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# Pronunciation and the Silent Way Fidel

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Pronunciation and the Silent Way Fidel

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the Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School for  
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This project by Bonnie Mennell Moyer  
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Never be afraid to speak because you fear to express your ideas rather awkwardly. Every time you give utterance to strange sounds adds to your knowledge of pronunciation, and lessens your bashfulness, by giving you increased confidence in yourself.

F. Butler, 1845<sup>1</sup>

Traditionally, proficiency in a second language has been thought of as proficiency in four skill areas--listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The teaching of pronunciation has always been part of the teaching of listening and speaking skills. All teachers of a second language should have some thoughts on what part pronunciation plays in a language and a student's learning of a language, and therefore what part it should play in their teaching of the language. These thoughts, in combination with their approach to learning, their personal skills, and their class needs, will then guide their choice of methods and techniques to teach pronunciation.

During the last two years of my teaching, I have broadened my definition of pronunciation to include the sounds, stresses, phrasing and melody of a language, as well as the correspondence between sounds and the signs used to represent them. As such, pronunciation is a vital part of the language. It is also a vital part of my teaching, for when a student tries to express herself in speech or in writing in a second language, it plays a significant part in her ability to do so both technically and emotionally.

The purpose of this paper is to share a way of working with pronunciation that I have found effective in meeting my students' needs and

my needs in the classroom. It is a way of teaching pronunciation with the Silent Way phonic code charts or Fidel based on the Silent Way approach to learning developed by Dr. Caleb Gattegno. (See inside front cover.) I first encountered this approach to learning and its ideas about pronunciation at a Silent Way workshop given by Educational Solutions at the School for International Training in October 1974. Since then I have been working with, experimenting with, and learning about this approach and its materials for teaching pronunciation.

This paper grew out of a need I felt to know more about the Fidel as a tool, its development, the rationale behind it, the sounds it displays, and how it could be used effectively in the classroom. I had also often heard other people express an interest in using the Fidel, but at the same time express bewilderment as to where to begin. I have answered my need in the work I have done on this paper. I hope it will answer the needs of others by offering some background on the Fidel, its place in the Silent Way approach to learning, and ideas about how to use it in the classroom.

While doing this paper I had to examine my reasons for working with pronunciation. This involved rethinking how Silent Way looks at pronunciation and what being in the classroom has taught me about the role of pronunciation. I also had to look at the "how" of using the charts in terms of how I approach any teaching I do in the classroom. This resulted in Parts One and Two of this paper where I offer my reasons for making pronunciation a vital part of my teaching and the assumptions about the learning situation upon which my teaching is based. These parts serve as background for the main focus of the paper-- Parts Three through Six. Part Three deals with the development of the Fidel as a tool, the rationale behind it, and its visual properties. This leads into Part Four which is an analysis of the sounds of the English Fidel. Part Five addresses the "how"

of pronunciation work with the Fidel and offers suggested techniques or procedures for using it in the classroom. Part Six is a final statement on what I see as the strengths of the Fidel. The tool: the Fidel; the way of using it: the techniques; and the approach to learning: the Silent Way -- all contribute to an effective and meaningful way of working with pronunciation in the classroom.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>L.G. Kelly, 25 Centuries of Language Teaching, 500 B.C.-1969 (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 1969), p. 93.



Part One

Why Work with Pronunciation?

I have made the teaching of pronunciation a vital part of my teaching for three reasons: pronunciation conveys part of the spirit of a language; people don't automatically pronounce a second language correctly; pronunciation can have a powerful effect on a student's self-image.

A primary step in teaching is helping the student to acquire a feeling for the language she is learning, to experience what is characteristic of it, to begin to grasp the spirit of the language. Much of the meaning of a language is carried through its melodic elements. It is not enough for her to learn new words and use them in keeping with the spirit of her native language. The spirit of the new language must take hold of her and dictate the expressions that a native would use for "Languages are excellent witnesses of various modes of thought."<sup>1</sup>

To become truly acquainted with the spirit of a language we would have to delve into the life, the literature, and the philosophy of the people using it, in addition to the melody and the structure of the language. Thus, there are many avenues to the spirit of a language. But which of these avenues is most accessible to the student of a second language? Gattegno feels that there are two basic avenues open to the student, the melody and the structure. Both of these convey part of the spirit of a language. Melody is the most accessible one. "Children babble with considerable ability (i.e., reproduce all the sounds of the language in their proper sequences and with correct intonation) before they can speak to any great extent."<sup>2</sup> So by working with pronunciation, I can help the student begin to grasp the spirit of the language through the most accessible avenue.

If we assumed that simply exposing the student to the language and

letting her produce it would be sufficient for her to grasp its pronunciation, and thus the part of the spirit conveyed by it, then we wouldn't need to focus on it at all. However, "Observation repeatedly shows that merely listening to good models does not produce good pronunciation after childhood."<sup>3</sup> If this is the case and we also accept the statement that "Any normal human being, by using his organs of speech in a given way, can produce any given sound of any language,"<sup>4</sup> we are then faced with the questions: what is stopping her from getting the pronunciation and how do we go about removing obstacles that might exist?

A normal baby is capable of making all the sounds that exist in any language. Gradually she restricts herself to producing more frequently the sounds that she hears in the environment. When she finally has control over the sound system of her environment, she has greatly narrowed her number of important sounds. " ...in a speech community there are a limited number of ways in which the speakers perform with their speech organs."<sup>5</sup> The ability is there, but the awareness has been lost.

The same is true of our sense of hearing which is the least used sense in an adult. We get into the habit of noticing only the parts of spoken language that are relevant to getting the meaning of what is being said. We usually ignore anything else; we do not hear it. But at the same time, we know what to expect; we anticipate; we know what is likely to follow. This allows us to supply missing information.

On the other hand, a second language learner needs to hear everything in the new language. She has not gotten to the point yet where she automatically notices only what is important. She can draw only on what she actually hears because she is extremely limited in her ability to supply missing information. At the same time, the stressing and ignoring habits she has brought from her native language get in the way. She hears what

she has been conditioned to hear. On the level of sounds, she stresses the distinctions she is accustomed to hearing and producing and lets others go unnoticed. She can hear all the sounds and other melodic elements, but the filtering device of her first language gets in the way.

So in both areas, perception and production of sounds, a student has the abilities to meet the challenges of a second language. What is needed is an awareness of this and a learning situation that allows her to work on it. A teacher has to help the student rediscover her powers of perception and production and expand them to include what is demanded by the new language.

The third reason that pronunciation is a vital part of my teaching has to do with the focus of my teaching-- the student. I am concerned with the student's learning and what will free her to function most effectively in the learning situation and in the language. By starting with pronunciation I let the student see she is equipped to hear and produce the language. I let her see it is a process of approximation, a process of moving closer and closer to what is considered native, and that mistakes are a natural part of this process. She can begin to develop confidence in her ability to speak the language naturally. She is being given the opportunity to grasp a basic part of the language which will free her to move on to other parts of it.

However, I feel there are three areas in which pronunciation can produce fears or anxieties that can threaten a student's self-image. The first is anxiety over not knowing what to do to produce a sound or not being able to hear a sound. The second is anxiety over saying it poorly. Students often remain silent in class and outside of class because of a fear of saying it poorly and of the reactions this often brings from those around them. The third is what Stevick talks about--the fear of saying it well.<sup>7</sup> Sound-

ing foreign and hearing foreign sounds can be a threat to group identity, both in terms of the class as a group and the wider cultural-language group to which a student belongs.

So when we focus our teaching on the student, we must be concerned with her self-image. "Pronunciation is very central to self-image, but less important in terms of language."<sup>6</sup> If we create situations in the classroom that threaten her self-image, she will react to defend it. We are not freeing the student. We are interfering in her learning.

When the sounds and the melody of the language are worked with from the beginning, mistakes are treated as a part of the natural process of approximation and growth, and allowances are made for anxieties over group identity, the student's self-image is less threatened and she is given an invaluable entry into the language. She is being freed to move on to other parts of the language and to put her energy and concentration there.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Caleb Gattegno, Teaching Foreign Languages in School, The Silent Way (New York City: Educational Solutions, 1972), p. 19.
- <sup>2</sup> Eugene Nide, "Selective Listening," in Teaching English as a Second Language, A Book of Readings, ed. Harold B. Allen (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 110.
- <sup>3</sup> Robert Lado, Language Teaching, A Scientific Approach (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1964), p. 51.
- <sup>4</sup> Ernest F. Haden, "Phonetics in Teaching a Foreign Language," in Teaching English as a Second Language, A Book of Readings, ed. Harold B. Allen (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 106.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 106.
- <sup>6</sup> Earl Stevick, "Teaching English as an Alien Language," Address given at the Tenth Annual TESOL Convention, New York City, 6 March 1976.
- <sup>7</sup> Stevick deals extensively with this issue in his chapter entitled "Inside the Student: Some Meanings of Pronunciation and Fluency" in Memory, Meaning, and Method - Some Psychological Perspectives on Language Learning (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 1976), pp. 47-64.

Part Two

Assumptions about the Learning Situation

Having stated the reasons for the importance I give to pronunciation in my teaching, I would now like to state the assumptions about the learning situation upon which I base my teaching. These statements are largely derived from my current understanding of the Silent Way. I have grouped them into four areas: the aims in teaching; what the learner brings to the classroom; the role of the teacher; and the role of the student.

For me, the aims in teaching are:

1. to enable students to become the most competent learners they are capable of becoming. The prime concern of the teacher is the learner. The language is secondary. However, language remains the prime concern of the student;
2. to allow students to be independent, autonomous and responsible and thus provide them with the means to meet the future;<sup>1</sup>
3. to develop in every student inner criteria which are the only, final, lasting guides to correctness.<sup>2</sup> In order to be an effective learner, a student must learn to go to her own sources, her inner criteria, to find answers instead of going to an outside authority.

When the learner comes to the classroom she brings with her:

1. intelligence;
2. common sense;
3. imagination;
4. creativity;
5. the ability to analyze;



6. the ability to experiment;
7. the ability to perceive and discriminate;
8. the ability to hear;
9. the ability to make sounds;
10. the knowledge of what language is since she has already learned one.

