

French Phonology Acquisition

Unit Assessment Liaison Report
Matthew Williams

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World Languages and ELL
April 2020



The Six Stage Process...

Outcome Definition

Assessment Research and Design

Pilot Assessment Tools and
Processes

Administer Specific Assessment

Data Analysis

Supporting Evidence-Based Change



...has taken us on a bumpy ride!

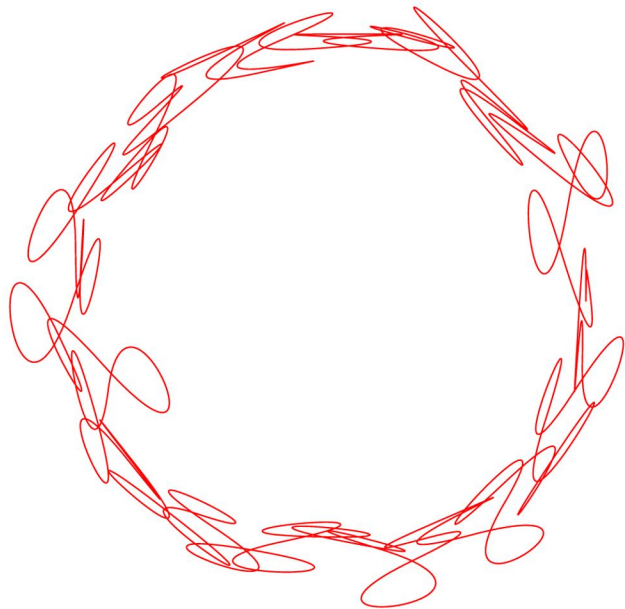
It all started with a question:

- *How can we help students improve their pronunciation of certain French sounds?*

What is stopping them?

1. Perception issues
2. Production issues

Obstacle!



Stage 1 - Outcome Definition

Early 2019

Discussions over French syllabi SLOs

No SLO for pronunciation

Proposal

1. Do the study
2. Date will show if goal is realistic



Stage 2 - Assessment Research and Design (1/4)

Mid 2019

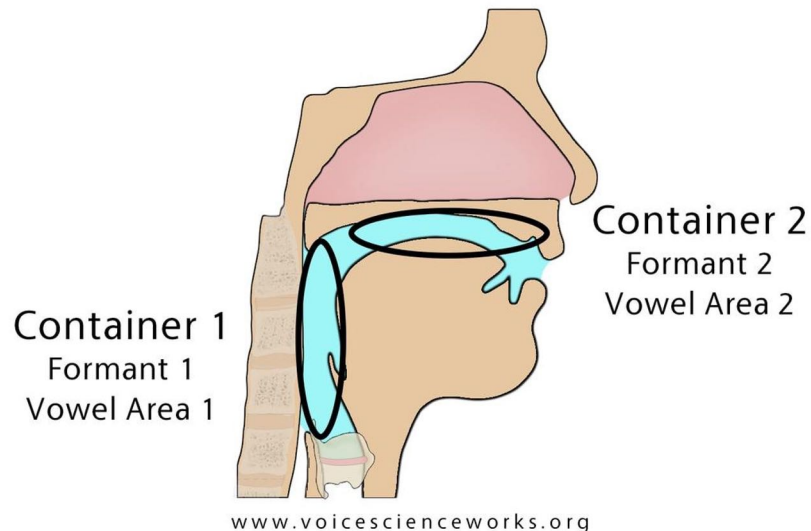
Student over-reliance on auditory channel, so...

Visual Reinforcement!

