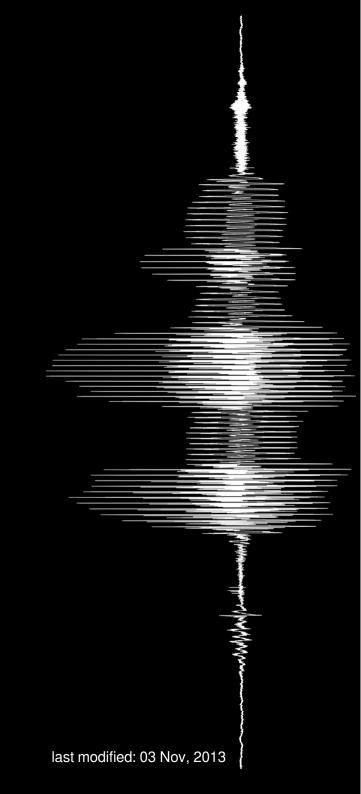
praat scripting primer

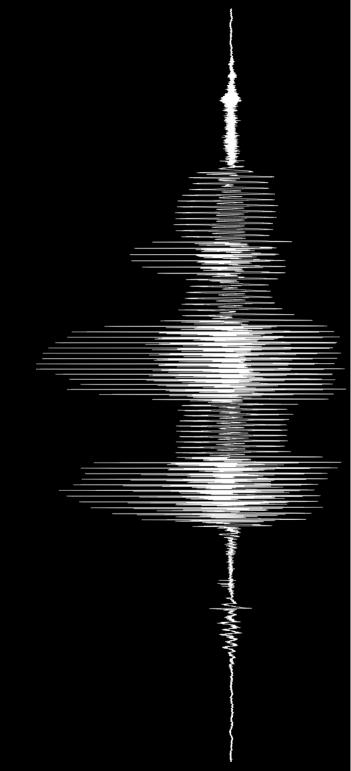
diving in head first



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part 1

overview

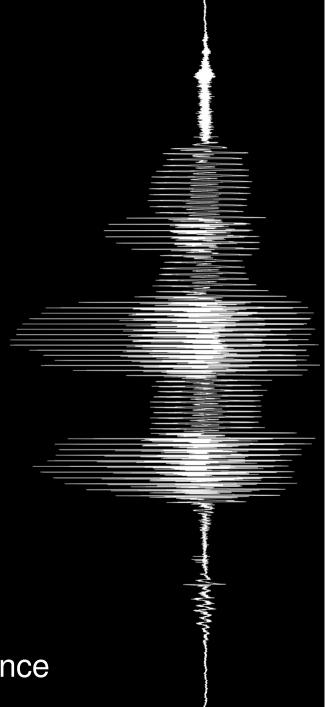


why use scripts?

they are:

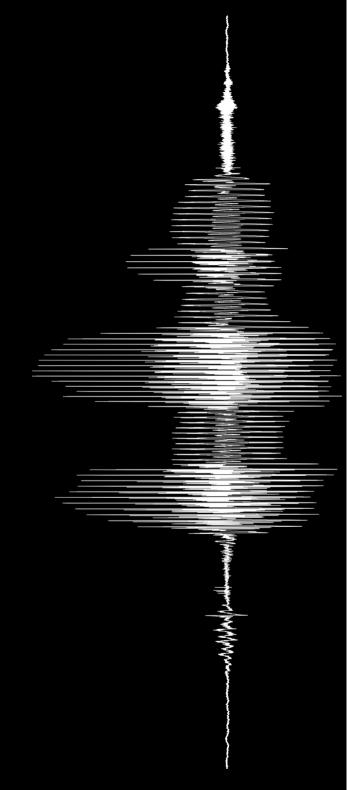
- precise
- reusable
- automatic
- portable

... which means they are the best friends of science



what is a *script*?

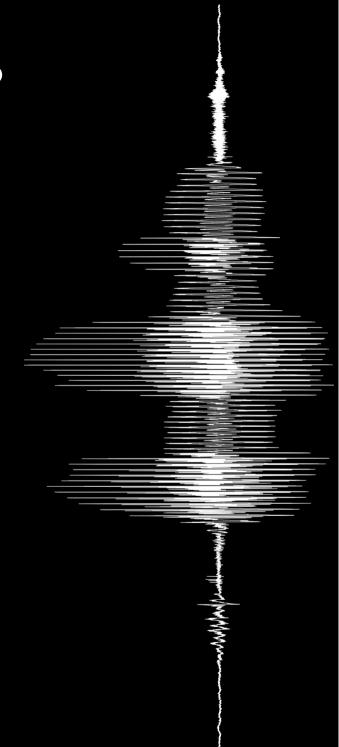
- a set of instructions
- stored as a separate text file
- loaded and run from within praat



what can you do with a script?

everything you can do without one ... and more:

- automatize tedious tasks
- invoke other scripts
- modify the behaviour of praat
- etc...

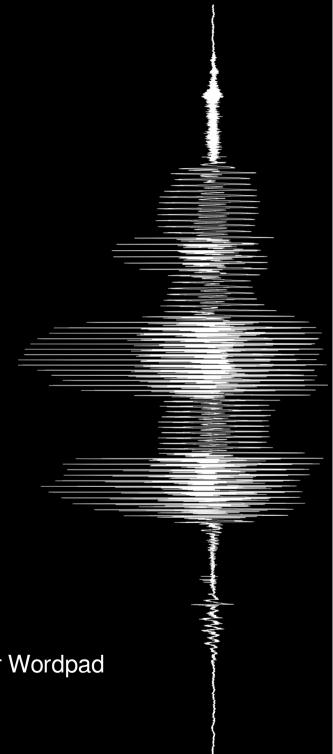


how do you make one?

with a text editor*

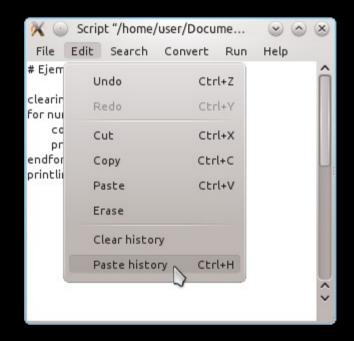
- Notepad++ (Windows)
- Kate on (KDE) or Geany on (GTK)
- TextWrangler (Mac)
- praat includes its own internal editor

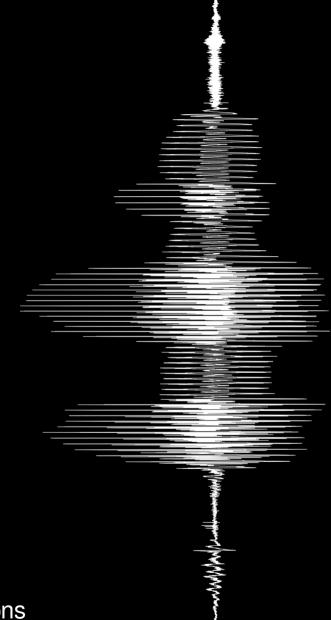




how do you make one?

use praat's history

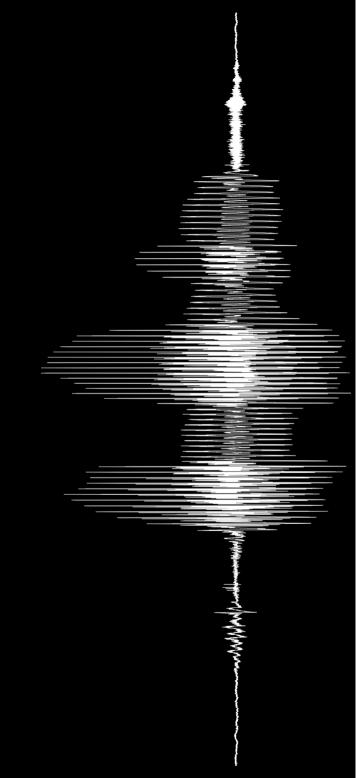




with it, you sometimes need only to make a few basic modifications

but remember:

a script is a set of instructions

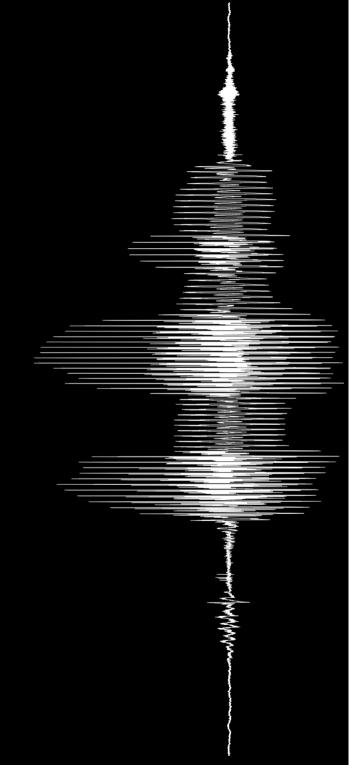


the single most important ability when writing any sort of code is the ability to take a complex problem and break it down into a sequence of simple tasks

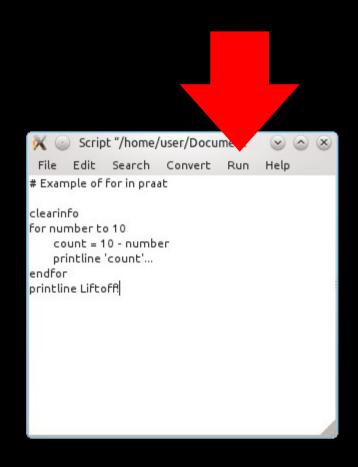
writing a script is solving a puzzle

how do you use a script?

