” command on the Praat File menu. So you need to use a quick key combination in order to save your textgrid. Press “CTRL” + “S”
- r. Name your textgrid file the same thing that your sound file is named. So for example, if your sound file is called “Hifil.aiff”, you will name your textgrid “Hifil.TextGrid”.
- s. Now something important to remember is that you currently have the original textgrid you made open in the Praat Object menu. And that is the one you’ve got open in front of you, not the version you just saved. So to make sure you’re working on the correct version, close this window.
- t. Select the textgrid labeled “TextGrid Word” and click “Remove” from the bottom of the Praat window.



- u. From the Read menu, select “Open File” and select the textgrid you saved. (In the current example, it would be called “Hifil.TextGrid”)
- v. Now you have your saved textgrid on the Object menu and you may now begin working.

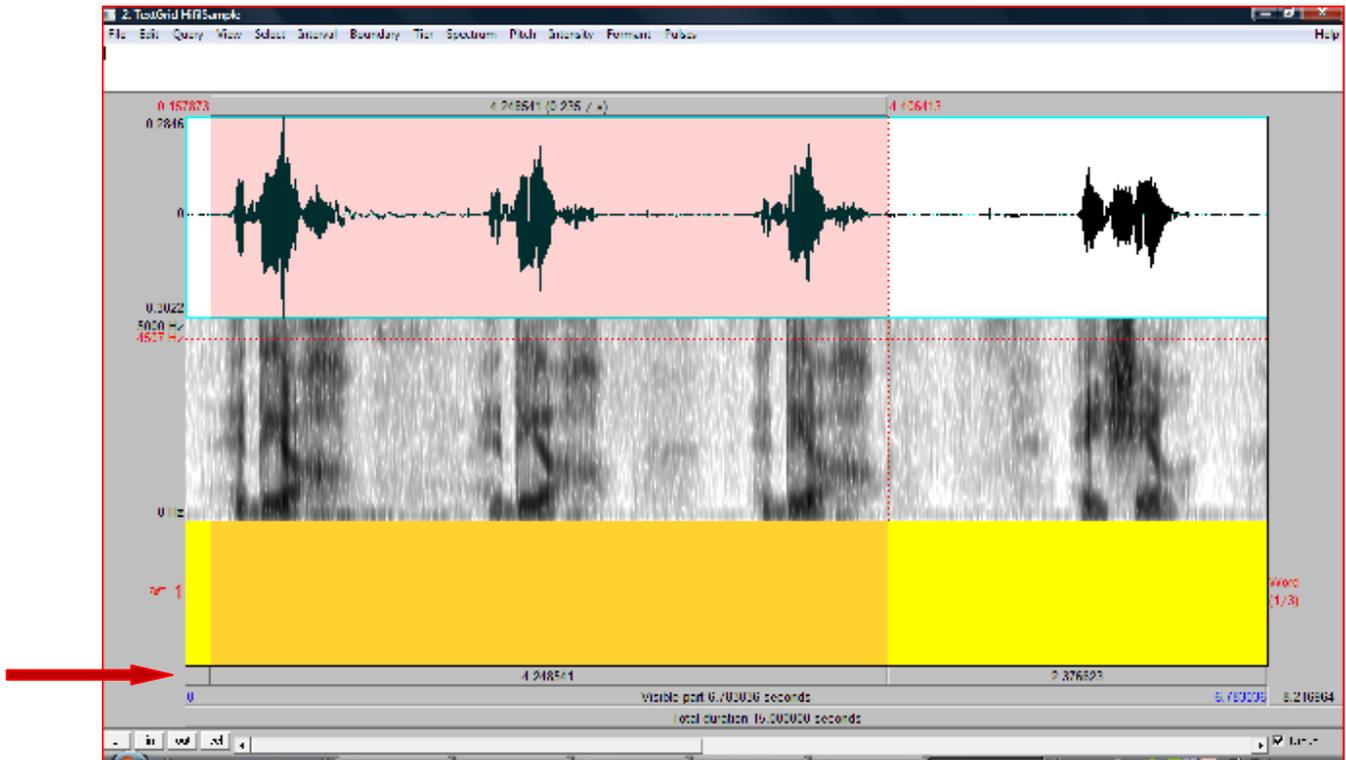
An important note:

You will need to save often as Praat can unexpectedly quit, causing you to lose your work. However, Praat does not have the capacity to update a saved version. It can only save a new version every time you hit “CTRL –S”. This simply means that you need to name the TextGrid the same name as the old one, and hit yes, when prompted about whether or not you want to replace the textgrid of the same name.