The role of the teacher is:

1. to be aware of the student. She can become more aware by evaluating to what degree her learners use the powers or abilities they bring to the language learning situation;
2. to respect and use what the student brings to the learning situation;
3. to structure the learning situation to allow and encourage the student to use the powers she has to explore the language. The teacher helps her to re-discover the powers she hasn't been using and to extend the ones she is using. She helps the student to expand her self-awareness;
4. to present material in a manner that is clear and logical from the point of view of the learner and the language. The meaning must be clear and responsive to the situation. The learner's mistakes which are evidence of lack of mastery are to be used as guides in this process;
5. to supply only what the student can't supply herself. Because the teacher is using the powers of the student, she will supply only what the student hasn't yet met in the language or what is arbitrary in the language;
6. to give the student time to work things out for herself. This is done in a patient, silent way. She doesn't interfere in the student's learning. She lets her re-discover the joy of learning;

7. to remain the final authority in the language but to increasingly throw the learner back on herself as her inner criteria develop and she learns to place confidence in her own perception;

8. to teach in such a way that she knows what she is doing at all times. The teacher must be conscious of what her goal is in a given situation and plan how to achieve it. However, she must also be able to adjust this "how" according to what happens in the classroom without losing sight of the goal.

9. to participate as a learner herself.

The role of the student is:

1. to use the powers she brings to the classroom;
2. to be responsible for her own learning. The student must give herself to the tasks involved in learning. Her use of her will is responsible for her actions, initiatives and participation in the learning situation;
3. to not interfere in other people's learning;
4. to acquire a language;
5. to use her developing inner criteria to monitor and correct herself;
6. to act as a resource for herself, for her peers, and for the teacher.

I hope these assumptions will help clarify why I teach the way I do and thus why I suggest using the charts the way I do in Part Five.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For further discussion of these attributes, see Caleb Gattegno's chapter entitled "Independence, Autonomy and Responsibility" in The Common Sense of Teaching Foreign Languages (New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1976).

<sup>2</sup> The development of inner criteria is a central element in the Silent Way approach. The following quote from Caleb Gattegno's book Teaching Foreign Languages in Schools, The Silent Way (New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1972), p. 30, explains what is meant by the term inner criteria.

Most of us know at once whether we have just uttered a word that is unwanted or out of sequence, or whether we have distorted a sound. We immediately provide the alternative wanted. This proves that while we are engaged in jobs of talking, writing, discussing, etc., part of our consciousness is occupied in supervising the activity. This part feeds back to the self in charge information which is used at once to either let the flow go on or to introduce corrections where needed, in order to make the objective material which has been produced comply with the schema that pre-existed and provoked the activity.

This criteria of rightness, correctness, and adequacy is developed as part of the learning process. It doesn't appear at any given moment.

Part Three

The Silent Way Fidel - Background

The Fidel, or phonic code chart, is the basic tool that is used in teaching pronunciation in the Silent Way. (See inside front cover.) It is the focus of my work with pronunciation. The Fidel is in essence a presentation of all the sounds and all the signs of a language. They are organized on the Fidel in such a way that the special features of the sound and sign systems of the language are presented clearly, effectively, and efficiently. Each Fidel is a unique creation, just as every language is.<sup>1</sup> It is a key to a basic part of the language.

Before we can use this key however, we must know it as we must know any tool before it can be used effectively in the classroom. Part of knowing the tool is knowing its history--the when, how, and why of its development. Gattegno's first attempt at reorganizing an alphabet took place in Ethiopia in 1954. He was working on a project to develop a more effective way of teaching adult literacy. Since literacy involves the teaching of reading and writing skills and sound-symbol correspondences, he had to look at the alphabet and sound system to see what problems it might present to a learner.

He found Amharic,<sup>2</sup> the national language, to be a fairly simple language phonetically, but a difficulty lay in the fact that each vowel affects the shape of the consonant following it in a unique way. Thus the alphabet consists of 251 syllables which presents a formidable task to the learner. He took the alphabet and physically arranged it in such a way that the regularities, irregularities, and groupings of patterns in the signs were used to advantage. Color was used to complete this new organization. Without changing the characters, he was able to emphasize patterns that could make learning more efficient. Thus the first Fidel was created and used,

along with a dynamic approach to the teaching of reading and writing, to teach literacy.<sup>3</sup>

The second language Gattegno worked with was Spanish. The third was Hindi.<sup>4</sup> So, in 1957 when he first considered the teaching of reading and writing in English to children, he had considerable experience and expertise to draw on. Gattegno says that subsequent teaching taught him that there was something of value in his adaptation to the English language of his work done in Ethiopia, Argentina, and India.<sup>5</sup> He looked at the alphabet and sound system of English to determine whether it had an alphabetic spelling system or not. In a language which is alphabetic, each sign represents one sound and each sound is represented by only one sign. The languages with which Gattegno had previously worked approach this ideal situation while English is definitely non-alphabetic.

What importance did this characteristic of English have for Gattegno? "Since phonetic languages can be taught in such a way that natives do not make spelling mistakes, if an artifact could be found which would make non-phonetic languages resemble phonetic ones, it seems safe to assume that a great step forward would be achieved toward alleviating problems in learning to read and write non-phonetic languages."<sup>6</sup> He had this artifact in the Fidels he had already developed for three languages.

The problem with English arises because there are a smaller number of signs than the number of different sounds. The alphabet has twenty-six letters or signs, but the spoken language has fifty-two different sounds.<sup>7</sup> This presented Gattegno with a task very different from the task he had faced with previous languages where a new arrangement of the alphabet, capitalizing on morphological resemblance or sound similarity, was sufficient to create a regularity that could facilitate learning. How could the number of signs in English be increased so there would be as close as

possible a correspondence between written and spoken English without violating the reading and writing traditions of the English language? How could English be made at least a quasi-alphabetic language?

Without altering the shapes of the original twenty-six letters, Gattegno provided English with 378 characters. These characters are graphemes which are combination or replications of the basic twenty-six signs. He grouped them according to the sounds they could represent, used color to indicate sound differences and similarities, and thus made English a quasi-alphabetic language. The graphemes presented on the Fidel are not an alphabet in the traditional sense, but a phonic code or Fidel. The English Fidel, like the Fidels for any of the languages he has worked with, is a presentation of the sounds and signs of a language that takes into consideration the uniqueness of the languages's sound and sign systems. It is organized to make use of any regularities that will help the learner in his task of learning the sound-symbol correspondences of the language.

Looking closely at this Fidel for the English language, we see that it consists of eight charts divided into columns by vertical white lines, except for the three x sounds and the combination sounds of m, n, l, and r which are separated by horizontal white lines.<sup>8</sup> Each vertical column contains the different graphemes that can represent a distinct sound in English. There are fifty-two sounds and 379 graphemes represented.<sup>9</sup> Each column or sound is a distinct color.<sup>10</sup> The top four charts show the twenty-one vowel sounds Gattegno considers distinct enough to warrant listing as individual sounds. The bottom four show the thirty-one consonant sounds of English he considers distinct. (We will focus on these sounds individually in the next part of the paper.)

Gattegno says that there is no reason for the order of the sound columns from right to left across the charts. The order of the graphemes from top

to bottom in a column is based partly on frequency of occurrence (it may be the most common spelling), and partly on simplicity of spelling (it may be the simplest one). A third factor, showing similar alterations apply to a number of consonants, influenced the choice of what to put on the second and third lines of the consonant charts. "...the triplet of spellings for each consonant sound: the single sign, the double letter, and the sign with the 'silent e'.....are arranged to appear in one horizontal line of the Phonic Code....."<sup>11</sup> As one works with the charts, the feeling that the graphemes near the top of each column tend to be more frequently used than those at the bottom is reinforced, even though Gattegno does not explicitly state that this is so.<sup>12</sup>

These graphemes represent all the possible spellings of a sound. He has included spellings that reflect the pronunciation of foreign words such as ballet that have been accepted into regular use in English, and spellings that reflect the pronunciation of words both in isolation and and in context. (See page 26.)

The colors were used to add an extra dimension to the signs. They help most learners to distinguish among sounds and shapes. Color is easier to use than geometric signs such as underlining or crossing which would interfere with the morphology of the script.<sup>13</sup> Color is only used for introducing sounds and shapes. On the board or on paper everything is in one color, but the color is always there on the charts reinforcing the students' mental image of the sound-sign relationships. We tend to store the color, the shape, and the sound of the letter(s) together in our mind.<sup>14</sup> We can use the color to evoke the shape and/or sound that is associated with it. Because of my work with the charts, I can see in my mind a letter in a certain color and I know the sound of it. I can run through a series of colors and sounds: white - hat, pink - sit, bright yellow - until, light orange - pot. This also happens with students when the charts are used



consistently. The color has the power to evoke the sound.<sup>15</sup>

Gattegno also says that "The learning principal involved in the use of color is to contrast or show similarities between the signs of spoken American English by using sharply contrasting or very similar colors; the choice of colors is obviously to a great extent arbitrary."<sup>16</sup> I want to look at the second part of this statement first. Although it may be true that the choice was largely arbitrary, if we look at the Fidel, we find one column, one color, that stands out. It is the bright yellow column representing the sound of the underlined vowel in the word potato. This sound, the schwa, is the most striking feature of the English sound system. I feel this color was chosen to make it stand out as it is central to English. This would be in keeping with Gattegno's emphasis on showing the student what is characteristic and central to a language from the outset.

Now let us look at the first part of the statement about bringing out similarities and differences that are important for the learner to perceive. By using two very different colors to represent two sounds, the difference between them is emphasized. The sound of a as in hate (blue/chart two) is very different from the sound of a as in all (brown/chart two). By the same token, using similar colors suggests a similarity in sound. The sound of u as in use (green/chart three) is quite similar to the sound of u as in flu (dark green/chart four). However, this has not been done with complete consistency because it is not possible with the number of colors and sounds involved.