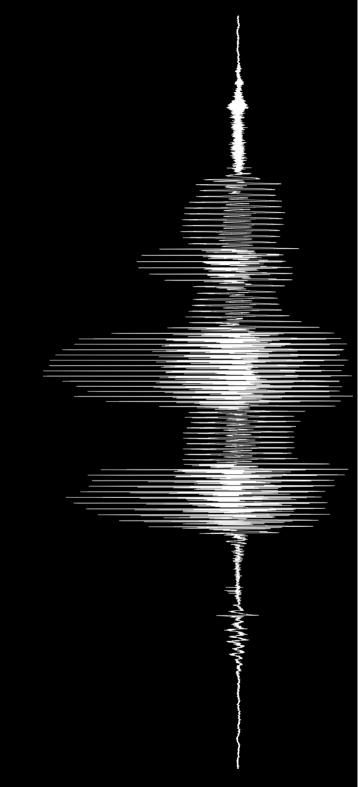




how do you use a script?

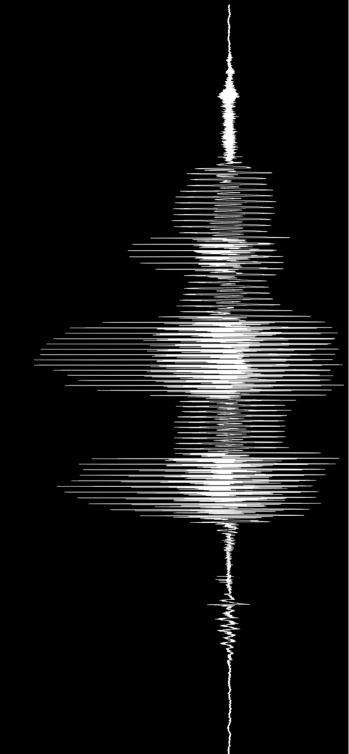


or press CTRL + R / \Re + R



part 2

doing it right

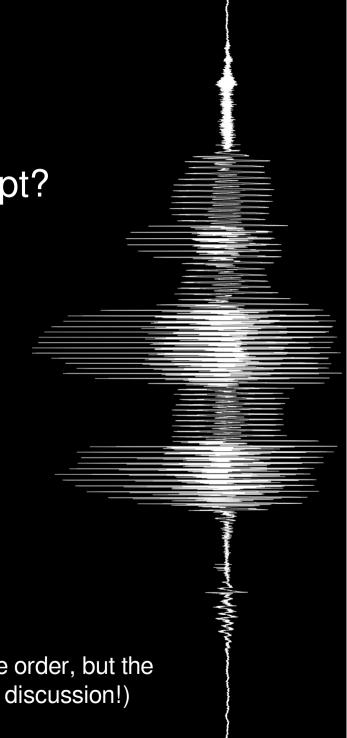


good practices

what distinguishes a good and a bad script? in decreasing order of importance:

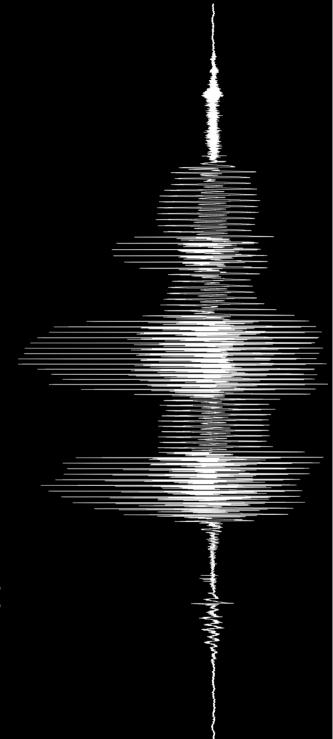
- is it easy to read?
- is it clear?
- is it extensible?
- does it work?
- is it robust?
- is it efficient?

(we may disagree on the order, but the questions are not up for discussion!)



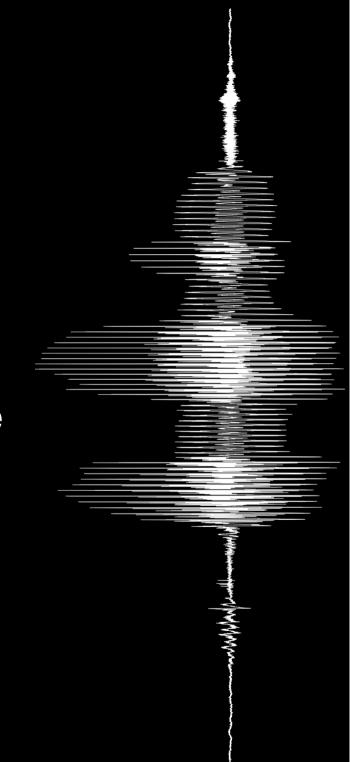
is it easy to read?

- does it have a consistent style?
- is it properly indented?
- are variable names informative?
- is it thoroughly commented?
- is it easily understood by others?
- is it possible (for you or others) to go back to it in a couple of months and not die trying?



is it clear?

- does it have clear objectives?
- is it transparent in the ways to achieve them?
- is it well structured?



is it extensible?

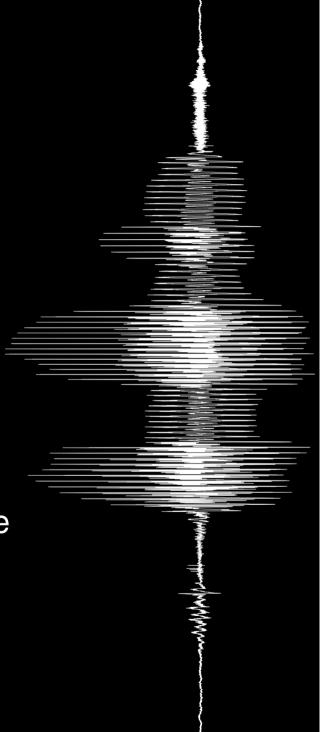
- is it possible to use it in other situations?
- how heavily do you have to modify it to use for similar tasks?
- can it be used in different ways?
 or from different environments?

does it work?

does it do what it has to do?

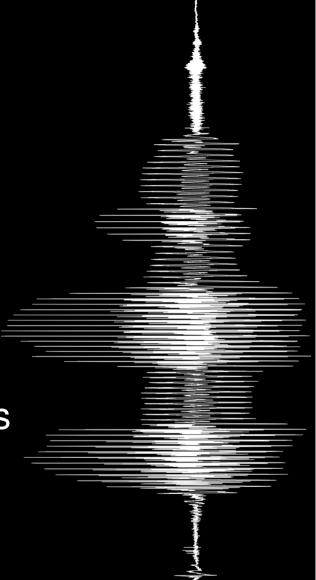
an easily understood and well structured script that doesn't work can be fixed rather easily

one that works in cryptic ways like a black box will soon break down, and then it will be completely useless



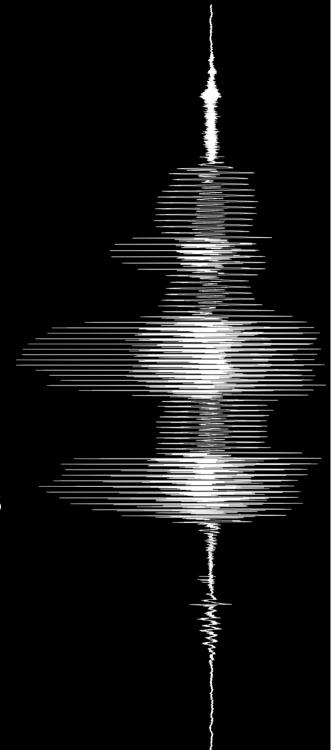
is it robust?

- how well does it react to user errors?
- how does it fare when the environment is not what is expected?

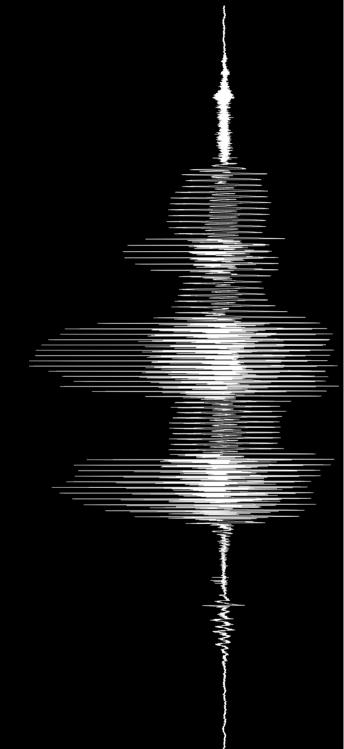


is it efficient?