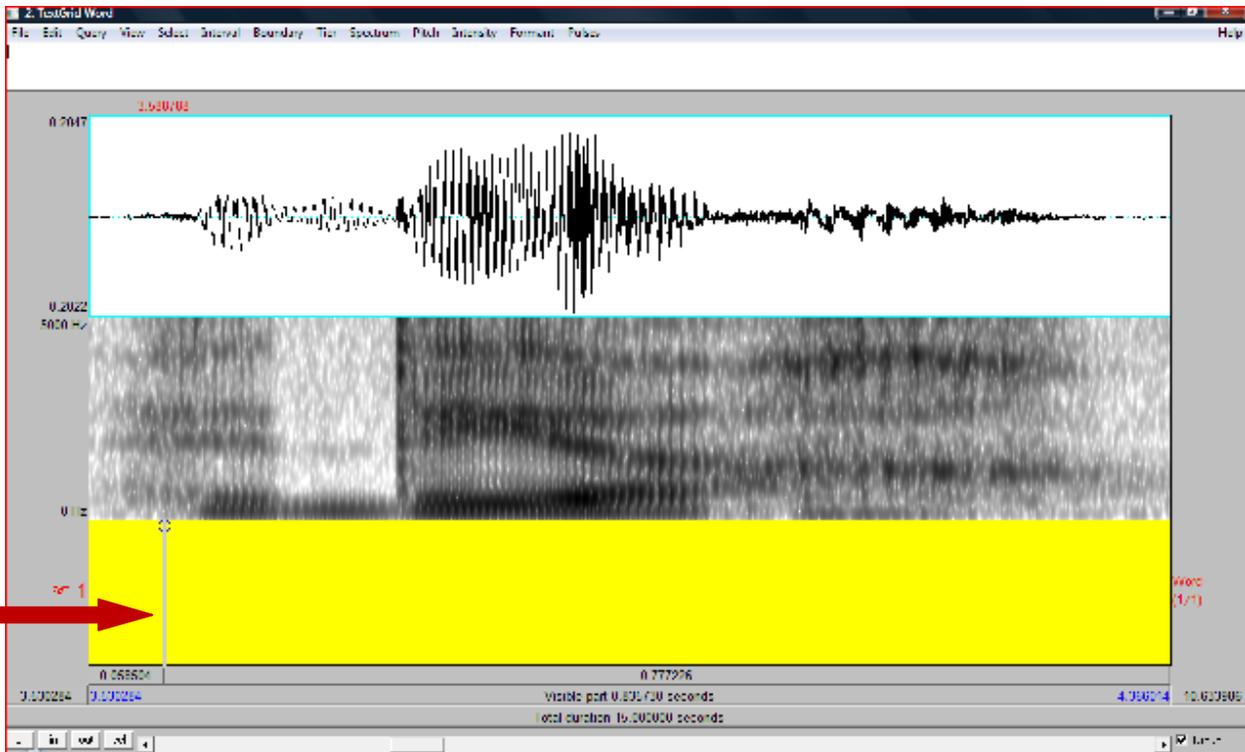
Step 3: Splicing

OK, now that you know how to open your sound file and have your textgrid ready to go, you’re ready to start splicing.