Another way Gattegno has used color is to show that a sound is a combination of two other sounds. An example of this is the sound represented by oi in oil (brown-pink/chart four). It is a combination of the sounds represented by a in all (brown/chart two) and the sound of i in pink (pink/chart one).<sup>17</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> There are Fidels, at least in prototype, for twenty two different languages.
- <sup>2</sup> Fidel is the Amharic word for "alphabet".
- <sup>3</sup> See Caleb Gattegno's book Words in Color, Background and Principles (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Press, Inc., 1962), for the specifics of this dynamic approach to the teaching of reading and writing in one's native language.
- <sup>4</sup> This work, plus his work on Spanish and Hindi which followed, are explained in greater detail in Gattegno, op. cit.
- <sup>5</sup> See Forward, Gattegno, op. cit.
- <sup>6</sup> Gattegno, op. cit., pp. 7-8. Gattegno uses the term phonetic when more properly he should be using the term alphabetic. All languages are phonetic, i.e. they consist of sounds. Some are phonetically simpler than others, i.e. they contain less sounds and sound variations. English is phonetically difficult and non-alphabetic.
- <sup>7</sup> Fifty-two is the number of sounds Gattegno recognizes as distinct enough to warrant separate listing.
- <sup>8</sup> The Fidel included in this paper is the 1970 version of the English Fidel. It is the only one available in large classroom chart form. In Appendix A is a mini-version of the new American English Fidel, 1974, that is part of a comparative phonetic kit available from Educational Solutions. It will probably be two years or more before this version of the Fidel is available in classroom size. This is the reason I chose to concentrate on the 1970 version.
- <sup>9</sup> Gattegno speaks of fifty-one sounds and 378 graphemes in his books, but on the 1970 edition of the English phonic code (the one included in this paper) there are fifty-two sounds and 379 graphemes represented.
- <sup>10</sup> "By blending three primary colors in varying strengths and combinations, we can produce a range of colors that are secondary, tertiary, and so on. The difficulty is in obtaining shades that are readily distinguishable since fifty-one is a large number to select and control for consistent matching and contrasting within single charts and between different charts. This question of color control was a major commercial and technical problem in producing a set of twenty-nine separate colored charts, relatively

low in cost and yet sufficiently consistent in color for easy use." Gattegno, Words in Color, Background and Principles (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Press, Inc., 1962), p. 55.

11

Idem., Teaching Reading with Words in Color (New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1968), p. 79.

12

I compared the spellings and the order in which they are listed on the Fidel with the lists of the relative frequencies of English spellings for individual phonemes listed in Godfrey Dewey's Relative Frequency of English Spellings (New York: Teachers College Press, 1970). On the whole, Gattegno seems to include more spellings than Dewey for individual sounds. Often the first one or two spellings in Gattegno's and Dewey's lists are the same for each sound in order of occurrence, but after this there seems to be a lack of correspondence in the order of occurrence.

13

This interference with the script is a primary reason for not using a phonetic alphabet. A phonetic alphabet interferes with a student's learning of the actual shapes and sign-symbol correspondences. Why place upon a student the burden of learning an additional script?

14

Earl Stevick, Memory, Meaning, and Method - Some Psychological Perspectives on Language Learning (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 1976), p. 18, citing R.M. Shiffrin, "Memory Search", Chapter 12 in D.A. Norman, ed., Models of Human Memory (New York: Academic Press, 1970), pp. 375-447.

15

Gattegno hasn't been the only person who has worked with color and its psychological effect. L.G. Kelly in his book 25 Centuries of Language Teaching, 500 B.C. - 1969 (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, 1969), p. 81-82, comments that

Following some psychological research into the problem of visual perception of sounds, the phoneticians of the team that produces Parlons Français devised a system of vowel symbolization based on the spectrum. Front vowels were thought of as warm, therefore at the red-yellow end, and back vowels were therefore in the green-violet area. Close vowels were lighter in color and open darker. Nasalization was symbolized by muddying the intense color of the primary vowel, and the front rounded vowels [y] , [ø] and /œ/, were given pastel toning based on the color of the appropriate unrounded vowel. In the later books of the part of the set designed for pupil use, vowels were printed in outlined letters to allow the user to color them in, thus reinforcing kinesthetically the phonetic training from the teacher.

16 Gattegno (1962), op. cit., p. 10.

17 Gattegno uses this coloring more extensively on the 1970 Fidel for double-sound vowels (diphthongs).

Part Four

The Sounds of the Fidel

Now that we are familiar with the English Fidel in terms of the when, why, and how of its development, let us take a detailed look at the sounds it presents. On the basis of his analysis of the language, Gattegno presented fifty-two sounds. More refined analysis could present more discriminations, but for his original purpose, the teaching of reading, he felt that the identification of fifty-two sounds, twenty-one vowels and thirty-one consonants, was adequate. The number of sounds was not changed when the Fidel was begun to be used for second language teaching.<sup>1</sup>

The Fidel presents more sounds than most textbooks designed for teaching pronunciation to second language learners. Most books deal with thirty-eight sounds, fourteen vowels and twenty-four consonants. This is usually considered the basic number of phonemes in general American English pronunciation.<sup>2</sup> Gattegno works with these thirty-eight sounds plus fourteen additional ones, six vowels and eight consonants.

These additional sounds fall into one of two categories. Some of them are a combination of two sounds that occur fairly frequently together as more or less one sound. The sounds represented by qu as in queen are an example. The others are sounds that reflect the variations that occur when certain sounds occur in certain environments. Several sounds on the Fidel reflect the influence of /l/, /m/, /n/, or /r/ on a preceding vowel. These sounds are considered different enough and frequently occurring enough to warrant<sup>a</sup> their separation from related sounds.. By listing them separately they can be brought to the student's awareness and worked with as he refines his pronunciation.

The Fidel was based on standard British English pronunciation. Some of the words used by Gattegno to illustrate the pronunciation of a particular

grapheme tend to illustrate British pronunciation more than American, as you will see on the pages that follow.<sup>3</sup>

These pages are individual sheets for each sound column of the Fidel, starting with column one, chart one. They are meant to be a resource tool for the teacher in her work with the charts. Four things are included on each sheet:

1. an identification of the sound;
2. a list of words illustrating the spellings for each sound in the order they are listed on the chart;
3. a cross reference for Nilsen and Nilsen's book Pronunciation Contrasts in English<sup>4</sup> to be used as an aid in preparing materials for pronunciation work and a reference for more information on a sound;
4. explanatory notes, if warranted, based on my understanding of the sound.

The 1970 edition of the Fidel which is referred to frequently can be found in Appendix A.

A AS IN PAT      WHITE, CHART ONE  
/æ/

pat<sup>5</sup>

laugh

plaid

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 6. bit /i/<sup>6</sup>  
9. bait /ey/  
12. bet /e/  
15. but /ə/  
16. cot /ɑ/  
17. bite /ay/



U AS IN UP LIGHT YELLOW, CHART ONE  
/ə/

up

done

does

young

blood

was

cupboard

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 7. bit /i/  
10. bait /ey/  
13. bet /e/  
15. bat /æ/  
18. cot /a/  
19. book /u/  
20. boat /ow/  
21. bought /ɔ/

This sound represents schwa when it occurs in a stressed syllable. It is longer in duration than the schwa which occurs in an unstressed syllable, i.e. upon. (See page 29.)

The grapheme up as in cupboard is eliminated on the 1970 edition of the Fidel.

I AS IN SIT PINK, CHART ONE  
/i/

<u>it</u>	<u>beauty</u>
<u>women</u>	<u>honey</u>
<u>village</u>	<u>saturday</u>
<u>busy</u>	<u>build</u>
<u>english</u>	<u>been</u>
<u>portrait</u>	<u>marriage</u>
<u>forfeit</u>	<u>sieve</u>
<u>caesarian</u>	<u>guinea</u>
<u>chassis</u>	<u>forehead</u>
<u>chamois</u>	<u>exhibition</u>

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 1. beat /iy/  
4. bait /ey/  
5. bet /e/  
6. bat /æ/  
7. but /ə/

This sound can occur in both stressed and unstressed syllables. Village is a good example. The i in village represents this sound in a stressed syllable and the a represents it in an unstressed syllable.

There are certain words where the /i/ tends to be used in place of the schwa in an unstressed syllable. Village is one example and roses is another.

Chassis and chamois illustrate the inclusion of graphemes occurring in words from other languages.

Saturday is one of several examples of the pronunciation of a word in context, as in Saturday night. In isolation ay in the word Saturday would be pronounced as ay in day (turquoise-blue/chart two).

E AS IN PET      BLUE, CHART ONE  
/e/

pet

friend

lead

said

bury

any

says

leopard

heifer

aesthetic

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 3. beat /iy/  
5. bit /i/  
8. bait /ey/  
12. bat /æ/  
13. but /ə/  
14. pot /ɑ/

O AS IN POT LIGHT ORANGE, CHART ONE  
/ɑ/

pot

john

honor

knowledge

swamp

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 14. pet /e/  
16. cat /æ/  
18. cut /ə/  
22. put /u/  
23. coat /ow/  
24. caught /ɔ/  
25. doubt /aw/

The distinction between ough in caught (brown/chart two) and o in cot is not differentiated in all sections of the United States. If you do not make this distinction readily, be aware of this when working with these two sounds.

Discuss this with students, depending on level, as a dialect variation. You can also bring in another speaker or a tape to illustrate a contrast you do not make in your dialect.

A AS IN USABLE BRIGHT YELLOW, CHART TWO  
/ə/

<u>fatal</u>	<u>upon</u>
<u>potato</u>	<u>the</u>
<u>pencil</u>	<u>pageant</u>
<u>ethyl</u>	<u>numerous</u>
<u>foreign</u>	<u>conscience</u>
<u>tortoise</u>	<u>question</u>
<u>mountain</u>	<u>martial</u>
<u>pigeon</u>	<u>righteous</u>
<u>vehement</u>	<u>cupboard</u>
<u>nasturtium</u>	<u>conscious</u>
<u>restaurant</u>	<u>bureaucrat</u>
<u>hallelujah</u>	<u>thoroughly</u>

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.<sup>?</sup>

This is the schwa which occurs in unstressed syllables. It is a result of the relaxed pronunciation of weakly stressed vowels. It is a central feature of spoken English and as such, demands attention from the very beginning of pronunciation work.