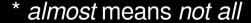
- are the methods it uses the most appropriate?
- are they the fastest?
- are they the most cost-efficient in terms of memory or processor use?



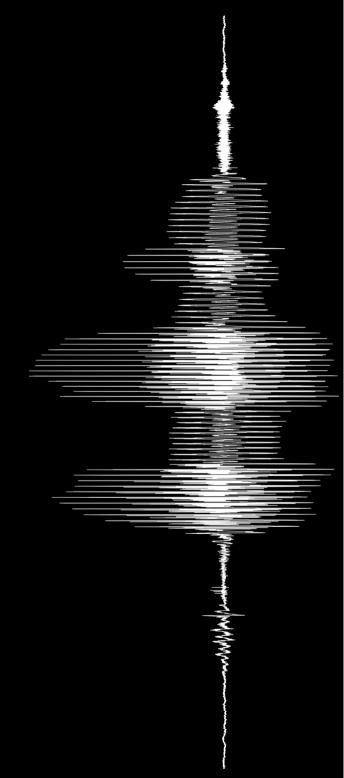
part 3



- objects
 - almost any action in praat results in the creation of an object*
 - they can be created, manipulated, removed and saved to disk with scripts
 - they last for the duration of the praat session



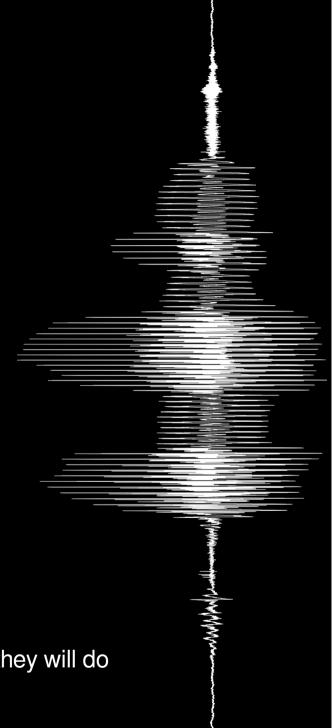
- objects
 - Sound
 - TextGrid
 - Pitch
 - Table and oh so many more...



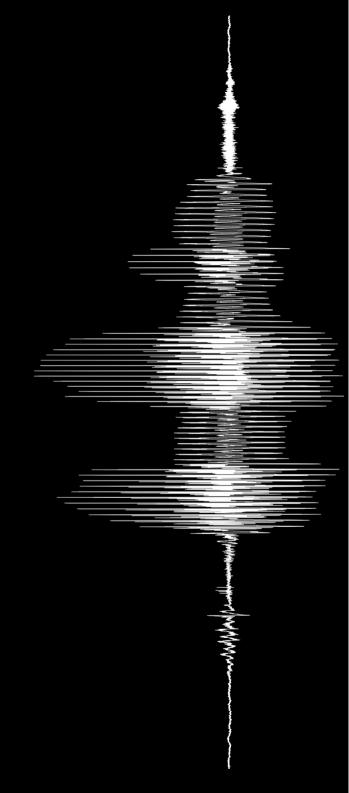
variables

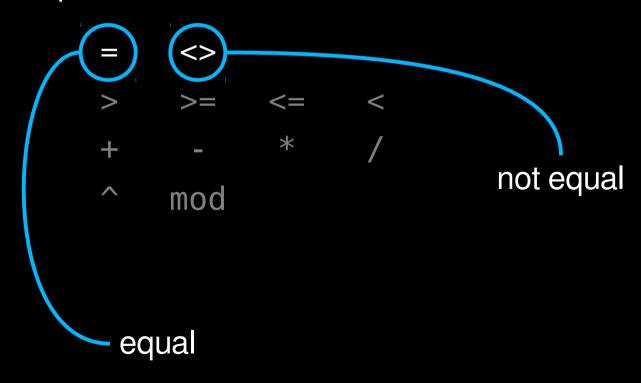
- strings\$ = "this is a string"
- numeric variables = 1337
- arrays[]*
- assignments
 - like the first two above
 - by means of queries

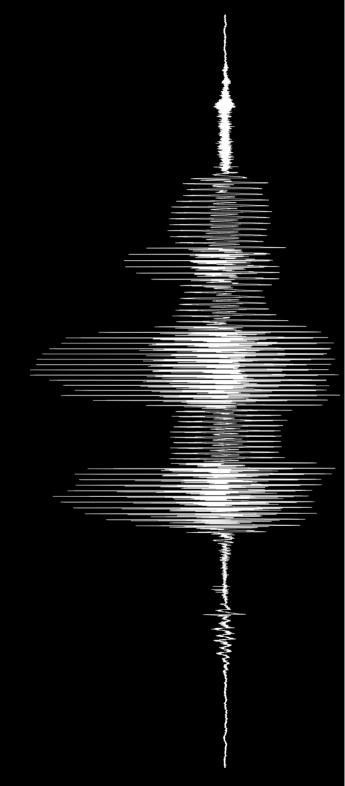


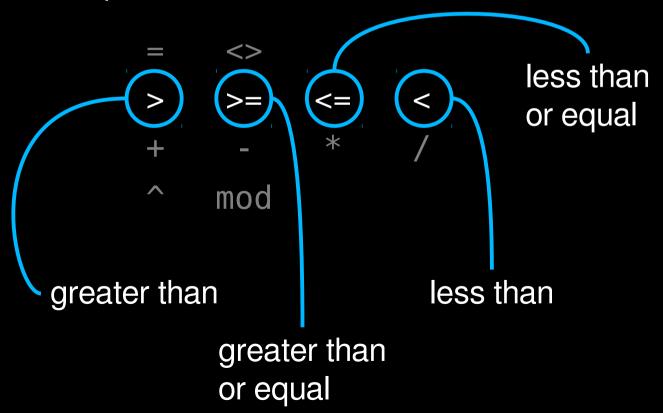


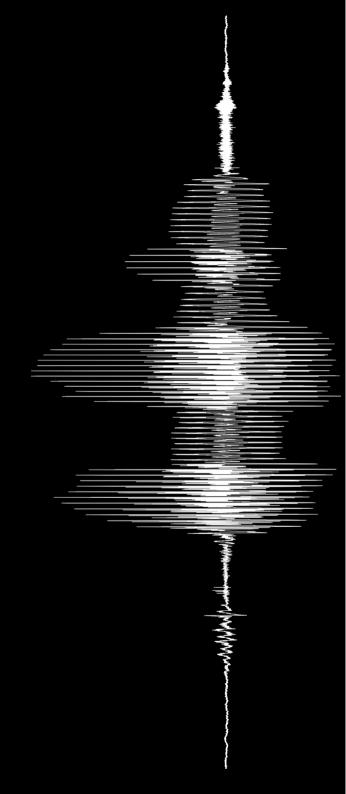
```
= <>
> >= <= <
+ - * /
^ mod
```

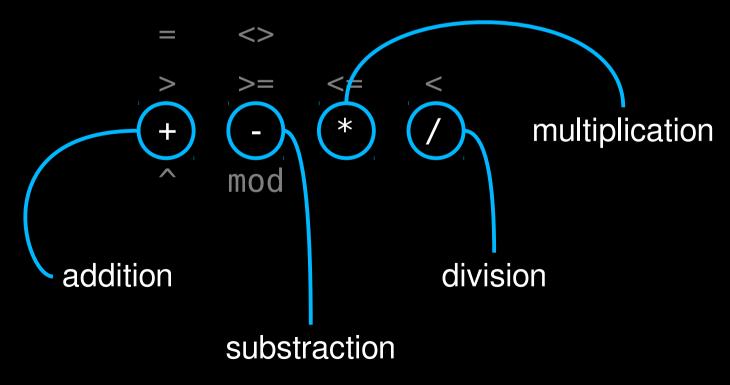


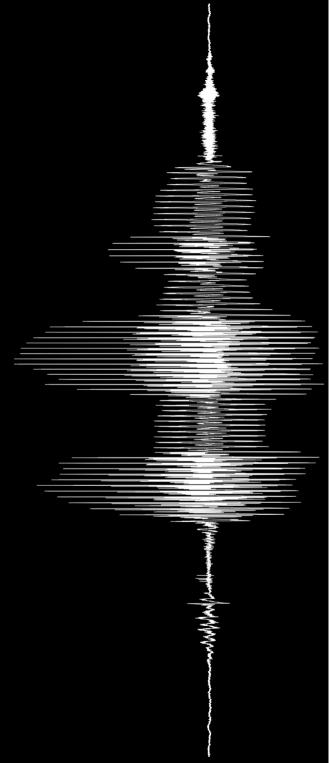


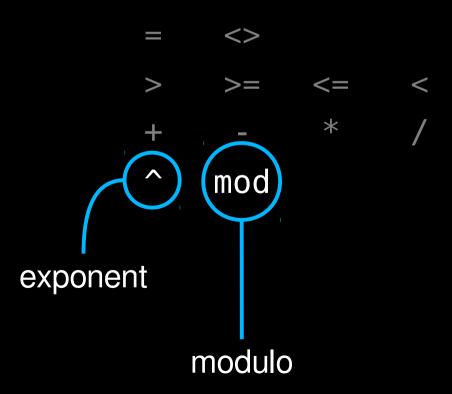


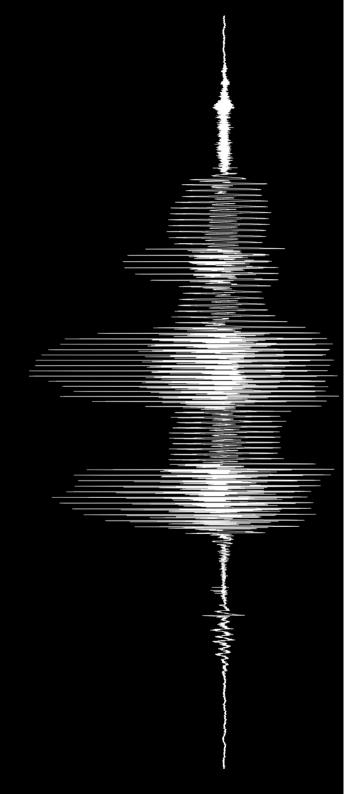












- #commentsare ignored by praat
- clearinfo
 clears the Info screen
- printInfoLine(string\$)
 clears the Info screen and prints a line
- appendInfoLine(string\$)
 adds a line to the Info screen