- Spectrogram



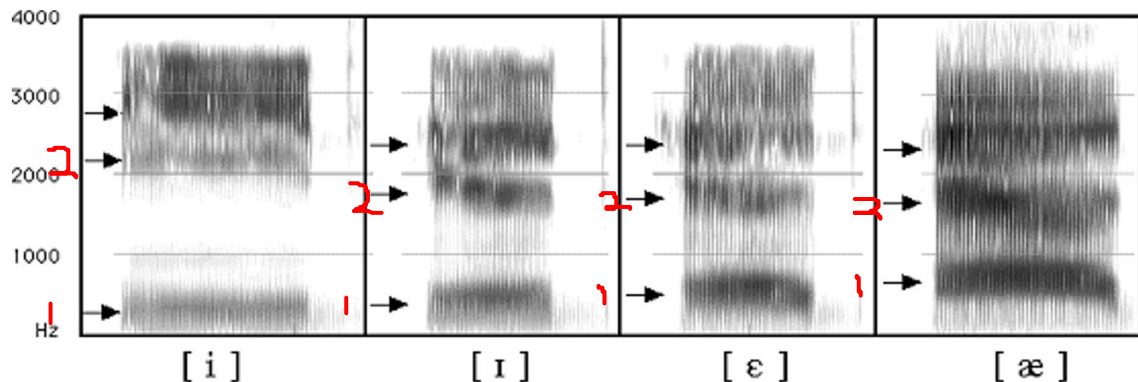
What does Praat do?



Stage 2 - Assessment Research and Design (2/4)

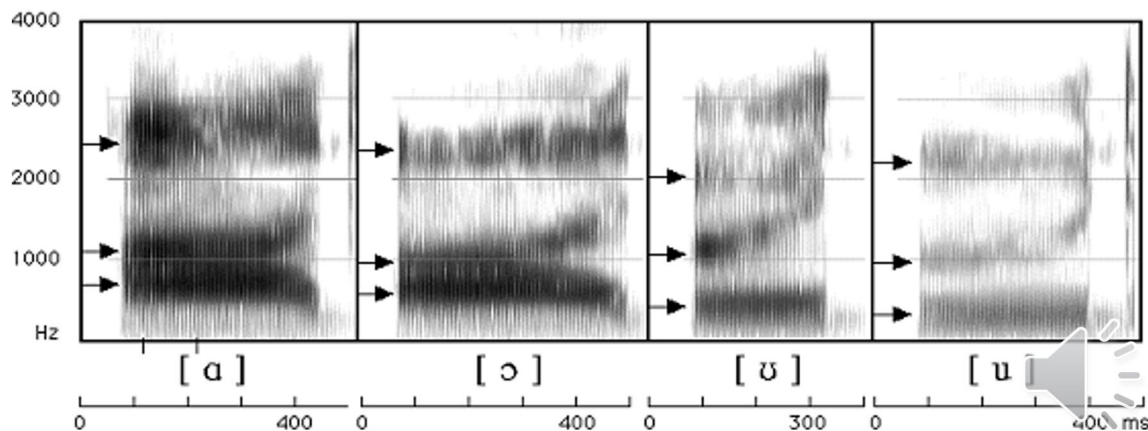
Spectrogram

- Graph that measures evolution of a sound
 - Y axis = Frequency (Hz)
 - X axis = time
 - Shading = intensity of signal



How do you read it?

- Shows frequency of resonances in the mouth
 - Formant 2 (F2) front of mouth
 - Formant 1 (F1) back of mouth
- Each vowel has unique frequency pattern



Stage 2 - Assessment Research and Design (3/4)