U AS IN FUR ROSE, CHART TWO

fur

her

work

girl

courteous

pearl

myrrh

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This sound is light yellow/chart one modified by /r/. It occurs in stressed syllables. In English /r/ greatly affects the pronunciation of a preceeding vowel. There are many dialect differences in the way vowels before /r/ are pronounced. In addition to u as in fur there are five other vowels that are noticeably affected by /r/. They are as follow:

1. a as in far (purple/chart two).
2. ai as in air (light green/chart four).
3. o as in for (brown/chart three). This sound is included with the unmodified sound represented by o as in off. See page 33.
4. ea as in near. This vowel sound can be shown on the chart by combining i as in it (pink/chart one) and u as in fur.
5. u as in cure. This is a fine sound distinction. It is treated on the 1970 edition of the Fidel as a separate sound. It could be shown on this chart by combining u as in united (light green/chart three) and r as in iron (bright yellow orange/chart six).

Y AS IN MY LIGHT GREEN, CHART TWO

/ay/

Imylikehighlieeyesryeheightisleaisleeither

Nilsen and Nilsen p. 17. bat /æ/  
 30. bout /aw/  
 32. boy /oy/

I is the only capital letter appearing on the charts. Since it is never written by itself as a small letter, it is shown here as a capital. It can serve as an introduction to capitalization when teaching reading and writing to children in their native language.

The grapheme ei as in either is one of two alternative pronunciations; ei can also have the sound of e as in he (red/chart three).

Gattegno does not list uy as in buy as a possible grapheme for this sound. You have to use the grapheme bu from dark green/chart seven plus y from light green/chart 2. Whenever you have difficulty locating a spelling for a sound look for other alternatives.

A AS IN FAR PURPLE, CHART TWO

far

bazaar

heart

sergeant

ah

laugh

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This is light orange/chart one modified by /r/.

The grapheme au as in laugh represents a British English pronunciation.



O AS IN OFF BROWN, CHART TWO  
/ɔ/

for

all

paul

paw

daughter

thought

pour

door

exhaust

board

awe

extraordinary

exhort

reservoir

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 21. but /ə/  
24. cot /ɑ/  
26. boil /oy/

This column includes the pure sound and the sound modified by /r/. (See page 30 .) If you wish to separate the two sounds, take the graphemes that represent the sound modified by /r/ and make a new column. This can be added to chart four. In most cases, new words unmodified by /r/ can be found to illustrate all the graphemes in this column. For example, o can be represented by off, ou by cough and oa by broad. The graphemes found only in words modified by /r/ can also be removed or simply not used.

On the 1970 edition of the Fidel a separate sound column has been added for

the /r/ modified sound. It includes the graphemes underlined in the following words:

or  
war  
dinosaurur  
board  
door

pour  
exhort  
extraordinary  
reservoirur  
toward

A AS IN LATE      TURQUOISE, CHART TWO  
/ey/

late

day

they

freight

straight

veil

break

mail

ballet

gauge

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 2. beat /iy/  
4. bit /i/  
8. bet /e/  
9. bat /æ/  
10. but /ə/

U AS IN USE LIGHT GREEN, CHART THREE

/yuw/

useyouthbeautyhuefewfeudalqueueadieueweyewviewexhume

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This sound is a combination of two sounds, y as in yes and o as in do (dark green/chart four). The grapheme y is considered a semi-consonant or a semi-vowel, depending on the book you look at. Gattegno has placed y with the consonants (pink/chart seven). This column represents its use as a vowel sound which occurs frequently in conjunction with o as in do.

E AS IN HE RED, CHART THREE  
/iy/

he

see

tea

conceit

field

clique

people

amoeba

quay

key

fifty

caesar

debris

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 1. bit /i/  
2. bait /ey/  
3. bet /e/

O AS IN GO LIGHT ORANGE, CHART THREE  
/ow/

go

goes

know

owe

joan

oh

sew

soul

plateau

though

brooch

mauve

yeoman

depot

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 11. bait /ey/  
20. but /ə/  
23. cot /a/  
28. could /ʊ/  
29. boil /oy/

OU AS IN HOUSE PURPLE-LIGHT GREEN, CHART THREE

/aw/

ourhoursowbough

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 25. dot /a/  
30. bite /ay/  
31. boy /oy/

Here Gattegno uses two colors to indicate that this sound is a diphthong. He doesn't do this consistently on this Fidel. It is a combination of purple/chart two and w as in wet (light green/chart seven). Diphthongs are sometimes called glide vowels. In this case, start with purple and glide into light green.

A AS IN RARE LIGHT GREEN, CHART FOUR

rare

air

heir

pear

there

their

aerial

prayers

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This is blue/chart one influenced by /r/. See page 30.



O AS IN DO      DARK GREEN, CHART FOUR

/uw/

do

too

shoes

through

soup

flu

true

fruit

dew

two

pneumatic

lieutenant

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 27. pull /u/

This is a diphthong, a combination of u as in put (brown/chart four) and w as in wet (light green/chart seven).

OO AS IN FOOT

BROWN, CHART FOUR

/u/

foot

would

put

woman

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 19. buck /ə/  
22. pot /ɑ/  
27. pool /uɹ/  
28. code /ow/

OI AS IN OIL BROWN-PINK, CHART FOUR

/oy/

oilboy

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 26. ball /ɔ/  
29. bowl /ow/  
31. bough /aw/  
32. buy /ay/

This is a diphthong, a combination of brown/chart two and pink/chart seven.

OI AS IN RESERVOIR LIGHT GREEN-PURPLE, CHART FOUR

reservoir

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This is a fairly specialized sound which represents an alternative pronunciation. It is a combination of light green/chart seven and purple/chart two.

O AS IN ONE LIGHT GREEN-LIGHT YELLOW, CHART FOUR

one

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This is a combination of light green/chart seven and light yellow/chart one. This is also a fairly specialized sound. It was made a separate sound because there is no other way to represent this sound easily with the Fidel.

P AS IN POT      DARK ORANGE, CHART FIVE  
/p/

pot

stopped

pipe

shepherd

subpoena

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 35. back /b/  
36. fat /f/  
59. tack /t/

T AS IN TOP      VIOLET, CHART FIVE  
/t/

top

little

late

finished

yacht

indict

debt

receipt

cigarette

thyme

placed

don't

phthisic

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 51. thank /e/  
59. pack /p/  
60. dab /d/  
61. chap /č/

S AS IN IS PURPLE, CHART FIVE

/z/

ispossesshosesam'szerobuzzsizebusinessclothesanxietyasthma

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 50. veal /v/  
56. then /ð/  
63. dipper /d/  
67. seal /s/  
70. jest /j/



S AS IN US LIGHT GREEN, CHART FIVE  
/s/

us

pass

promise

pat's

conceit

service

sword

listen

scythe

schism

psalm

finesse

acquiesce

isthmus

waltz

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 46. fat /f/  
53. thank /θ/  
66. shack /ʃ/  
67. zeal /z/

The grapheme tz as in waltz is changed to z on the 1970 edition.

S AS IN MEASURE      DARK BLUE, CHART FIVE

/z/

measure

azure

garage

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

M AS IN MAT LIGHT ORANGE, CHART FIVE  
/m/

mat

comma

same

lamb

diaphragm

hymn

calm

I'm

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 33. wac /w/  
34. hang /ɔ/

M AS IN CRITICISM BRIGHT YELLOW-LIGHT ORANGE, CHART FIVE

rhythm

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This is a specialized sound. It is a combination of bright yellow/chart one and light orange/chart five. It represents the tendency to insert schwa before m when it follows a voiced sound.

N AS IN ON LILAC, CHART SIX  
/n/

on

channel

fine

know

wednesday

pneumatic

sign

often

extraordinary

iron

grandfather

mnemonic

lincoln

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 57. lack /l/  
58. fang /ɒ/

The grapheme en as in often is eliminated on the 1970 edition.

F AS IN IF LIGHT PURPLE, CHART SIX  
/f/

if

off

life

photograph

half

cough

giraffe

sapphire

often

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 36. pat /p/=  
43. vat /v/  
44. thane /θ/  
45. shame /ʃ/  
46. sat /s/  
47. hat /h/

V AS IN SEVEN ORANGE, CHART SIX

/v/

ofsevengivehalvesstephen

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 40. west /w/  
43. fat /f/  
48. bat /b/  
49. that /ð/  
50. zeal /z/

D AS IN DID GREEN, CHART SIX  
/d/

did

sudden

made

rolled

would

he'd

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 37. bad /b/  
55. than /θ/  
60. tab /t/  
62. rash /r/  
63. zipper /z/  
64. jab /j/



TH AS IN THIS PINK, CHART SIX

/ð/

this

bathe

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 49. vat /v/  
54. thigh /θ/  
55. dan /d/  
56. zen /z/

TH AS IN THIN LIGHT YELLOW, CHART SIX

/e/

thin

absinthe

eighth

southhampton

phthalein

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 44. fane /f/  
51. tank /t/  
52. shank /ʃ/  
53. sank /s/  
54. thy /ð/

Y AS IN YES PINK, CHART SEVEN  
/y/

yes

onion

hallelujah

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 72. jam /j/

See page 36 .

L AS IN LET      DARK BLUE, CHART SEVEN  
/l/

let

sell

pale

belle

he'll

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 57. knack /n/  
65. rack /r/

L AS IN WILD      BRIGHT YELLOW-BLUE, CHART SEVEN

/ l /

wild

pile

I'll

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This is a specialized sound. It is a combination of bright yellow/chart two and blue/chart seven. It shows the tendency to insert schwa before l after the vowel sounds heard in mile and boil and other front vowels. It can also represent the sound of the le as in bottle where the insertion of the schwa also occurs.

W AS IN WET LIGHT GREEN, CHART SEVEN

/w/ /hw/

wetwhenchoirsuitewhere

Nilsen and Nilsen,

/w/

/hw/

p. 33. mac /m/  
 39. whack /hw/  
 40. vest /v/  
 41. rack /r/  
 42. gag /g/

p. 38. hack /h/  
 39. wac /w/

Gattegno made no distinction between the w and the hw on this edition of Fidel. On the 1970 edition h as in where is eliminated from this column, which then becomes solely w, and included as the grapheme wh in a new column that represents /hw/. British English does not make this distinction and it is only differentiated in some parts of the United States. If you wish to have this distinction reflected by the Fidel, it can easily be done by eliminating the grapheme h from this column and adding a column below consisting of the grapheme wh as in where.