use appendInfoLine() for debugging code... for there will be bugs

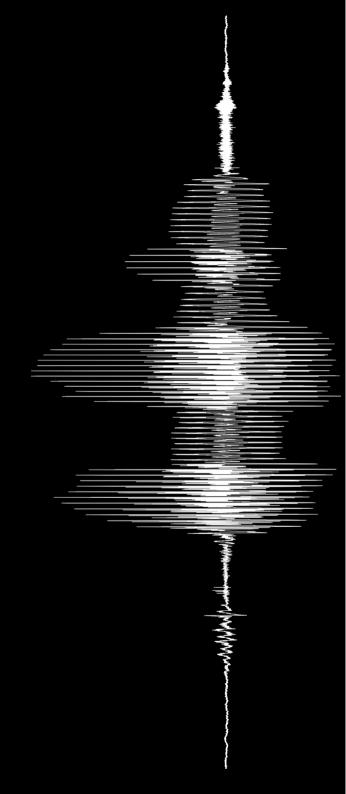
- control structures
 - for x [from y] to z ... endfor
 - if cond1 ... [elsif cond2 ...] else ... endif
 - while cond ... endwhile
 - repeat ... until cond
- procedures

(in more detail further along)

- control structures
 - for x [from y] to z ... endfor

```
# example of for in praat

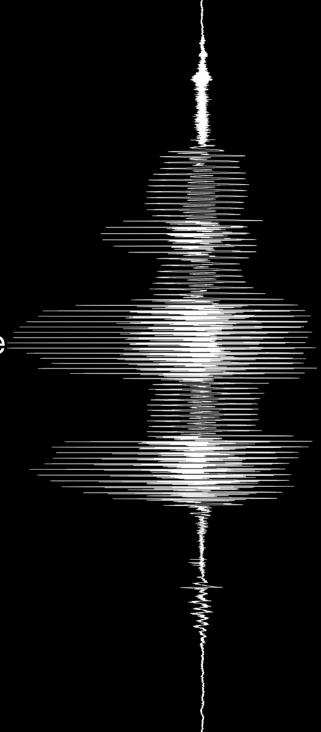
clearinfo
for number to 10
    count = 10 - number
    appendInfoLine(count, "...")
endfor
appendInfoLine("Liftoff!")
```



- control structures
 - for x [from y] to z ... endfor

in praat, a for block always increments the value of its control variable

if y < z the block is **never** executed



- control structures
 - if cond1 ... [elsif cond2 ...] else ... endif

```
# example of if and for in praat

clearinfo
appendInfoLine("Start")
for number to 10
    if number < 5
        appendInfoLine("First half...")
    elsif number > 5
        appendInfoLine("Second half...")
    else
        appendInfoLine("Halfway through!")
    endif
endfor
appendInfoLine("And we are done!")
```

- control structures
 - if cond1 ... [elsif cond2 ...] else ... endif

any (defined) value that is not 0 or an empty string is true

elsif can also be written elif

else is very useful to define default values:

```
default_value = 0
f0 = do("Get value at time...", 0.5)
if f0 = undefined
  f0 = default_value
endif

# if there is no value, f0 will be 0
```

control structures

```
repeat ... until cond
  # example of repeat in praat
  clearinfo
  number = 353467
  appendInfoLine(
      ... "number starts as ", number)
  repeat
     if number > 10
         number = number - number / 2
     elsif number < 10
         number = number + number / 2
     endif
      tmp = round(number)
     appendInfoLine(
         ..."...and now it is ", tmp, "...")
  until round(number) = 10
  appendInfoLine("And we are done!")
```

- control structures
 - repeat … until cond

the block executes until the condition is true

it is possible to create infinite loops (use with care!)

the condition is tested at the *end* of each loop

long lines can be broken with ellipsis at the beginning of the next line:

```
string$ = "even though this is a very
...long string, it is still just one string"
```

praat's scripting language

control structures

```
• while cond ... endwhile
    # example of while in praat
    clearinfo
    number = 353467
    appendInfoLine(
       ..."number starts as ", number)
    while round(number) <> 10
       if number > 10
           number = number - number / 2
       elsif number < 10
           number = number + number / 2
       endif
       tmp = round(number)
       appendInfoLine(
           ..."...and now it is ", tmp, "...")
    endwhile
    appendInfoLine("And we are done!")
```

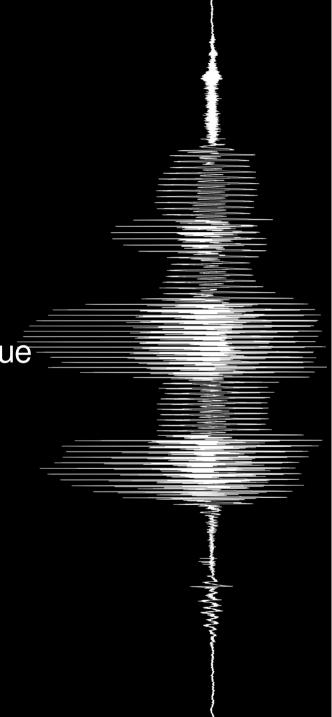
praat's scripting language

- control structures
 - while cond ... endwhile

the block executes while the condition is true

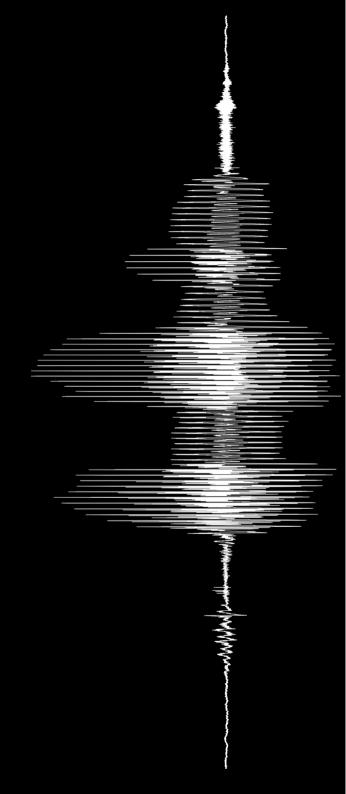
it is possible to create infinite loops (use with care!)

the condition is tested at the *beginning* of each loop



praat's scripting language

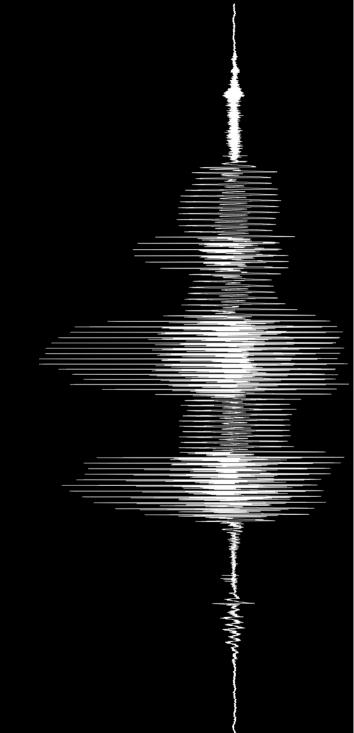
- logical operators
 - and (&)
 - or (|)
 - not (!)
- functions*
 - string functions
 - numeric functions



^{*} more on this on part 5!