Mid 2019

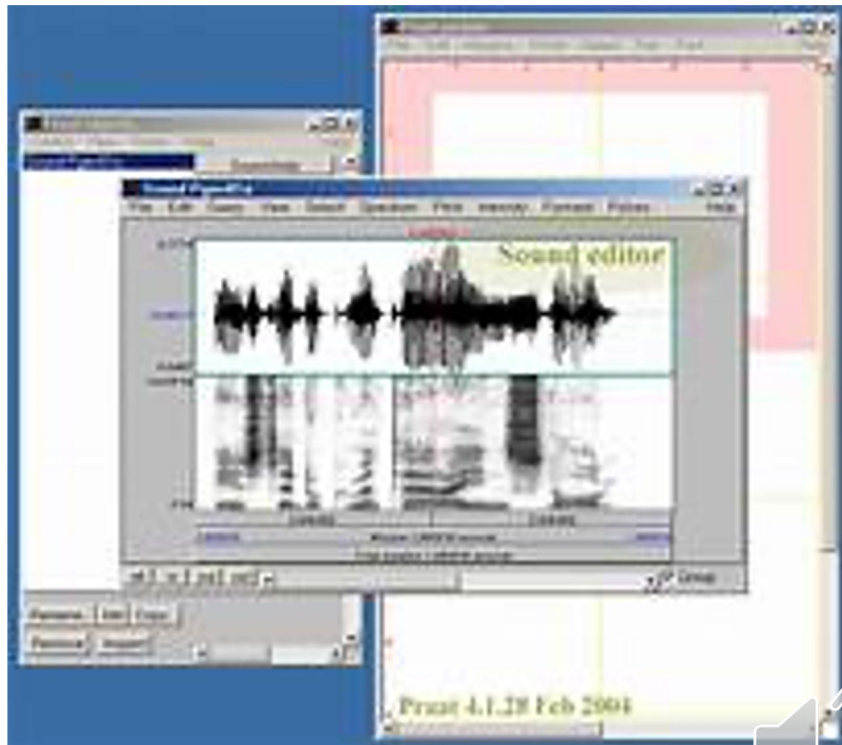
Student over-reliance on auditory channel, so...

Visual Reinforcement!

Praat = basis for a tool / procedures

Original Procedures for Students

1. Listen to target sound
2. Play recorded target sound w/ Praat
 - a. Study spectrogram
3. Produce target sound w/ Praat
 - a. Compare spectrograms



Stage 2 - R & D (4/4)

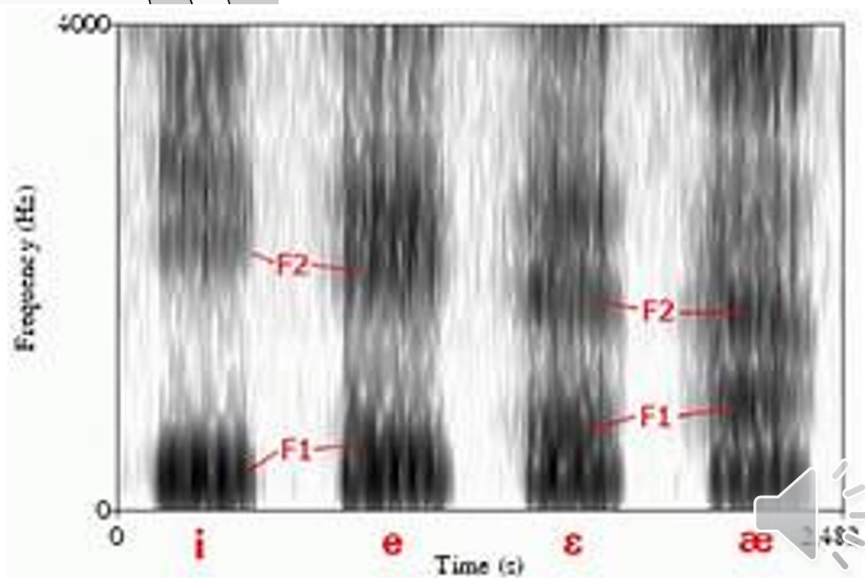
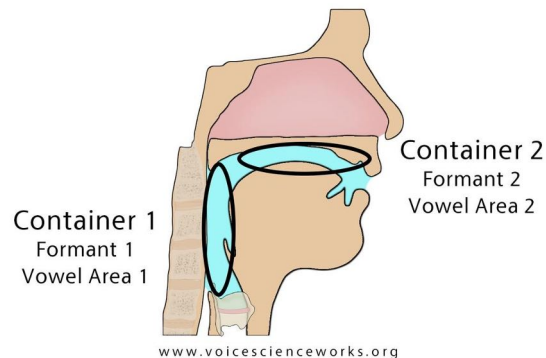
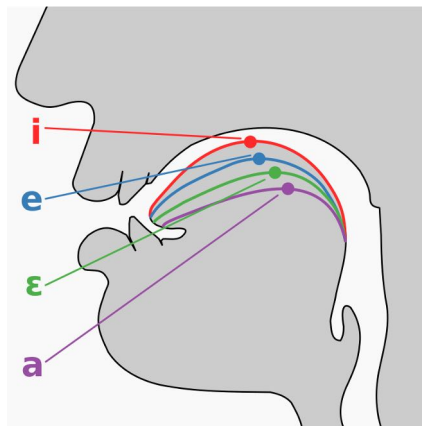
Late 2019

Not enough information for students!

