Seeing speech: Teaching and learning Hul'q'umi'num' pronunciation with Praat

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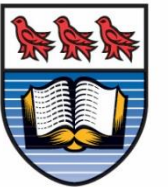
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Who we are

- Rae Anne Claxton, Sonya Luschiimtunaat Charlie, Harvey S-hwutstus George, George Sq'utxulenuhw Seymour
  - MA students in SFU Masters in Linguistics of a First Nations Language (Hul'q'umi'num')
  - Members of the Hul'q'umi'num' Language and Culture Collective

- Sonya Bird: Linguistics professor, University of Victoria

- Maida Percival: PhD student, University of Toronto

Huy tseep q'u

- Our Hawaiian hosts
- Elders: Ruby Peter, Delores Louie, Merle Seymour
- SFU Masters in Linguistics of a First Nations Language (Hul'q'umi'num')
- Donna Gerdts, SFU

Introduction: Hul'q'umi'num'

- Hul'q'umi'num' territory
  - Along the Salish Sea from Nanoose to Malahat on Vancouver Island and neighboring islands.
    - North of Seattle, WA

Island Halkomelem = Hul'q'umi'num'

http://digitalsqewlets.ca/stames/maps-cartes-eng.php

Introduction: Hul'q'umi'num' context

- Hul'q'umi'num'
  - Approximately 40 L1 speakers (elders) + 200 fluent second-language (L2) speakers + over 1,000 semi-fluent speakers and language learners + several hundred "fluent understanders"
  - Active language revitalization: many (new) programs designed to create new speakers of all ages

Hul'q'umi'num' sounds

	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Lateral	Palatal	Velar	Lab. Velar	Uvular	Lab. Uvular	Glottal
stop	p		t			k	kw	q	qw	'
Glott. stops	p'		t'				kw'	q'	qw'	
affricates		tth	ts		ch					
Glott. affricates		tth'	ts'	tl'	ch'					
Fricatives		th	s	lh	sh		hw	x	xw	h
Resonants	m		n	l	y		w			
Glott. resonants	m'		n'	l'	y'		w'			

- 37 consonants, 21 not in English
- Other important sound features: long strings of consonants
  - E.g. **hwtl'**uqtnuts 'cougar'

Introduction: Hul'q'umi'num' pronunciation

- Challenge: learners have very high standards with respect to pronunciation, but little by way of resources to support them
  - ***In general***: until very recently, very little opportunity to develop our own capacity for language work
  - No thorough phonetic description
  - Few opportunities to hear natural speech, *not* in a pedagogical context
  - Popular teaching approaches de-emphasize pronunciation (e.g. WAYK, TPR)
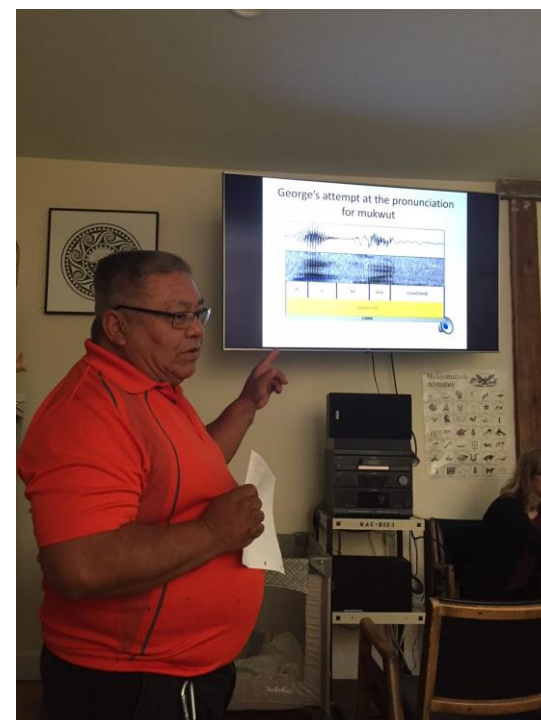
Introduction: Hul'q'umi'num' pronunciation

- Solution: new programming in Hul'q'umi'num' linguistics (SFU)