intermission

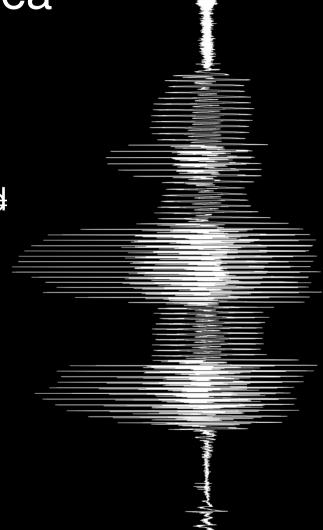
how about those good practices?



```
top = 100
for q from 3 to top
is = 1
p = q \mod 2
if p = 0
is = 0
endif
this = 3
while this <= sqrt(q)</pre>
p = q \mod this
if p = 0
is = 0
endif
this = this + \overline{2}
endwhile
if is = 1
printline 'q'
endif
endfor
```

bad idea

- easy to read
- clear
- extensible
- it works
- robust?
- efficient?



```
# detect prime numbers by brute force # start from 3 to skip even numbers
```

clearinfo

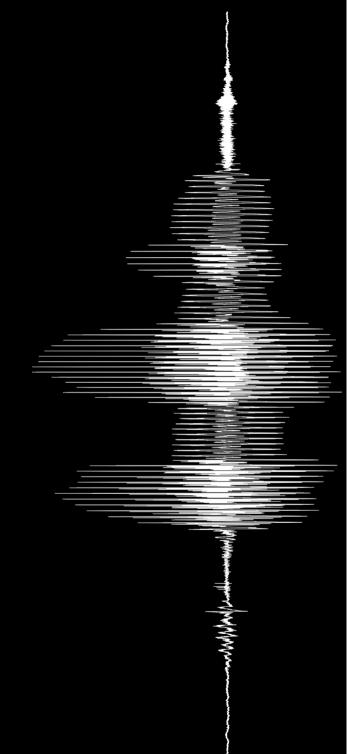
endfor

```
# for every number up to limit
limit = 100
for n from 3 to limit
   prime = 1
   for candidate from 2 to (n-1)
       test = n mod candidate
       if test = 0
            prime = 0
       endif
   endfor
   if prime
       printline 'n'
   endif
```

- easy to read
- clear
- extensible
- it works
- robust
- efficient

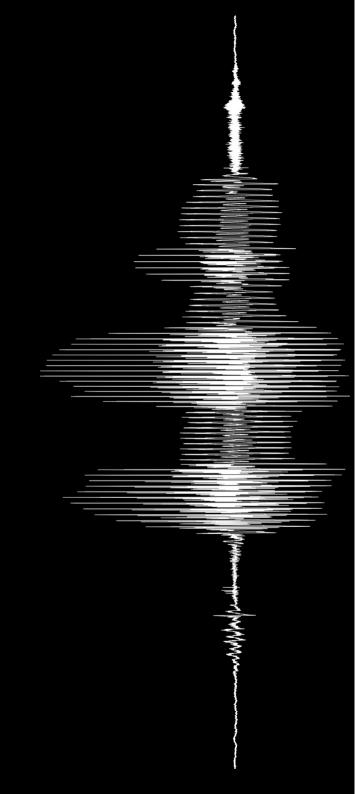
part 4

object handling

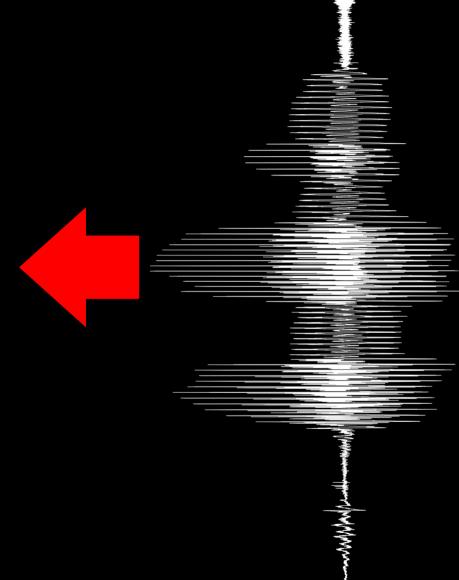




on the left we have the list of objects...



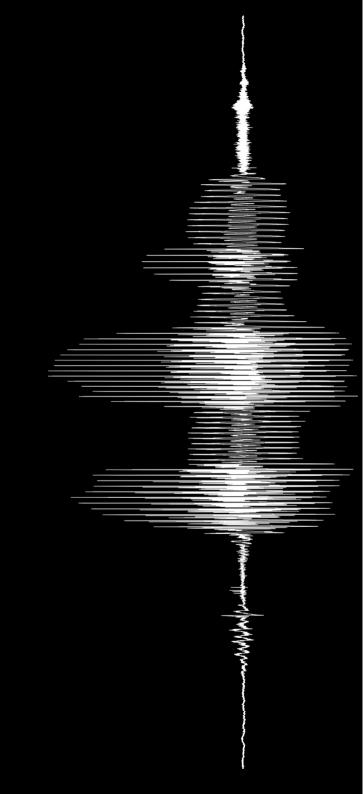




...and on the right the available actions

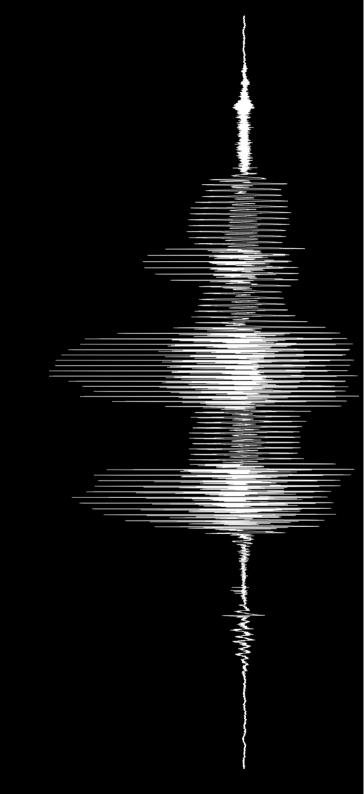


but these are selection-sensitive



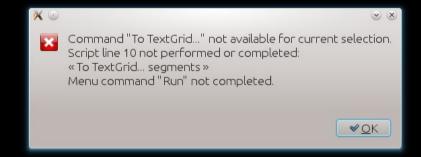


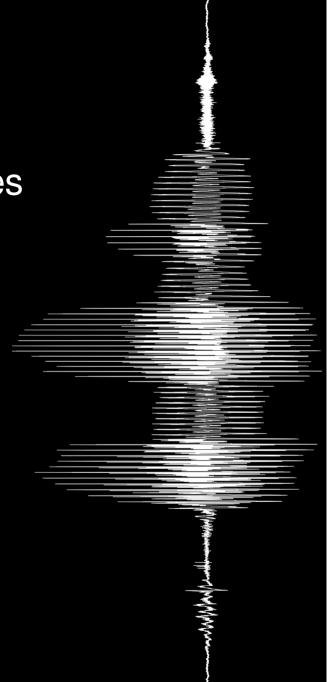
and some actions are only available for combinations of objects



and why should we care?

- because our active selection determines our available options
- and those options are the same options we'll have available from within a script

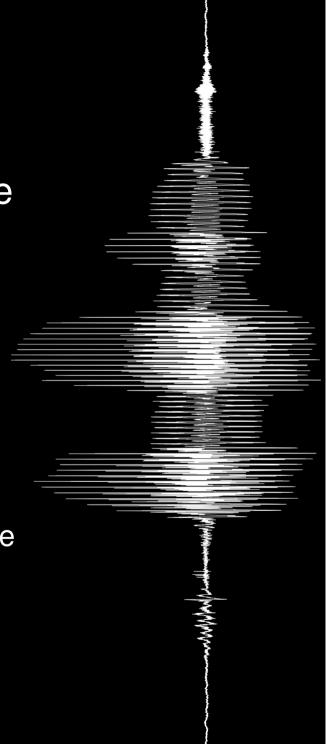




praat has some functions to manipulate the active selection:

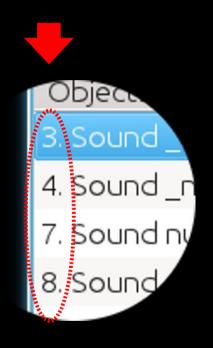
selectObject(obj1[,obj2,...])
 selects the specified objects

plus0bject(obj1[,obj2,...])
 minus0bject(obj1[,obj2,...])
 adds or removes the specified objects to the current selection



- scripts inherit the selection that was active when they were run
- this selection is modified whenever you:
 - actively change selection
 - remove selected object(s)
 - create a new object (new objects are automatically selected)

if you'll be working with lots of objects, save that selection!



- two (or more) objects may have the same name
- use instead object IDs which are unique



selectObject(3,4,7,8)
minusObject(4,8)

since object IDs are assigned sequentially, they may skip some numbers at times

what is currently selected?

