How to set up tiers in Praat
(Richard Wright – UW Phonetics Laboratory, 12/23/2011)

After you have installed Praat and Unicode IPA fonts on your computer you are ready to use the transcription tier in Praat. Here are the steps for setting up a tier:

1. Load the file you want to transcribe
   a. Under the "read" menu select "read from file" as in Figure 1.
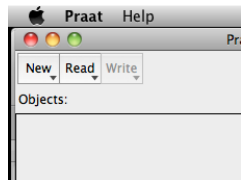

Figure 1. Open a file under the "read" menu

2. Select the file you want to transcribe by clicking on it
3. From the "annotate" menu select "to text grid" as in Figure 2.
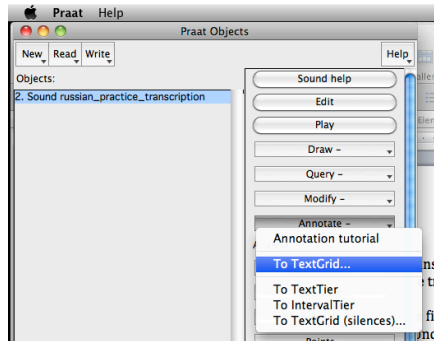

Figure 2. Select sound file, under "annotate" menu select "text grid"

4. In the window type the names of your tiers separated by spaces in the first field, and in the second field type the name of any tiers that are "point" tiers, Illustrated in Figure 3. Here I've created 3 "interval" tiers (tiers with a beginning and end) called "orthographic", "broad", and "narrow"; and I've created 1 "point" tier (a tier that is a single point in time with no beginning or end values) called "notes".
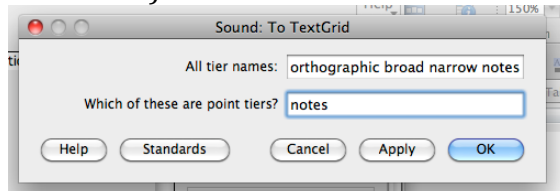

Figure 3. Label the tiers and say which ones are "point" tiers

5. Select both the sound file and its tiers and click the "edit" button to the right illustrated in Figure 4.
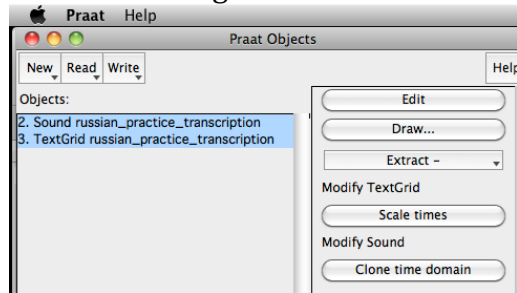

Figure 4.

6. Once the soundfile and the tiers have loaded, select a reasonably short portion of the sound file and click on the "sel" button at the lower right of the Praat edit window to zoom in on your selection.
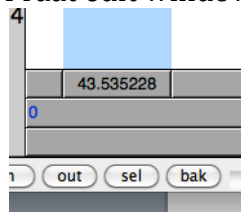

Figure 5.

7. With the selection showing, make sure that you are in the tier that you want to work in (it will be highlighted in yellow), in the waveform select the word (or portion of the signal) that you want to transcribe by clicking and dragging, then hit the "Return/enter" key in the keyboard. Then begin typing or entering IPA symbols. In this case I have selected the Russian orthographic tier and I am entering Cyrillic symbols, then I select the "broad" tier and select-enter-type to align the IPA symbols to the waveform.
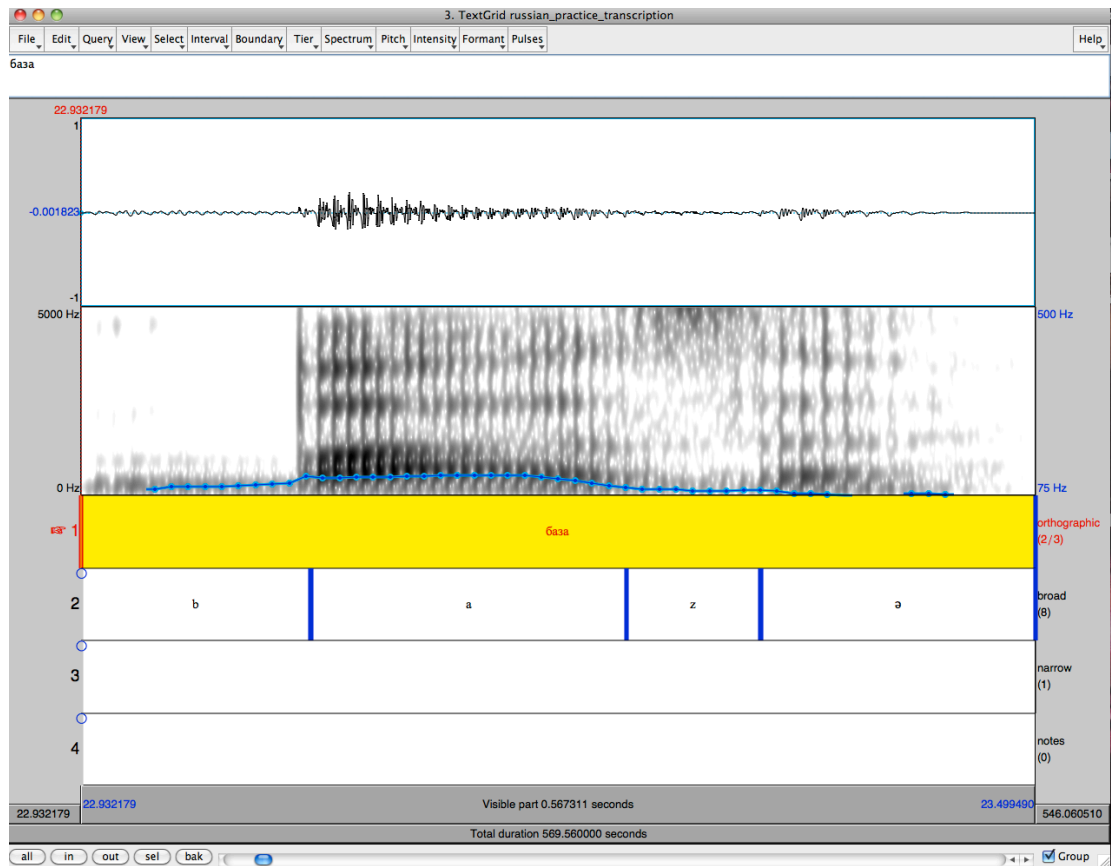
Figure 6.

8. Be sure to save your tiers to a text file or your changes will be lost:
   a. select the tiers file
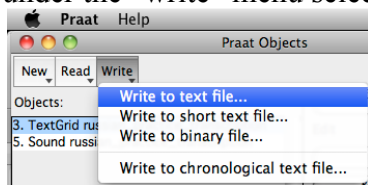   b. under the "write" menu select "Write to text file"

Figure 7.