  In terms of pronunciation

  - Seeing speech using acoustic analysis software: Praat (www.praat.org)
  - Emerging as an effective way of learning pronunciation in the broader field of second language acquisition (Olson, 2014).
 - Something we can learn, take control of, and make use of ourselves
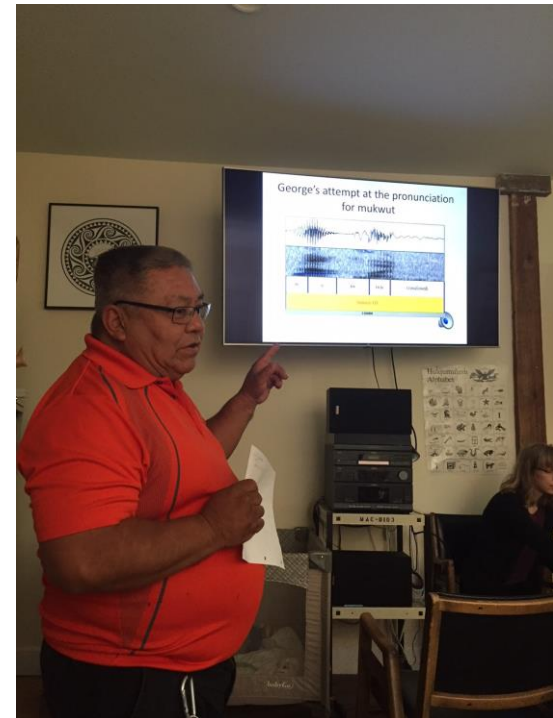
Hul'q'umi'num' phonetics and phonology class

- Participants
  - Students: SFU-based Master's in Linguistics of a First Nations Language program
  - Instructors: Sonya Bird and Maida Percival
- Process
  - Teaching and learning phonetic analysis with Praat
    - Training in Praat
    - Recording, listening to + visualizing, and documenting L1 and L2 speech
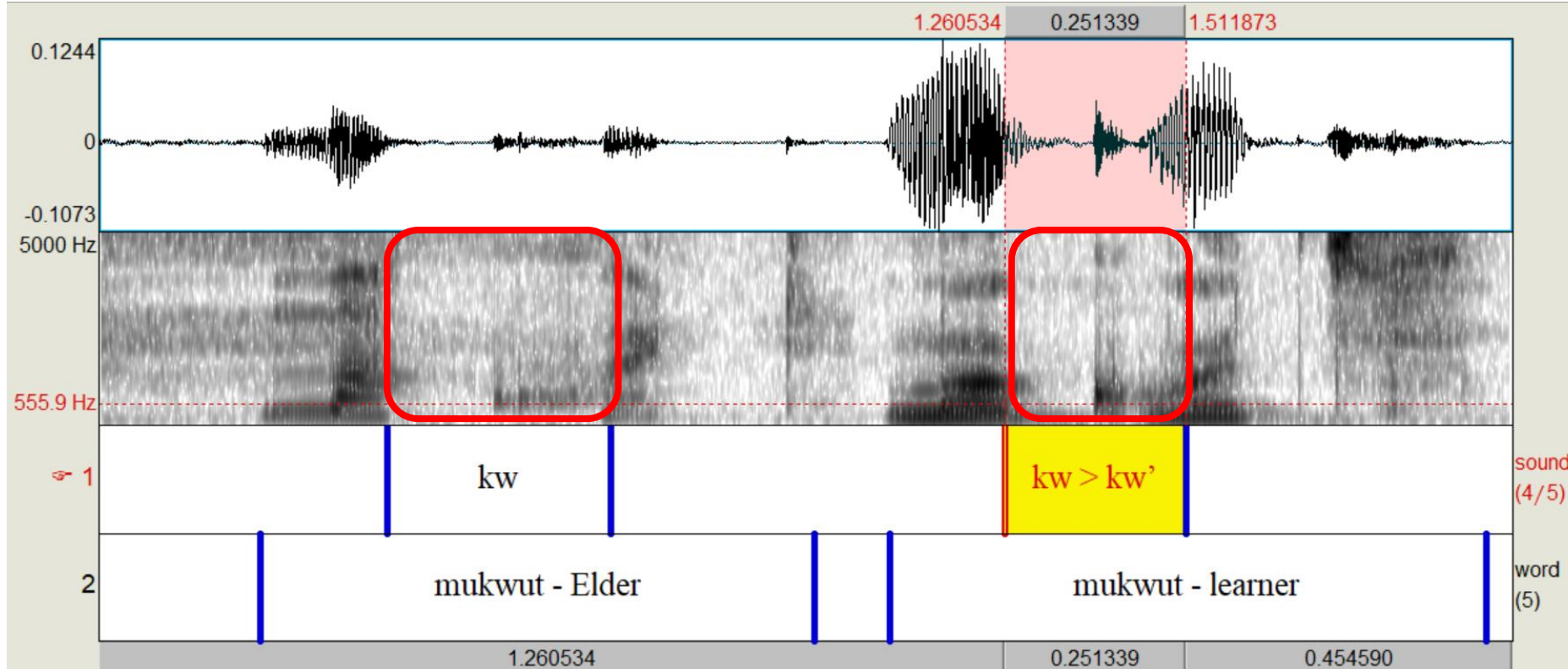
Example 1: adding sounds to words