- numberOfSelected(type\$)
 returns the number of selected objects of type type\$**
- selected(type\$, #)
 returns the ID of #th* selected object of type type\$**
- selected\$(type\$, #)
 returns the name of #th* selected object of type type\$**
- * if not provided, this will be 1 by default
- ** if not provided, objects of all types will be considered

how this all fits together

```
# example of selection of objects by type
# number of selected "Sound" objects
n = numberOfSelected("Sound")
# save original selection
for i to n
   object[i] = selected("Sound", i)
endfor
# for each originally selected object
for i to n
   selectObject(object[i])
   # get its name
   name$ = selected$()
   # and remove it
   removeObject(object[i])
   appendInfoLine("Object ", name$, " has been removed")
endfor
```

the push of a button

the buttons we can normally use with our mouse we can also use within scripts, and they work in the same way:

- if it needs arguments we'll provide them*
- if it returns some information it will do so and we can assign that to a variable!
- to use them we use the do() and do\$() functions

the latter for when it returns a string

^{*} these have names that end with an ellipsis...

the push of a button

this allows us to

create objects

```
do("Create Sound from formula...",
    ..."A", 1, 0, 1, 44100, sin(2*pi*440*x))
do("To TextGrid...",
    ..."intervals points", "points")
```

remove objects

```
selectObject(1)
do("Remove")*
```

^{*} this is another way to remove objects: using the "Remove" command (commands in praat are *case sensitive*!)

the push of a button

this allows us to

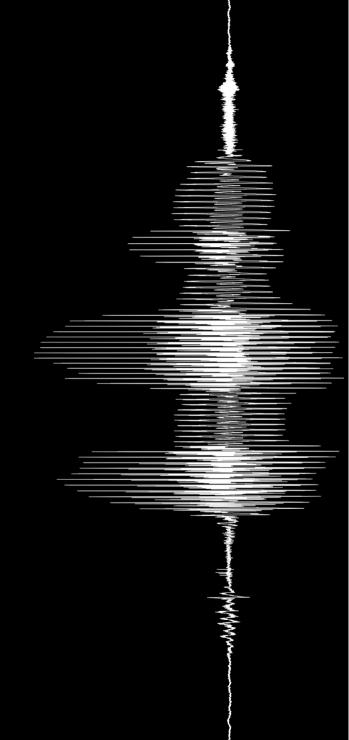
query information about objects

manipulate objects

```
sound = selected()
quarter = duration / 4
do("To TextGrid...", "points", "points")
for i to 4
    point = quarter * i
    do("Insert point...", 1, "point")
endfor
plus sound
do("Edit")
```

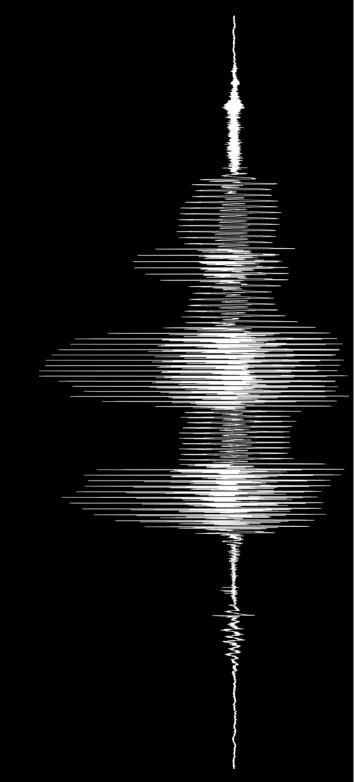
part 5

the tool box



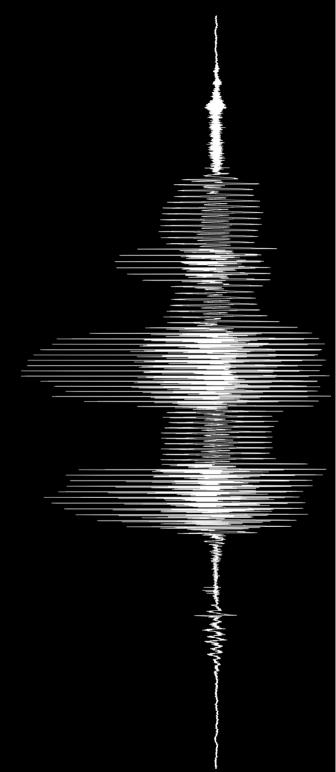
the tool box

- scripts carry out tasks
- tools make tasks easier
- tools are specialized
- praats tools are its <u>functions</u>



what is a function?

- a function is a ready-made set of instructions that performs a more complex task
- it can be used like a simple instruction
- they can take arguments
- they can return results
 - which can, of course, be assigned to a variable



what is a function?

they are a powerful tool

a script is a set of simple instructions to perform complex tasks

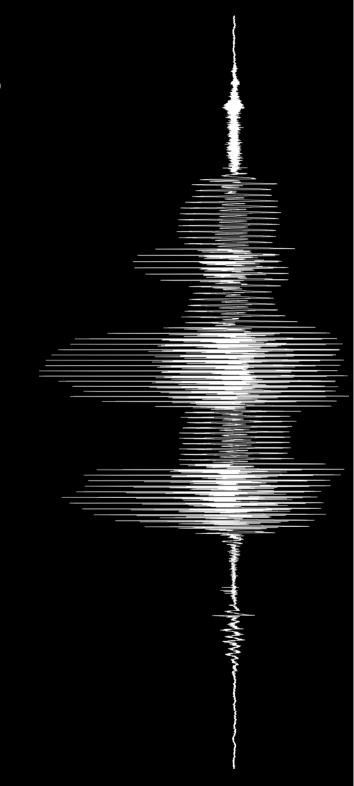
a function is just the same!

we can deal with some complex tasks as if they were simple

how do you recognize them?

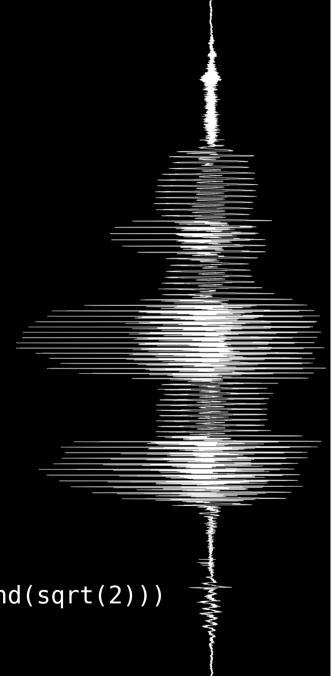
 the easiest way is because they are followed by parenthesis

sounds = numberOfSelected("Sound")



what's special about them?

- they are invoked by name
- normally at the right side of an assignment (they are rvalues)
- they take arguments (which can be the result of other functions)
- they don't always require them



what's special about them?

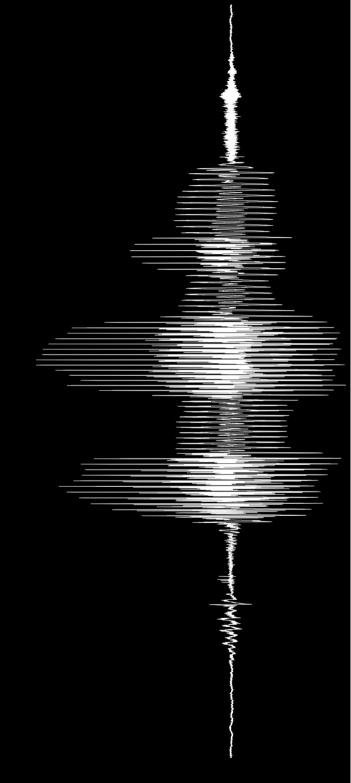
- all functions return a value*
- numeric functions return a number, string functions return a string

pay attention to the name of the function!

selected("Sound")



selected\$("Sound")

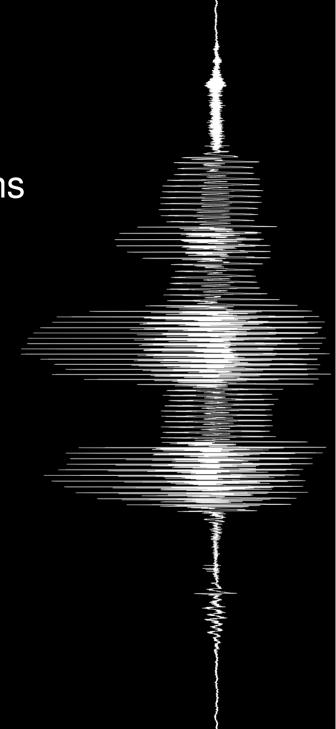


^{*} at least in praat

the usual suspects

we've actually already seen some functions

- selected(a\$, b)
- selected\$(a\$, b)
- numberOfSelected(a\$)
- round(a)
- sqrt(a)



length(a\$)

returns the length in character of string a\$

```
a$ = "any old string"
b$ = "some other longer string"
lengthA = length(a$)
lengthB = length(b$)
if lengthA > lengthB
    appendInfoLine("""", a$,
        ...""" is longer than """, b$, """")
else
    appendInfoLine("""", b$,
        ...""" is longer than """, a$, """")
endif
```

in order to include a double quotation character in a string, you need to input it twice

left\$(a\$, b); right\$(a\$, b)
 return a string of length b made of characters on the left or right side of a\$

^{*} this denotes an edited part of the script. see the example scripts for the full version.

mid\$(a\$, b, c)
 returns a substring of a\$ of length c starting from position b in a\$