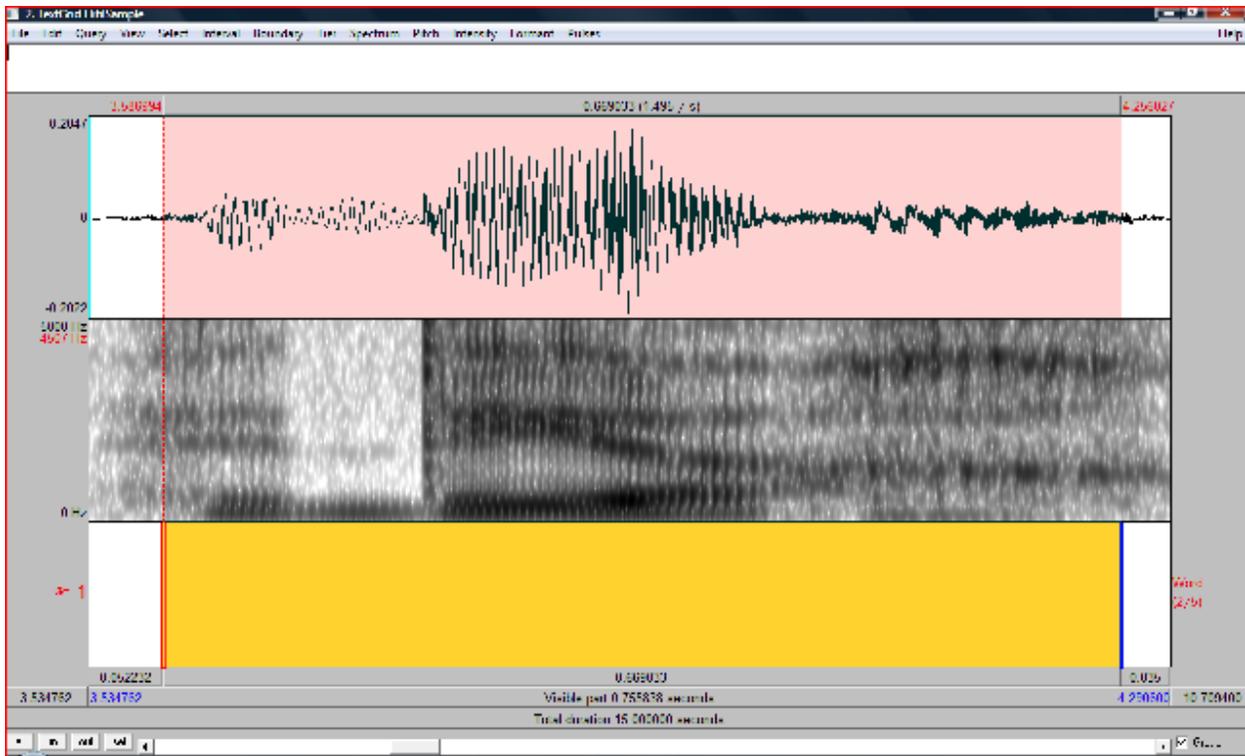
- Open your sound file
- Open your textgrid
- Select them both and click "Edit" (see example above)
- Drag your cursor over the first three words to select them. Click on the bottom of the selection to play it.