- Learners sometimes insert sounds that shouldn't be there
- Praat helps learners see these sounds, and avoid them
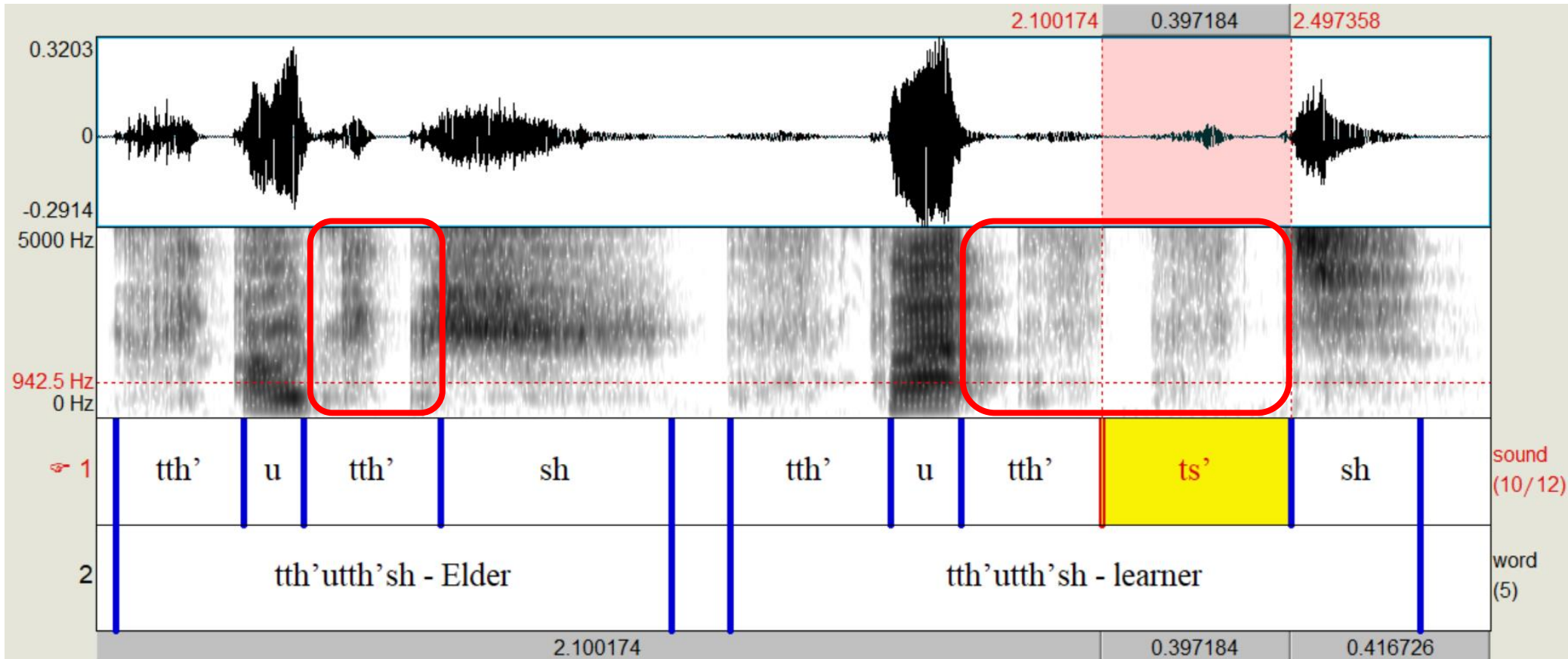
Example 2: Hul'q'umi'num' plain vs. ejective stops