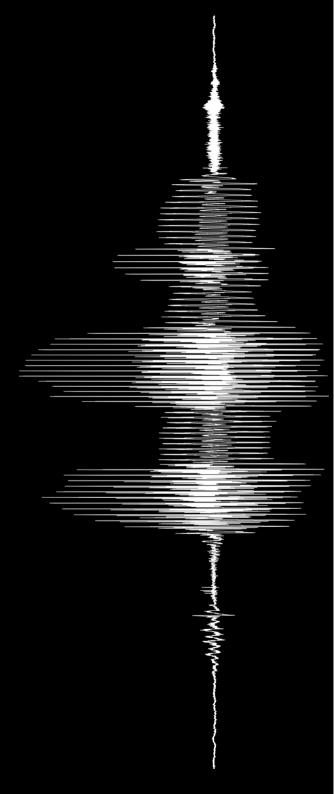
```
vowels$ = "aeiou"
strlen = length(vowels$)
a$ = ""
for i to strlen
    a$ = a$ + mid$(vowels$, i, 1)
    if i < strlen
       a$ = a$ + "-"
    endif
endfor
appendInfoLine(a$, " are the vowels in the alphabet")</pre>
```

• index(a\$, b\$)

returns the position of the first occurrence of b\$ in a\$; returns 0 if b\$ cannot be found in a\$

index() has a sister function that returns the index of the
last occurrence of a string in another: rindex()

- fixed\$(a, b)
 return a string with the value of a, with b digits after the decimal point
- number(a\$)
 interprets a\$ as a number
 (these can be used to turn numbers into strings and vice-versa)
- date()
 returns the current date in a preset format



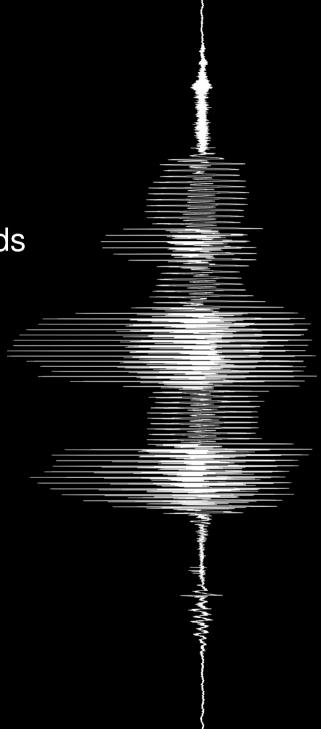
- extractNumber(a\$, b\$)
 returns the number in a\$ that follows b\$
- extractWord\$(a\$, b\$)
 returns a string with the word (no spaces) in a\$ that follows b\$
- extractLine\$(a\$, b\$)
 returns a string with whatever is in a\$
 between b\$ and the next line break

hertzToSemitones(a)

returns a value in semitones that coresponds to a in Hz (relative to 100Hz)

- semitonesToHertz(a)
 returns the result of the inverse operation
- abs(a)

returns the absolute value of a (unsigned magnitude)



and if the function doesn't exist?

you can make your own!

you can either:

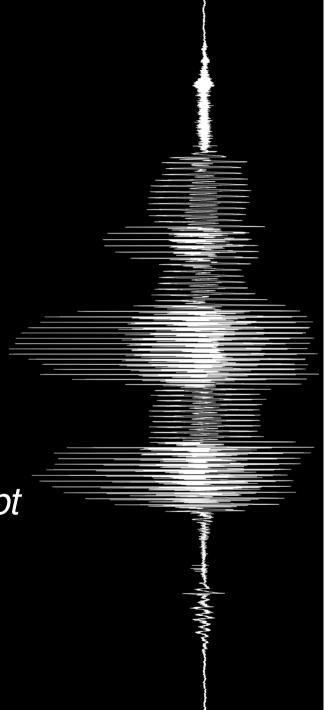
- write it as a procedure inside your script
- write it as a script

and then use it with include or execute...
but this is more advanced than this overview.
feel free to check it on the praat manual

(follow those links!)

what is a procedure?

- to perform a repetitive task, you use a script
- to perform a repetitive task in a script, you can use a procedure
- a procedure is like a script within a script
- but they are not functions!



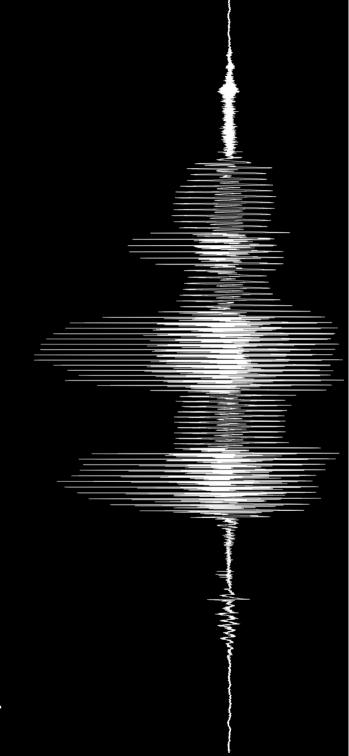
how do you write one?

you declare it

```
procedure NameOfTheProcedure ([variables])
...
endproc
```

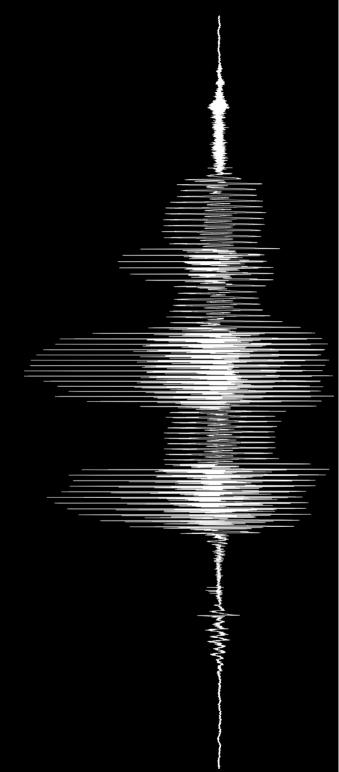
you invoke it

@NameOfTheProcedure([variables])



but functions take arguments...

- word\$ is a global variable, available throughout the script
- @measure() was written in its most basic form: it is the same as if the contents of the procedure were copied every time we call it



and what about return values?

- word\$ is still global
- but now @measure() works with .word\$
- .word\$ is a local variable
- however, in praat local variables are also available globally

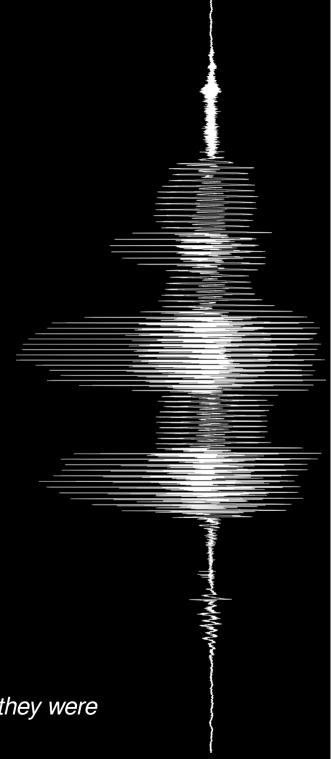
(.word\$ is the same as measure.word\$)

- local variables are used to control the information available to procedures
- so how do we get values back?

```
vowels$ = "aeiou"
for i to length(vowels$)
    @getChar(i, vowels$)
    appendInfoLine("Vowel ", i, " is """,
        ...getChar.result$, """")
endfor

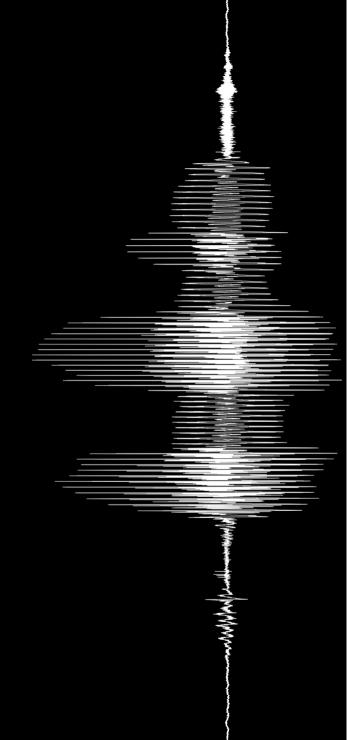
procedure getChar (.index, .string$)
    .result$ = mid$(.string$, .index, 1)
endproc
```

they may *not be* functions (and they are not), but that doesn't mean they can't be used *as if they were*



part 6

reaching out

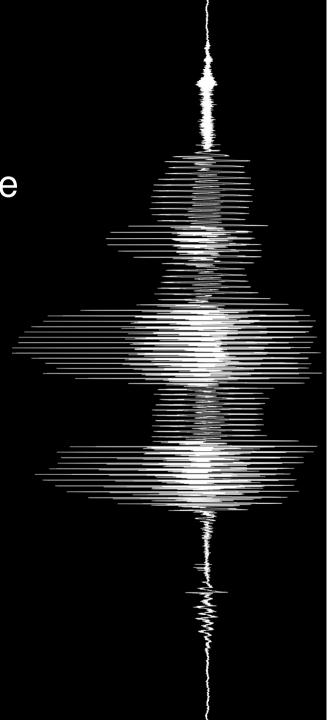


interacting with the user

we also have tools to communicate with the user

mainly, they are:

- appendInfo() and appendInfoLine()
- exit
- pause and form



through the Info screen

```
    appendInfo(string$)
        appendInfoLine(string$)
        writeInfoLine(string$)
        appendInfo() and appendInfoLine()
        add to the Info screen without clearing it, but the latter always ends with a line break
        writeInfoLine() clears the Info screen
```

and outputs a line of text to it

```
clearinfo
appendInfo(
    ..."Text",
    ...newline$)

clearinfo
appendInfoLine(
    ..."Text")
    ..."Text")
```

upon quitting

exit [TEXT]

ends the execution* of the script and prints a message (if provided)

this directive works different to the rest we've seen: everything that follows it until the end of the line is the string

this is a remnant of the old syntax

^{*} this makes useful as a quick and dirty way to to interrupt loops

before or during execution

• form ... endform

form allows us to create a dialog box which will come up upon execution for user input

```
form Title...
   natural positiveInteger defaultValue
   real realNumber defaultValue
   ...
   word stringNoSpaces defaultValue
   text string defaultValue
   choice multipleChoice defaultValue
       button Text
      button Text
   comment Text
   etc...
endform
```

check the manual for the full list of options!