- Too confused
- Couldn't see the point

Revised Procedures!

1. Pre-assessment by professor
2. Select a target sound from professors' list
3. Analyze diagram of mouth for that sound → practice
4. Analyze target sound in various environments
5. Analyze diagram of formant locations
6. Play target sound w/ Praat → analyze spectrogram (back to step 4)
7. Record themselves trying target sound w/ Praat → compare spectrograms
8. Post-assessment by professor of sounds on list
 - a. Rubric (doesn't meet, approaches, meets)



Stage 3 - Pilot Assessment Tools and Processes

Spring 2020

Venue = WELL Computer Lab (Room 310)

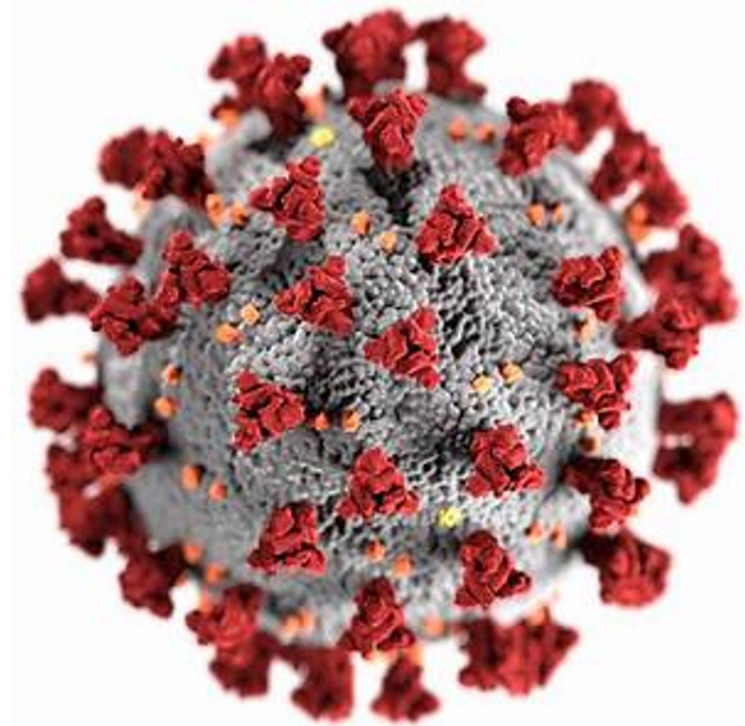
1. Installed Praat on computers
2. Training of lab aides

Stay at home order halted process!

Remote assessment too difficult now

Plan = Summer Pilot

1. Procedures video for students
2. Tutoring time to help them



Thank You!

Email: mwilliams297@ccc.edu



Table 2 - Nasal Vowels in French:

(View this first: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbyKzUM9H5c&feature=youtu.be>)

IPA	FP A	Time stamp	Sound File (click link to download sound file)	At the beginning of a word (click link to view video clip)	In the middle of a word (click link to view video clip)	At the end of a word (click link to view video clip)
[ɑ̃]	â	6:02	link	ensuite [ɑ̃sɥit] [ɑ̃syit]	exemple [ɛgzɑ̃ : pl] [ɛgzɑ̃ : pl]	seulement [sœlmɑ̃] [sœlmɑ̃]
[ɔ̃]	ô	6:28	link	oncle [ɔ̃kl] [ôkl]	longtemps [lɔ̃tɑ̃] [lôtɑ̃]	nom [nɔ̃] [nô]

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