K AS IN KIT GOLD, CHART SIX  
/k/

kit

trekked

like

sick

chorus

cat

occasion

talk

quay

clique

saccharine

ache

lacquer

khaki

chocolate

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 74. gap /g/

R AS IN RAN      ORANGE, CHART SIX  
/r/

ran

horror

more

bizarre

write

rhythm

catarrh

mortgage

colonel

corpsman

corps

you're

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 41. wac /w/  
62. dash /d/  
65. lack /l/



R AS IN IRON BRIGHT YELLOW-ORANGE, CHART SIX

iron

fire

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

When diphthongs occur before /r/, most speakers add a syllable by inserting schwa in front of /r/.

B AS IN BUT      DARK GREEN, CHART SEVEN  
/b/

but

ribbon

cube

buy

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 35. pack /k/  
37. dad /d/  
48. vat /w/

H AS IN HE LIGHT BLUE, CHART SEVEN  
/h/

he

who

where

jose

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 38. whack /hw/  
47. fat /f/

The grapheme w as in where is listed here as an alternative pronunciation.  
It is eliminated on the 1970 edition.

G AS IN GO GREY, CHART EIGHT  
/g/

go

egg

guard

ghost

catalogue

blackguard

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 42. wag /w/  
73. bang /ŋ/  
74. cap /k/

SH AS IN SHOP LIGHT BLUE, CHART EIGHT

/ʃ/

shop

michigan

education

sugar

ocean

cache

tissue

schist

conscience

special

appreciate

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 45. fame /f/  
52. thank /θ/  
66. sack /s/  
68. chatter /tʃ/  
69. jack /j/

The graphemes ce and ci are eliminated on the 1970 edition. They are replaced by the grapheme c.

CH AS IN CHICKEN

PURPLE, CHART EIGHT

/tʃ/

chickenwatchquestioncelloniche

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 61. tap /t/  
71. shatter /ʃ/  
68. jest /j/

NG AS IN SING      BROWN, CHART EIGHT

/b/

sing

anxiety

handkerchief

tongue

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 34. ham /m/  
58. fan /n/  
73. bag /g/

J AS IN JACK GREEN, CHART EIGHT

/j/

jack

gem

soldier

judge

cage

exaggerate

judgement

adjective

Nilsen and Nilsen, p. 64. dab /d/  
69. shack /š/  
70. zest /z/  
71. chest /č/  
72. yam /y/



QU AS IN QUESTION      GOLD-LIGHT GREEN, CHART EIGHT  
/kw/

question

acquire

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This is a combination of sounds, gold/chart seven and light green/chart seven, that occurs frequently.

X AS IN BOX GOLD-LIGHT GREEN, CHART EIGHT  
/ks/

box

axe

excel

accident

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This is a combination of gold/chart seven and light green/chart five.

X AS IN EXIST GREY-LILAC, CHART EIGHT  
/gz/

examination

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This is a combination of grey/chart eight and lilac/chart five.

X AS IN ANXIOUS GOLD-LIGHT BLUE, CHART EIGHT

/kʃ/

obnoxious

Nilsen and Nilsen - No entry.

This is a combination of gold/chart seven and light blue/chart eight.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>On the 1970 edition of the Fidel, the analysis was refined, increasing the number of vowel sounds to twenty-three and the number of consonant sounds to thirty-five, thus bringing the total to fifty-eight.
- <sup>2</sup>Don L.F. Nilsen and Alleen Pace Nilsen, in their book Pronunciation Contrasts in English (New York: Regents Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), work with fourteen vowel sounds and twenty-four consonant sounds. The English Language Services' book Drills and Exercises in English Pronunciation, Consonants and Vowels (Washington, D.C.: Collier MacMillian International, 1967) also identifies thirty-eight sounds, fourteen vowels and twenty-four consonants. However, this text does give examples of sounds in several environments and provides for practice in hearing and producing the changes caused by these environments.
- <sup>3</sup>The 1974 Fidel was revised for American English.
- <sup>4</sup>Nilsen and Nilsen, op. cit.
- <sup>5</sup>These words used to illustrate the spellings of a sound on each page of Part Four are taken from Gattegno's book Teaching Reading with Words in Color (New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1968), App. Four, p. 175.
- <sup>6</sup>The sound listed here is contrasted, on the page given, with the sound being looked at. For example, on page 6, i as in bit is contrasted with a as in pat.
- <sup>7</sup>Only phonemes that can be contrasted in minimal pair drills are treated in Nilsen and Nilsen, op. cit.

Part Five

Working with the Fidel in the Classroom

Gattegno begins teaching a language with a Fidel. By using a pointer, the Fidel, and his hands, he is able to present clearly, effectively and efficiently the sounds, stresses, phrasing, and melody of the language. He presents the totality of the language in terms of sounds and signs. He shows the students what is characteristic of the new language. They proceed from making single sounds, to sounds grouped together to make words, to strings of words uttered with the melody of the language being worked on. They are working initially on sound only. Because of this, they are free to use all their energy where sound comes from. They put their consciousness in their throat and mouth and use their will to produce sounds that they have heard. They are encouraged to listen to the teacher, to their peers and to themselves. Emphasis is placed on listening carefully and critically. Oral production is the responsibility of the student. When she feels ready to produce a sound, she is free to do so. If she chooses to remain silent, she is also free to do so.

The student's awareness is being worked on. She is learning what she has to do in order to make a particular sound. She is seeing what sounds she is capable of hearing and making, and what sounds she has yet to master. She can begin to let the habits of the new language dictate her utterances, and leave behind the habits of her own language. She can begin to monitor herself and correct herself.<sup>1</sup>

By creating a situation in which these things can begin to happen, Gattegno is working to free the student from anxieties at the level of sound production that can prevent her from moving on to other parts of the language. At the same time, the student is working to grasp this basic part of the lan-

guage and starting to expand and develop awarenesses and skills that will make her a more proficient learner.

This initial lesson also serves to establish the conventions of the Fidel and its use. The most basic is that the signs of the Fidel represent sounds. All the signs of the color have one sound. When a sign is tapped by the pointer, the sound for that sign is uttered. When the pointer taps a series of signs, the sounds are merged in the sequence in which they are tapped. A brief pause indicates the break between words. Lowering the pointer indicates the end of a sentence. Stress is indicated by tapping a sound more forcefully than the other sounds in the series that make up a particular grouping of sounds. Phrasing is indicated by using the fingers on one or both hands. One finger represents one word. By placing or holding fingers together, it is indicated that words run together. By separating them, pauses are indicated. This combined with the use of the hand to indicate raising or lowering of the voice, produces the melody of the language. Establishing these conventions allows one to work effectively and efficiently with the sounds, stresses, phrasing and intonation of the language.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that a teacher must be familiar with the Fidel and the conventions before using it in the classroom. I feel there are two steps in this process. The first is to observe and/or participate in an actual language lesson based on one of the Fidels. The second is to become more familiar with the sound and sign systems of the language to be taught and how it is arranged on the Fidel. Tapping out and sounding out words, phrases and sentences alone and/or with other interested people will increase one's acquaintance with the Fidel. The more familiar one becomes with the charts, the easier working with them becomes.

The teacher has to realize what she is capable of doing with the Fidel, and understand what is on it. She has to decide what she wants to work on,



taking into consideration class level, class needs and interests. The charts allow her to be as limited or as expansive as she wishes. She can work with the basic thirty-eight sounds of English or the more refined fifty-two, or anywhere in between. The work she can do with stress, phrasing and intonation is unlimited. A column with another sound distinction can be added if it is felt to be important.<sup>3</sup> Such adaptations may be required from country to country or region to region because the spoken language varies. Gattegno feels that he has been able to eliminate, or at least minimize these varying effects by always referring to the written form of a sound, for example, au as in laugh. The teacher and the students are free to use any series of sounds on the Fidel to indicate how they actually pronounce this word. The American pronunciation can be indicated where au has the sound of a as in hat, or the British pronunciation where au has the sound of o in cot. The Fidel allows this freedom. Words are not irrevocably listed as being pronounced one and only one way.

The teacher and students are free to explore dialect and country differences as well as informal and rapid speech differences. A student may use any of the multiple accepted pronunciations of a word as long as it falls within the limits of standard English, or she is aware that it represents a regional dialect or an informal pronunciation pattern. I feel this awareness on the part of the student of the variability of English pronunciation is important. This work can raise the issue of pronunciation as a factor in group identity, accent having the power to make you a member of or exclude you from a group.<sup>4</sup>

Even though spelling is being worked on at the same time as sounds and pronunciation patterns, the teacher might want to focus more specifically on it. She must then decide what spellings to work on. On a beginning level she might want to focus on examples of the first three or four spell-

ings since the others tend to be used less frequently and occur in more advanced vocabulary. She can go further and help students to see some of the patterns that do exist in English spelling. Exercises can be done on the charts that illustrate particular sound-sign patterns.

My use of the charts has always been slightly different from the one presently advocated by Gattegno. He feels that the Fidels should be used for the first one or two hours of a student's contact with a language. My initial lessons are not exclusively the charts. My teaching has usually been with students who already have some of the language and are already somewhat familiar with the sound system and the writing system. So my work with the charts has been more in terms of their use as a long term tool for continuing pronunciation work than their use as a tool for initial entry into the language. However, the reasons for using them and the conventions of using them are the same as those discussed in the initial paragraphs of this part of the paper.

After the charts are introduced to my class, which may or may not be the first day, they become an integral part of the class. The charts remain permanently on the wall. Pronunciation is not a certain time slot each day, although we may spend twenty to thirty minutes during a five hour class day focusing on it; it is a working part of all we do.

What follows is an inventory of ways to work with the charts.<sup>5</sup> They are not the only ways, and the inventory is not exhaustive. After the initial presentation of the charts, there is not an inherent sequence of possible activities. Alternate and intertwine them and do what is needed. In order for the charts to be a truly effective tool, the students must become fairly familiar with them. This happens quickly if the charts are worked with frequently.

I have organized these activities or ways of using the charts into

five categories. Some activities could easily fit into more than one of them. The categories are FOCUS ON ALL ASPECTS OF PRONUNCIATION, FOCUS ON SOUNDS, FOCUS ON STRESS, FOCUS ON INTONATION, FOCUS ON SPELLING. I have also indicated whether the activity is for introduction, review or correction and whether there is any particular level for which it is best suited.