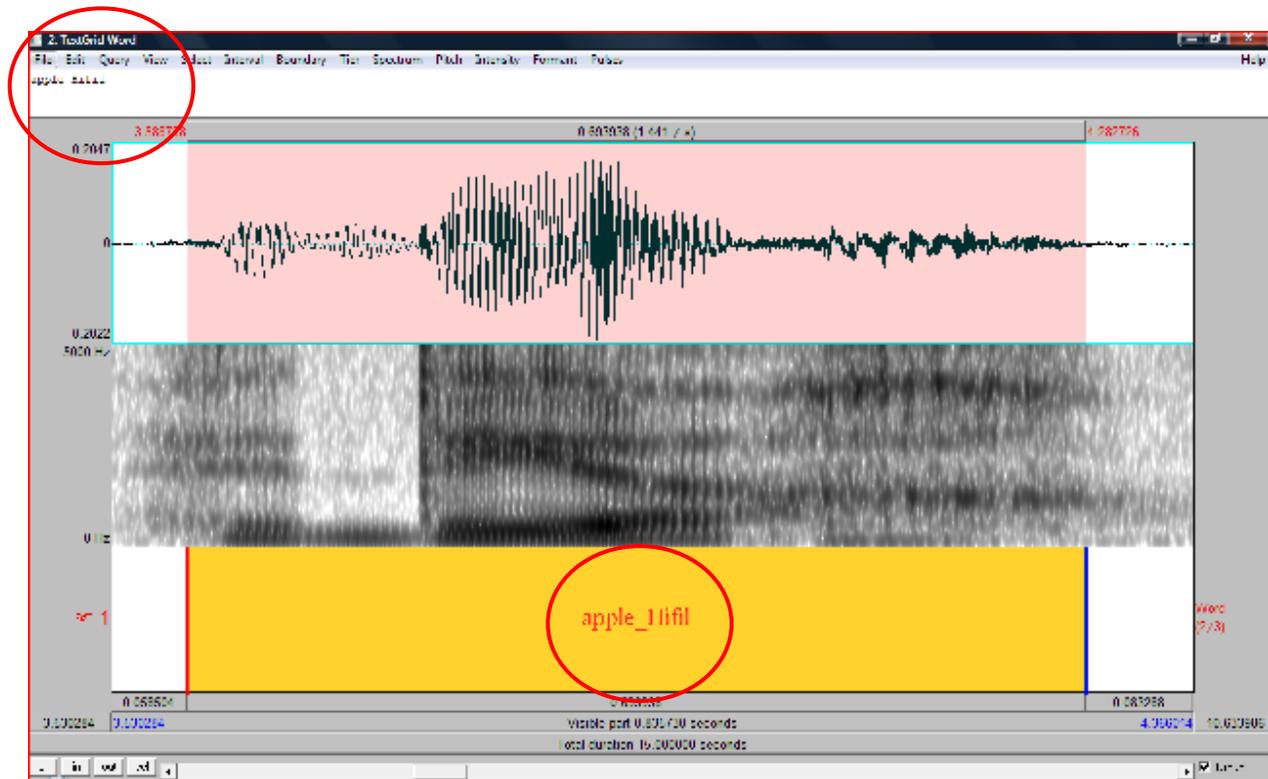
- Listen carefully and select the most clearly articulated, best version of the three repetitions.
- Once you've picked out the best version, you need to indicate to us which one you've selected. In order to do this, you will enter boundaries in the textgrid.
- With the cursor, select the best word.
- Click on the command "sel" in the lower left hand corner, in order to look at your selection up close.
- Click the cursor as close as possible to the beginning of the word, taking care to leave no silence in front of the word. Like this:



- j. Once you've positioned the cursor like this, from the "Boundary" menu, select "Add on tier 1" (Note also, that there is a quick key combination for this: "Ctrl + F1". You can do this to make the process go faster as you get more confident.)
- k. Now a red bar (it may be another colour as well; but usually an active or select boundary will be red, while an inactive or unselected boundary is blue) will appear where you positioned the cursor.
- l. Now do steps i. and j. except at the end of the word. Again, take care not to include any silence at the end of the word.
- m. Now you should have the word surrounded on each side by a blue or red bar, or boundary.



- n. Now you can write inside the two barriers. Click inside the textgrid between the two bars.
- o. Type the name of the word, followed by an underscore, followed by the name of the sound file you're working on. So for example, if you have the word "apple" in the sound file named "Hifil", you will type "apple_Hifil"



- p. Do this for all of your selected words.
- q. SAVE OFTEN!!!!

Helpful Hints for navigating in Praat:

- Use the “in”, “out”, and “sel” buttons in the lower left corner to see your sound files from close up or far away. It makes it easier to see what you’re doing.
- Use the scroll bar on the bottom to navigate forward or backward through the sound file
- USE HEADPHONES WHEN YOU LISTEN TO YOUR SOUNDFILES: there are often small details you can miss if you use your speakers

If you have any questions at all, don’t hesitate to email!!