- Learners tend to "over-ejectivize" stops
- Praat helps learners understand the release features of these sounds and try to match their Elders' speech
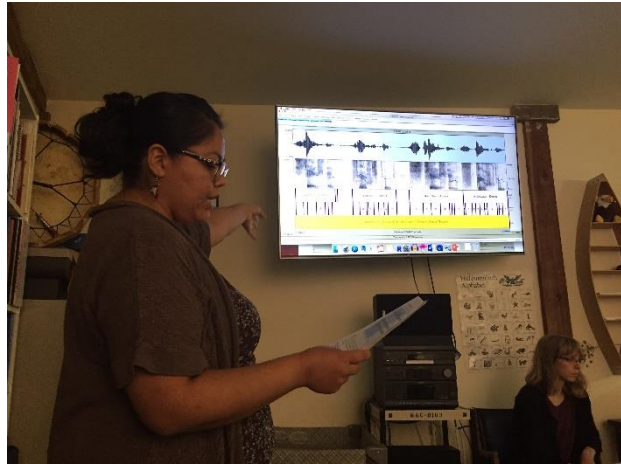

Long version

Short version

Discussion: Phonetic analysis as a pronunciation tool

- ## Pedagogy
  - Raises **awareness** of detailed pronunciation features
  - Helps develop both **perception** and **production** skills, both of which contribute to production ability
  - Takes guess out pronunciation (it's right there, you can hear and see what you're doing)
 - Fun for elders too!

- ## Documentation
  - Serves to **document** speech details
  - Facilitates **transcription** work (of previously recorded stories)
  - Builds our **capacity** to do this kind of work in our community and share it with others

Conclusion

- So far, we have used Praat to document the speech of elders and learners, and to compare the two
- We have found that Praat is an effective tool for our own learning
- We hope to keep using Praat as teachers, to help other learners with pronunciation
- We hope that, by sharing our experiences, we might encourage others to incorporate this kind of technology in pronunciation teaching and learning, especially in contexts where resources that support pronunciation work are sparse.
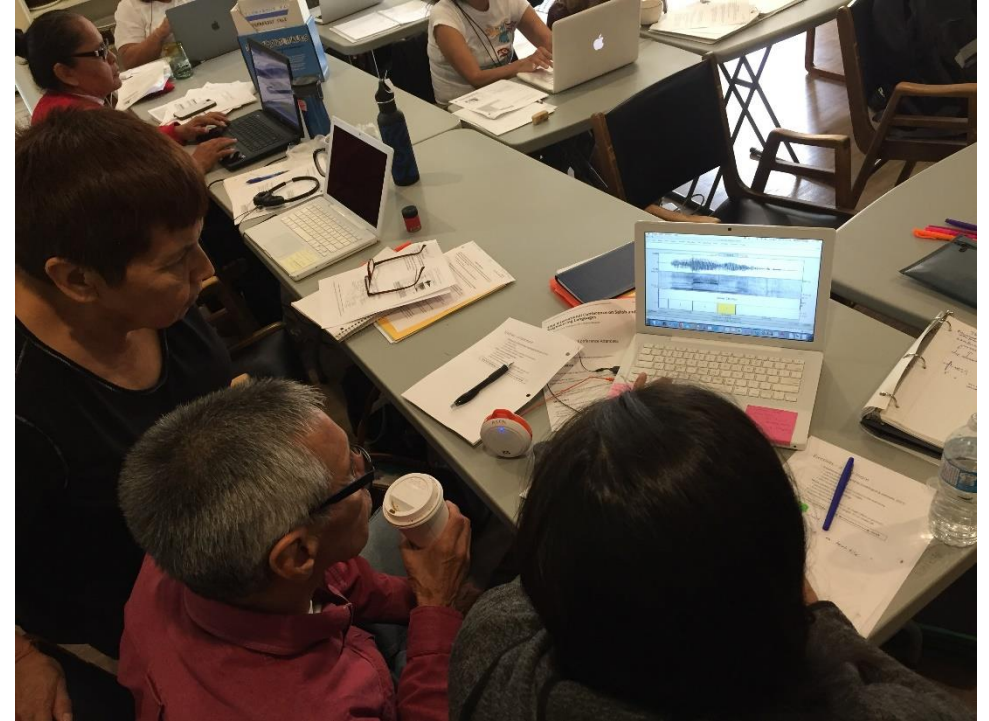
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