### FOCUS ON ALL ASPECTS OF PRONUNCIATION

There are three ways that can be used to introduce the charts. The first makes use of only the eight charts of the Fidel. The next two use the eight charts and the first word chart.<sup>6</sup>

#### I. Introduction - All Levels:

1. Tap a vowel sound column.
2. Let the students respond with possible sounds. If someone produces the correct sound, indicate that she has it and have her pronounce it for others to hear. If no one produces it, supply the correct pronunciation once.
3. Tap other graphemes in the same column and have them produce the same sound again.
4. Introduce two or three more vowels in the same way.
5. Introduce some consonants by combining them with the vowels already introduced. Vowels can be sounded in isolation but not consonants.<sup>7</sup>
6. Tap some words using the sounds already covered as well as others that can be easily grasped by students. Work with word stress. These words can be words that will be used in the next lesson or words that have already been used in class.
7. When all the sounds felt to be important at this time have been worked with, tap out some short sentences. Work with phrasing and intonation. Select what is being tapped out to get at a variety of sounds, phrasings and intonation patterns. This, not meaning, is what is being worked on.

#### II. Introduction - All Levels.

1. Place the first word chart next to the Fidel.
2. Tap a word on the word chart that the students know. When they

have uttered it, isolate the vowel sound it contains by covering up the rest of the word. Have them sound it in isolation.

3. Tap the corresponding column of the Fidel. Have them produce the sound.
4. Tap the complete word again, this time on the Fidel. Have them produce the word. Work with stress if necessary.
5. Continue in this manner to identify the sounds of the Fidel.
6. When all the sounds felt to be important at this time have been worked with, tap out some short sentences working with stress, phrasing and intonation.

### III. Introduction - Intermediate to Advanced

1. Place the first word chart next to the Fidel.
2. Give the students time to look at the charts.
3. Ask them what they perceive. Their observations will suffice to establish that the top charts are vowels and the bottom ones are consonants.
4. Have them work with all the charts to establish the sound of each column. They can only work with the sounds which are used in words on the first word chart. Do this as a group or in smaller groups coming together after sufficient time to compare findings.
5. Establish the sound for each column they have been able to work with by tapping it and having students give the sound they have arrived at. Allow students to decide on correctness. (See page 85, #8).
6. Tap out words and then sentences, and work on stress and intonation.

After working with the Fidel in any of these three ways, spend some time talking with the students about what they have observed about the Fidel, what the use of the Fidel is, and how they feel about it. On a beginning level this will be very limited if not impossible until later in the course, but I feel it is an essential part of using the Fidel effectively.

### IV. Introduction - All Levels

This activity is for introducing words or sentences to be used in a

following lesson.

1. Tap out new words, phrases and sentences.
2. Work on sounds, stress, phrasing and intonation.
3. Move into the lesson and attach meaning to the sounds.

An example of this would be working with the rooms of a house and the furniture appropriate to each room.

1. Tap out the name of a room. Living room.
2. Tap out the names of the furniture commonly found in this room. Couch, coffee table, etc.
3. After they have the words on the level of pronunciation, make the connection to meaning in a lesson using pictures or doll house furniture.

The reason for working with pronunciation first and meaning afterward is to allow the student to focus on one thing at a time. The teacher can also have the picture or furniture ready for immediate connection after each word's pronunciation has been worked with.

#### V. Review - All Levels

This activity is for review and/or reinforcement of an oral lesson.

1. Tap out words or sentences that have been used orally in a lesson.
2. Work on pronunciation, stress, phrasing and intonation.
3. Tap again and have students write the sentences.
4. Have volunteers put the sentences on the board. Work as a class to correct them.

#### FOCUS ON SOUNDS

This activity is used to specifically focus on one or more sounds at a time. Working with every sound on the charts in this way, making exceptions on the basis of class level and the usefulness of the distinction to them, gives students the opportunity to become truly familiar with the charts. It helps them to become aware of what sounds they have and what sounds they cannot hear and/or produce. The list of words generated can be used in lab and in further work in class to increase awareness of the sound.

## I. Introduction - All Levels

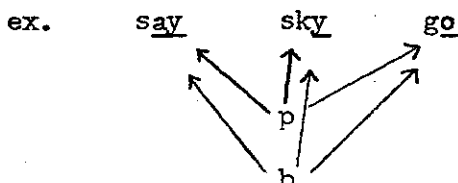
1. Tap out a word containing the sound to be focused on. Help students establish the correct pronunciation.
2. If it is a vowel, tap only the vowel column and have the students produce it in isolation. If it is a consonant have them produce the entire word.
3. Tap out four or five other words containing the sound.
4. Go to the board. Write the initial word used to elicit the sound. This becomes the key word for the sound.
5. Ask students to give other words they feel contain the same sound.
6. Write them on the board as they say them. Write what they say. Stop when there are ten to fifteen words on the board.
7. Give the students time to pronounce the words out loud and check them against the sound in the key word. Have them indicate what words they do not think contain the correct sound. Circle the ones they feel do not belong.
8. Have them pronounce the first word they think is correct. Leave it to the class to decide on correctness and produce corrections if any are needed. If students do not catch an error or cannot get the correct pronunciation, work with them to get it or correct it. Ask questions such as, "Is it the same sound," or "Do you agree?". This helps students to check the reality of what they see and hear against their inner criteria. ~~This process of student verification and correction should be used with all activities.~~
9. If it is correct, move to the next sound. If not, work on it. Find out what sound it is and locate it on the charts.
10. Next, work on the circled words. This is a process of having the students pronounce the word and compare it to the key word. If they are having trouble with the correct pronunciation of the circled word, indicate a student who has the right sound. If no one does, pronounce it once clearly. Let them check the corrected pronunciation against the key word. If the word is correctly placed, erase the circle.
11. When the entire list has been gone over, go back and have the students pronounce all the uncircled or correct words.

A variation of this procedure is to introduce on the Fidel two or more contrasting sounds that are commonly confused before going to the board. These can be minimal pairs or groups of sounds such as the vowels affected by /r/. On the board it is easy and productive to transfer sounds from one list to another as students correct their placement of the sounds.

## II. Introduction - All Levels

This procedure can be used to introduce consonant sounds. It can be very effectively combined with the preceding activity.

1. Tap out and work with two to five vowel sounds worked with previously.
2. Combine these with the consonant(s) to be worked with. The vowel sound can precede or follow the consonant(s).



3. Tap out several words using these sounds.
4. Go to the board and have the students give words containing the sounds. They key words might be pay and by.
5. Follow the procedure for correction in activity I of this section, FOCUS ON SOUNDS.

## III. Introduction - All Levels

When the grammar to be introduced in a lesson is going to involve a special sound pattern, it can be worked on before or after the lesson with the following procedure. We will use third person singular as an example.

1. Tap out three or four examples of verbs that fall into each pronunciation group.

/s/ gets      /z/ goes      /əz/ washes

2. When students have a grasp of all three, move into the lesson.
3. Refer to the charts during the lesson. See procedure IX in this section, FOCUS ON SOUNDS.
4. After the lesson, have volunteers pronounce and tap out the words following this pattern that have been used in the lesson and any others they may want to add.
5. List the words in three groups on the board.
6. Have students look for clues to pronunciation that might aid them.

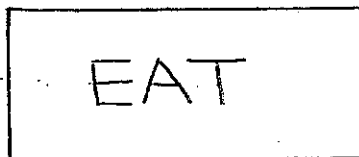
/s/ gets      /z/ goes      /əz/ washes

To follow this up, do a reading that is specifically written around this pronunciation pattern. Have students underline all the regular third person singular verbs. Have volunteers pronounce them and tap them out. Having students tap things out on the charts increases their familiarity and involvement with the charts. It can be incorporated as a part of most work with the charts if done on a regular basis.

#### IV. Review - All Levels

Cards can be used very effectively to review sounds already worked on in class. This procedure is also focusing on sound-sign correspondences.

1. Select five sounds that have been worked with in class.
2. Choose five words that contain the sound and also represent a variety of spellings.
3. Take three by five file cards (or smaller ones) and make a set of twenty-five cards like the example below.



4. Below is a sample list of words selected for five vowel sounds.

<u>e</u> at	<u>i</u> sit	<u>e</u> ad	<u>o</u>	<u>u</u> put
<u>e</u> he	<u>o</u> women	<u>e</u> pet	<u>o</u>	<u>o</u> would
<u>e</u> bee	<u>i</u> village	<u>e</u> ad lead	<u>e</u> new	<u>o</u> look
<u>i</u> fifty	<u>i</u> busy	<u>a</u> ny	<u>o</u> shoe	<u>o</u> woman
<u>i</u> field	<u>e</u> nglish	<u>a</u> id	<u>e</u> blue	<u>o</u> took

5. Divide your class into groups of four to six people. Make duplicate sets of cards if necessary.
6. Have the group(s) sit around a table or on the floor.
7. Shuffle the cards thoroughly.
8. Place the cards in the center of each group.
9. Give the following directions to the class (modified according to the class level):
  - a. You have twenty-five cards in front of you.
  - b. Each card has a word on it.
  - c. There are five sounds represented. There are five cards for each sound.
  - d. Work together. Read the words, pronounce them, and then group the ones with the same sound.

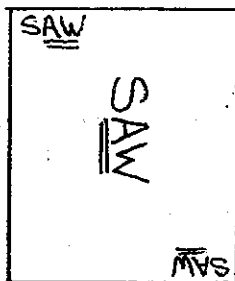
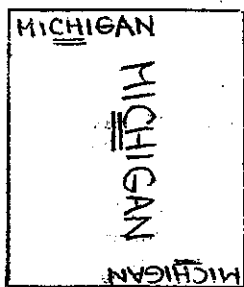


10. Let the groups work independently.
11. Observe and note any special difficulties the students are having with the sounds.
12. Allow the students to continue working until they are satisfied with their groupings of the cards. If a group of students is having difficulty, the teacher may indicate where the problem lies.
13. When the groups have finished, bring them together around one set of cards. Ask the students to indicate sounds that they think are misplaced. Set these words aside. If there is a misplaced word which no one had indicated, take it out and set it aside.
14. Have the students pronounce each sound group.
15. One by one take the cards that have been set aside and have the students pronounce the word and indicate where it should go. If no student can supply the correct pronunciation of a word, put it in the correct group and let the students figure out the pronunciation.