- since they are buttons, commands like
 - Read from file...
 - Open long sound file...
 - Save as text file...

are also available from scripts

but praat allows for some more ambitious modifications with the file system

- fileReadable(a\$)
 returns 1 if file a\$ exists and is readable
 (uses relative paths)
- attempts to create the directory specified in a\$; returns 1 if possible (even if it already existed), 0 if unable to (because of
- deleteFile(a\$)

createDirectory(a\$)

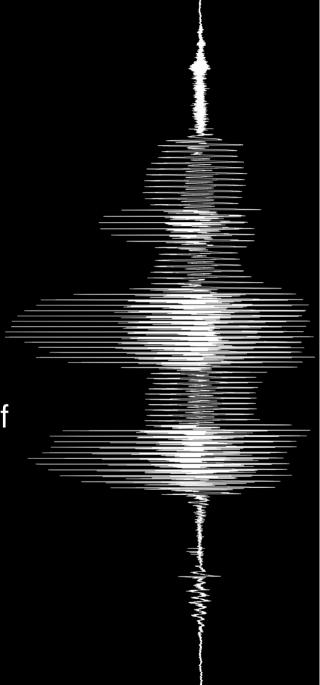
permissions, for example)

always returns 1. if file a\$ exists, it deletes it; if not, it does nothing

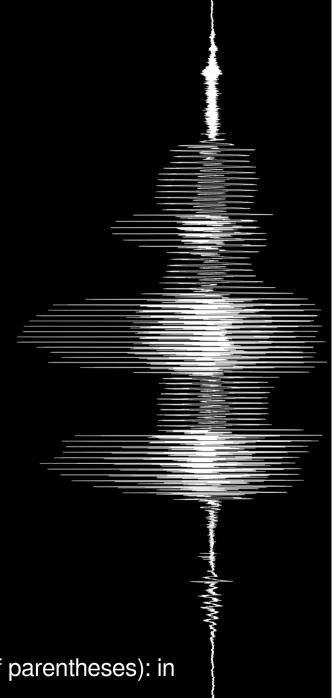
```
replace = 0
name$ = selected$ ("Sound")
filename$ = name$ + ".wav"
file_exists = fileReadable(filename$)
if file_exists = 1 and replace = 1
    deleteFile(filename$)
elsif file_exists = 1 and replace = 0
    exit File 'replace$' exists. Aborting...
endif
do("Save as WAV file...", filename$)
appendInfoLine(filename$, " has been saved")
```

those single quotes around 'replace\$' cause *variable substitution:* it will be replaced by the contents of the variable in quotes. once again, those are remnants of the old syntax

- a\$ > b\$
 - saves the contents of a\$ in file b\$
- a\$ >> b\$
 - appends the contents of file a\$ to the end of file b\$, or, if b\$ does not exist, creates it
- a\$ < b\$
 - saves the contents of b\$ in a\$



- fileappend a\$ b\$
 - appends the contents of b\$ to a\$
- filedelete b\$
 - deletes file b\$ if it exists



these are not functions (note the lack of parentheses): in the manual they are called *directives*

```
config file$ = "config.ini"
a = fileReadable(config file$)
if a
   config$ < 'config file$'</pre>
   height = extractNumber(config$, "Height = ")
   width = extractNumber(config$, "Width = ")
   name$ = extractLine$(config$, "Name = ")
else
   example$ = "Height = 0'newline$'" +
       \dots "Width = 0'newline$'" +
       ... "Name = Ferdinand"
   example$ > 'config file$'
   exit 'config file$' does not exist'newline$'
       ...an example has been created 'newline$'
endif
appendInfoLine("Height=", height, tab$,
   ..."Width=", width, tab$,
   ..."Name=", name$)
                                       did you notice the third line?
```

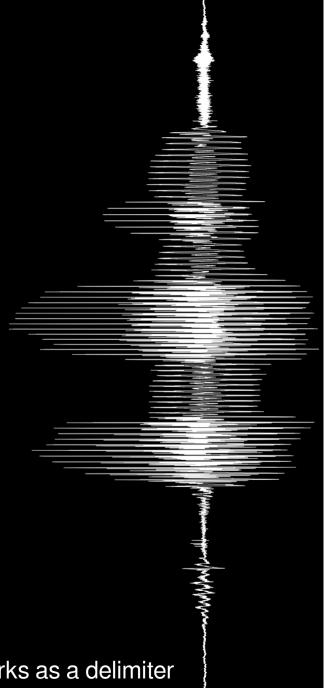
the last functions

- chooseReadFile\$(a\$)
- chooseWriteFile\$(a\$, b\$)

open dialog boxes with title a\$ in which the user can select a file to read or to write; in this last case, b\$ is a suggested file name

chooseDirectory\$(a\$)

opens a dialog box for selecting a directory from the directory structure, with title a\$



in praat, a forward slash (/) works as a delimiter no matter the system it is running on

the last functions

```
filename$ = chooseReadFile$("Open sound...")
if filename$ =
   exit
endif
strlen = length(filename$)
dot = rindex(filename$, ".")
new file = left (filename, dot-1)
   ...+ " reversed"
   ...+ right$(filename$, (strlen-dot)+1)
if !fileReadable(filename$)
   do("Read from file...", filename$)
else
   exit Could not read 'filename$'
endif
do("Reverse")
savefile$ = chooseWriteFile$("Save as...", new file$)
if savefile$ !=
   do("Save as WAV file...", savefile$)
endif
```

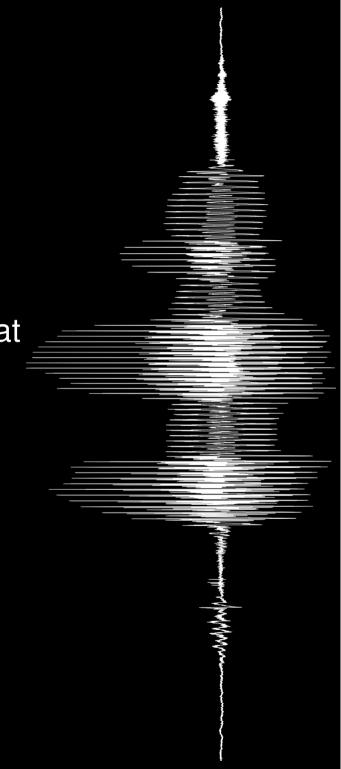
other resources

the example scripts shown here (as well as the latest version of this presentation) are available at

http://www.pinguinorodriguez.cl/tutorials/praatscript.html

don't forget to check the praat manual; it has loads of information

Praat Manual - Scripting



other resources

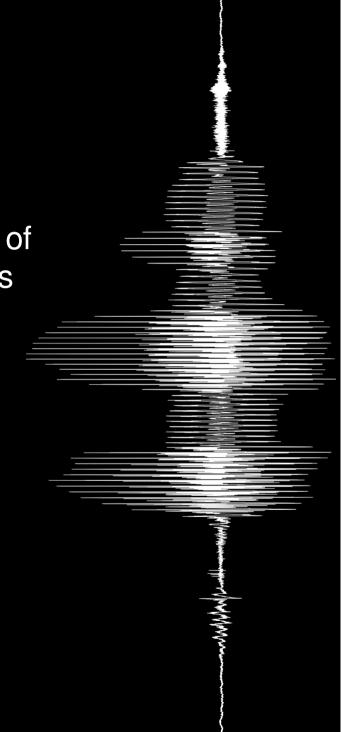
you can (and should!) also check the mailing list of praat users, where there are often interesting tips and suggestions, as well as questions with their answers.

and if you have the chance to give back to the community, all the better!

http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/praat-users/

you can send emails to the list to

praat-users@yahoogroups.co.uk



other resources

and of course, look online for the many websites that aggregate scripts and tutorials. here's a few ideas:

University of Iowa - Praat Script Archives

UCLA Praat script resources

and Scott Sadowsy has developed a syntax highlighting file for praat to be used with Notepad++, freely available at

http://www.sadowsky.cl/praat.html