#### V. Review - Intermediate to Advanced

This is an adaptation of the game of Rummy.<sup>9</sup>

1. Select eight sounds that have been worked with in class.
2. Choose seven words that contain the sound and also represent a variety of spellings.
3. Take three by five file cards and make a separate card for each word like the examples below. There will be fifty-six cards.



4. Below is a sample list of words selected for eight vowel sounds.

<u>saw</u>	<u>fine</u>	<u>pen</u>	<u>in</u>	<u>oh</u>	<u>as</u>	<u>seem</u>	<u>aid</u>
<u>taught</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>tell</u>	<u>will</u>	<u>close</u>	<u>cab</u>	<u>least</u>	<u>abe</u>
<u>bought</u>	<u>child</u>	<u>well</u>	<u>did</u>	<u>road</u>	<u>last</u>	<u>reach</u>	<u>waste</u>
<u>fall</u>	<u>by</u>	<u>met</u>	<u>fill</u>	<u>sew</u>	<u>had</u>	<u>sleep</u>	<u>weight</u>
<u>caught</u>	<u>nice</u>	<u>den</u>	<u>mill</u>	<u>though</u>	<u>catch</u>	<u>seat</u>	<u>paid</u>
<u>cost</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>head</u>	<u>miss</u>	<u>toast</u>	<u>matter</u>	<u>pete</u>	<u>lay</u>
<u>lawn</u>	<u>night</u>	<u>any</u>	<u>hid</u>	<u>soul</u>	<u>glad</u>	<u>fee</u>	<u>date</u>

5. Divide the class into groups of four. It is best to have a set of cards for each group of four students, although any number from three to six is possible. Make duplicate sets or sets with different sounds.
6. Have the group(s) sit around a table or on the floor.
7. Shuffle the cards.
8. The dealer deals out six cards.
9. The rest of the cards should be placed face down in the center. The top card is turned face up and placed beside the deck. This is the discard pile.
10. The object of the game is to get two sets of cards each consisting of three cards with words containing the same sound.
11. A turn consists of drawing one card, either from the deck or the discard pile and adding it to the hand. Only the top card may be taken from the discard pile.
12. Then the player must discard one card, face up, on the discard pile.
13. On any turn, before discarding, a player may lay down a set. She may also add one or more matching cards to any set previously laid down on the table. She does this by placing the card in front of her on the table or floor and indicating which set it matches.
- ~~14. Throughout the game students should be verifying and correcting the matching of sounds. The teacher should help students by indicating a mismatching if one has gone unnoticed.~~
15. The first player to get rid of all her cards wins the game. The winning player does not have to discard on the last turn if all her remaining cards match.

#### VI. Review - All Levels

1. Write a word frame on the board or on a card placed next to the charts.

ex.      tr\_\_p                  a\_\_                  p\_\_t

A blank indicates a sound which can be represented by one or more signs.

2. Tap out a sound. Either actual words or nonsense sounds can be tapped.
3. Have students add this sound and pronounce the word/merged sounds.

## VII. Review - All Levels

1. Take words already given by students in previous pronunciation work and words from other class work that contain the sounds to be reviewed.
2. There are three alternatives for working with these sounds.
  - a. Tap out the words. Students pronounce them.
  - b. Say the words. Volunteers tap them out. Students pronounce them.
  - c. Give students a typed list of the words or write them on the board. Have volunteers read the words. Tap out what they say.

## VIII. Review - All Levels

1. Tap a sound.
2. Students give words containing this sound. When working with consonants, students can be asked to give words that begin, end or have the sound in the middle.

## IX. Correction - All Levels

1. ~~When someone is having a pronunciation problem, indicate the color of the correct sound. Indicate stress if needed.~~
2. Let the student correct herself.

The colors allow reference to a sound or sign by color instead of by giving its sound or name. This reduces interference in the learning process. The most effective way of doing this is to refer, for example, to blue/chart one, or green/chart three. This is possible because no color is used more than once on each individual chart. There are too many fine distinctions to use a name for each of the colors.<sup>10</sup> Some teachers have tried numbering the columns for easier reference. Instead of referring to blue/chart one, sound four can be referred to.

## X. Correction - All levels.

1. Make a list of all the mispronounced words from an individual student's talk or a group discussion.
2. Put the list on the board.
3. Have the students look at the words, determine correct pronunciation, and see how many sounds of a particular color appear.

4. Group the words according to the correct color/sound.

This activity helps to isolate certain sounds that are problems for that individual or for the group.

XI. Correction - All Levels

1. During an oral reading in class, make note of the words the students are having difficulty pronouncing.
2. After finishing the reading, take the words and tap them out one by one.
3. Have the students pronounce them.
4. Then tap them again and have the students write the words.
5. Have volunteers read the list.

This activity also works with sound-symbol correspondence.

XII. Review - All Levels.

The following two pages are examples of review sheets that can be used in laboratory to reinforce sounds previously worked with in class. The teacher reads the words or sentences and the students listen and repeat.

Vowels

did	dad
big	bag
drink	drank
sing	sang
in	an
is	as
his	has
it	at
sit	sat

That bag is big.

Pick/pack up the bags

Give the ham to him.

He hid/had some money.<sup>11</sup>

~~He ran from the Indies to the~~  
Andes in his undies.<sup>12</sup>

kid*	fat
thick	ask
sick	tap
Inn	that
ping	
music	

\*Take these words from work done in class and give them as a dictation. The students listen, repeat, write, and then check the spellings after class.

Consonants

thank	tank
three	tree
thought	taught
thin	tin

ether	eater
tenths	tents
tathless	batless

math	mat
both	boat
tooth	toot

He said thanks for the tanks.<sup>13</sup>

She brought some broth.

Tim, the thin twin tinsmith.<sup>14</sup>

(Dictated words from class.)

FOCUS ON STRESS

## I. Introduction - All Levels

1. Choose words that illustrate various stress patterns within words.

ex.    thirty                    thirteen  
           above  
           study  
           telephone                northeastern                understand

2. Tap out examples. Use the pointer to indicate stress.
3. When you feel the class has a grasp of the patterns, go to the board. Put a key word for each pattern on the board.
4. Have students give other words that follow the same stress patterns.
5. Work on verification and correction.
6. Use the list generated in laboratory or in class for review.

The procedure for working with cards for individual sounds can also be used to review stress patterns. See FOCUS ON SOUNDS, procedure IV, page 87.

## II. Introduction - Intermediate to Advanced

1. Choose words that illustrate changes in stress for different parts of speech.

ex.    record                    record  
           present                present

2. Tap them out.
3. Then work with meaning by having the students use the words in sentences.

## III. Introduction - All Levels

1. Choose phrases and sentences and work with placement of primary stress.

ex.    a mug                    I can.                    Friday  
           in the morning        I can't.                    Friday night.  
           at night                I can go.  
           I don't like / to eat apple pie / for breakfast.

2. Tap them out on the charts beginning with phrases and moving into short sentences and then longer ones.
3. Work with phrasing or grouping when using long sentences.

After having introduced stress on word, phrase and sentence level, the following procedure can be used in conjunction with continued work on the charts.

1. Give students a list of twelve sentences.
2. Read the first one.
3. Have students listen and indicate the phrasing used and the placement of the primary stress in each phrase as follows:

I don't háve / any róds.

Sheila is góing / to the méeting place / at midnigh<sup>t</sup>.

4. Have a volunteer read the sentence and indicate what phrases she has broken it into and where the primary stress falls.
5. Work with correction and alternatives.
6. Give other students a chance to read the sentence paying attention to the phrasing and stress.
7. Continue in the same way with the rest of the sentences.

#### IV. Correction - All Levels

Use the pointer or a finger to quickly indicate correct stress during class work. Tap out the syllables giving more force to the syllable with the primary stress.

#### V. Review - All Levels

1. Tap out groups of sounds--nonsense sounds.

ex. didídi            dídidi            dididí

2. Have students pronounce the merged sounds giving the syllable indicated the primary stress.

Students are working with the effect of stress on pronunciation as well as reviewing sounds.



FOCUS ON INTONATION

## I. Introduction - All Levels

Short sentences that are easy to tap out can be used to illustrate basic intonation contours. Three patterns that might be worked with are illustrated by the following:

Hiroshi is up,      Is Hiroshi up?      What do you want?

1. Tap out the sentences or questions.
2. Indicate the intonation pattern with the pointer or the hand.
3. Have students give other examples orally.
4. Write them on the board.
5. Use these sentences to practice the intonation patterns.

## II. Correction - All Levels.

Use the pointer or the hand to indicate correct intonation contours when a student is using an incorrect one. Let him correct himself.

FOCUS ON SPELLING

## I. Introduction - All Levels

This procedure can be used to focus on certain spelling-sound patterns in English.

1. Tap out words illustrating the pattern to be worked with.

ex.	hat	hate	drop	dropping
	bit	bite	refer	referring
			utter	uttering

2. Have students pronounce them.
3. Give them an oral dictation of words that illustrate the pattern.
4. Have volunteers pronounce and tap out the dictated words.
5. Let students verify and correct.

## II. Review - All Levels

1. Put a list of words on the board that illustrate the same sign with

a different sound (soup - house) and different signs with the same vowel (would - wood).

2. Taking each set at a time, ask students to pronounce the words and indicate if they have the same sound or different sounds.
3. Have them indicate which sound(s) it is(they are) on the chart.

### III. Review - Beginning

This procedure is called visual dictation.<sup>15</sup> It is an exercise in having the students read, hold the shapes in their minds, and then put them down in the required order and form.

1. Tap out short sentences.
2. Have students write them on paper.
3. Have volunteers write them on the board.
4. Let students verify correctness and provide corrections if necessary.

### IV. Review - All Levels

1. Put a word frame on the board or on a card next to the Fidel.

ex. s\_\_t            \_\_at

2. Have students find as many words as they can by substituting signs in the blanks, one grapheme to a blank.
3. When students have found all they can, ask for volunteers to put the words on the board.
4. Let students verify and correct the words listed.

### V. Review - Intermediate to Advanced

This activity is called the Game of Transformations.<sup>16</sup> It involves four possible transformations. These transformations must involve single signs as defined by their appearance as a single unit on the Fidel.

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| a. Substitution | pat --> pet   |
| b. Addition     | pet --> pets  |
| c. Reversal     | pets --> step |
| d. Insertion    | pat --> past  |

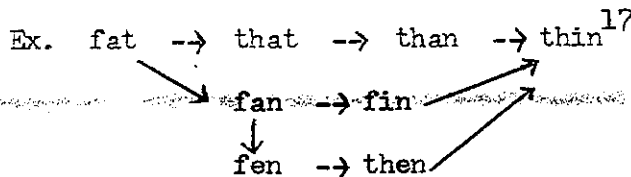
The game consists of making one transformation at a time, creating a

new word which is in turn transformed into another word. A different spelling for the same sound can be substituted and it does not count as a change.  
Ex. kit - cat.

1. Explain the game and give examples of each kind of transformation.
2. Tap out a beginning word.
3. Let a volunteer make the first transformation by tapping out a new word and pronouncing it.
4. Help students with correction if necessary. Attention can be called to which transformation was made if desired.
5. Continue until no one can make a successful transformation.
6. Introduce another word and continue.

This can also be done on the board which provides a visual reference for the students of what was done. This game can also be used for individual work and group correction.

1. Give students two words such as fat and thin.
2. The object is for them to go from one to the other, transformation by transformation.



There are three ways to go from fat to thin.

3. When they have finished, have a volunteer put his work on the board.
4. Let students verify and correct. If another way has been found, let another volunteer put it up.
5. Continue until all ways they have found have been looked at.

#### VI. Review - Advanced

1. Tap out pairs of homonyms.
2. Have the students write one sentence using both words.
3. Have volunteers read their sentences or write them on the board.
4. Let students verify and correct.

## VII. Review - Advanced

1. Initiate orally a sequence of words in which each word requires either a transformation in sound or in spelling from the one preceding.

Ex. ate, rate, trait, strait, straight, eight, weight,

wait..... 18

2. After saying the first word, have a volunteer tap out the word on the Fidel.
3. Let the class accept or correct it.
4. If the spelling (not the sound) changes from one word in the sequence to the next (i.e., so, sew, sow...) clarify the meaning of the word if necessary.

The next six activities, VIII through XII, all come from Gattegno's book Teaching Reading with Words in Color.<sup>19</sup>

## VIII. Review - Advanced

Have the students look at a particular column and attempt to write down, in a limited time (say, five minutes), at least one word exemplifying each of the spellings in that column.

## IX. Review - All Levels

Have the students write down as many words as they can think of having a certain spelling for one sound.

Ex. toast, boat, oak, float, foam, toad, loaf.....

## X. Review - All Levels

Have students write as many examples as possible for all the spellings in each column.

## XI. Review - Intermediate to Advanced

The class can be challenged to write sentences that contain as many spellings from one column as they can find.

Ex. He had soup, glucose and fruit for the rheumatism he got through losing the shoes he threw in the two blue pools. (dark green/chart four)

**XII. Review - Intermediate to Advanced**

The class can be challenged to write sentences in which one grapheme has as many different sounds as possible.

Ex. This woman is one of the women who worked for only a month.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Joan Morley - in a presentation at the Tenth Annual TESOL Convention, New York City, 5 March 1976 - talked about the same sequence of student behavior in connection with pronunciation work: speech production, peer and self awareness, peer and self monitoring, and self correction.
- <sup>2</sup> See Caleb Gattegno, The Common Sense of Teaching Foreign Languages (New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1976) pp. 17-21 for further discussion of these conventions.
- <sup>3</sup> See pages 33-34 in this paper.
- <sup>4</sup> Earl Stevick deals with this issue in his chapter on pronunciation in Memory, Meaning, and Method - Some Psychological Perspectives on Language Learning (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 1976), pp. 47-64.
- <sup>5</sup> These ways of using the charts come from several sources: workshops given by Educational Solutions, Inc., 80 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.H.; Caleb Gattegno's books listed in the bibliography; Jack Millet, Janet Gaston and Ruthanne Brown of the English Language Office staff of the School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont; my own contributions.
- <sup>6</sup> The word charts are a set of 16 charts upon which appear words printed in colors corresponding to the sounds/colors of the Fidel. They too are a very effective tool for use in the classroom. With them, the teacher can work on the functional vocabulary and the structure of the language. See Gattegno, op.cit., pp. 56-100. I have included a mini-version of word chart number one in Appendix A. It corresponds to the Fidel in Appendix A.
- <sup>7</sup> Consonant means sound with. Consonants are always sounded with a vowel, never alone.
- <sup>8</sup> The directions for this activity were written in conjunction with Janet Gaston of the English Language Office staff, the School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont.
- <sup>9</sup> This activity and the sample list of words included were contributed by Janet Gaston.
- <sup>10</sup> Gattegno gives his view of the specialized names given to each color in the following quotation from his book Teaching Reading with Words in Color (New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1968), footnote two, p. 59. "May

we suggest again that teachers not burden the memories of their pupils with the specialized names of the colors. These names are used in this guide merely as a cross reference for the teacher to the colored charts. Work on the charts requires only that the student see which colors are alike and which are different - a discrimination that a few-months-old baby makes without attaching a label to his perception."

11 These four sentences illustrating the sounds in the context of a sentence are from Don L.F. Nilsen and Alleen Pace Nilsen, Pronunciation Contrasts in English (New York: Regents Publishing Company, Inc., 1973), p. 6.

12 Alvin Schwartz, A Twister of Twists, A Tangler of Tongues (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1972), p. 89.

13 Nilsen and Nilsen, op.cit., p. 51.

14 Schwartz, op.cit., p. 77.

15 Gattegno, (1976), op.cit., p. 94.

16 Idem., (1968), op.cit., pp. 89-96.

17 Ibid., p. 93.

18 Ibid., p. 122.

19 Ibid., p. 123.

Part Six

Strengths of the Fidel



In this final section, I offer a series of statements on the strengths of the Fidel and the way I have outlined using it. These strengths are why I feel this is a good way to work with pronunciation in the classroom. I hope the preceding parts of this paper have given sufficient information to make these statements meaningful.

1. They are a concise summary of the sounds and spellings of the language. They assume work with sound-symbol correspondencies as an integral part of pronunciation work.

2. Color offers a clue to sound distinctions. English spelling is not sufficiently consistent to be a guide to pronunciation for the beginning student. "The value of a graphic symbol depends on a complex of interrelated facts: the inner structure of the word in which it occurs, the stress pattern, and the part of speech to which the word belongs".<sup>1</sup> So color is an aid until these other awarenesses can be created in the student.

3. The charts offer visual as well as auditory support to the student. The visual imagery helps to sustain the sounds heard in the new language. This supports the student's memory. The color adds an extra dimension to the sign - making students more aware of shapes.

4. They allow the student to see and hear all she has to master in spoken and written English from the very beginning. They prepare her for a realistic encounter with the basic elements of the language. At the same time, the use of the charts allows the student to see what she already has of the language. The teacher is not just working with problems or what the stu-

dent doesn't have.

5. The charts are always present in the classroom. They are an integral part of the class in the same way that pronunciation is an integral part of the language, continual review as well as introduction of new material can take place. This allows the student to see her progress and mastery of material. Their presence also facilitates correction; the charts allow correction to come from the student.

6. The teacher and students are working not only with sounds, but with speed of speech, stresses, the running together of words, pauses, and durations of sounds. They are truly working on the melody of the language. The student gains a sense of how the language behaves and what she has to do with herself in order to sound like a native.

7. The student is given a chance to concentrate on sound perception and production without having to be concerned with attaching meaning.

8. The student has a chance to check on herself. She can try making a sound to see if she has it. This creates an awareness in her of what sounds she has and doesn't have and where her energy needs to be put.

9. The powers or abilities that the student brings to the classroom are used. She is allowed to be independent, autonomous and responsible. She is free to participate and to increasingly trust her own perceptions as her inner criteria are strengthened. Work with the charts educates the feedback system that exists between our utterances and our hearing.

10. The student is challenged and motivated by the scope of the language presented on the charts and the way in which the charts are used.

11. The teacher is free to use the charts in the way that will be most beneficial for her students. It's not a rigid tool as a book often is.

12. The charts allow for pronunciation differences caused by context and dialect differences. One word can be represented several different ways. It allows for the variability that is inherent in spoken English.

13. The way the charts are used allows original production and creativity on the part of the student. They are encouraged to search for and discover words on their own during pronunciation work. Most pronunciation work is reflective - the student is giving back words the teacher has given. The charts allow for much more productive work - the student giving words she has come up with and she wants to use. This is more meaningful for her.

14. The teacher is concerned with the student, with her growth as a learner, with freeing her from any anxieties on the level of pronunciation that will stop her progress into other parts of the language, with showing her how the language behaves and what is characteristic of it, and with giving her a feeling for the spirit of the language.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Charles W. Kreider, "Teaching English Spelling and Pronunciation," TESOL Quarterly 6 (March 1972), p. 3.
- <sup>2</sup> Earl Stevick, Memory, Meaning, and Method - Some Psychological Perspectives on Language Learning (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 1976), p. 106.



Notes on Changes.

1. Four new consonant sounds and two new vowel sounds have been added. The vowels as listed on page 107 are:

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| #14 - <u>cure</u> | These two sounds bring to five the number of sounds affected by /r/ that are given a separate listing on the Fidel. See pages 30, 33. |
| #15 - <u>or</u>   |   |

The consonants are:

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| #4 - rich' <u>s</u>    | This sound represents the insertion of the schwa sound between a sibilant sound and the possessive apostrophe s.                            |
| #10 - wouldn' <u>t</u> | This sound also represents the insertion of the schwa sound in words such as couldn't and shouldn't. The schwa occurs after the stop sound. |
| #20 - <u>where</u>     | See page 62.  |
| #35 - <u>luxurious</u> | This is a combination of the sounds <u>g</u> as in <u>go</u> (sound #18) and <u>s</u> as in <u>measure</u> (sound #6).                      |

2. The color-sound correspondence has been slightly revised for two reasons: to make it more accurate for American English, to make it more consistent with the color-sound correspondences of Fidels in other languages.<sup>1</sup>

3. Diphthongs are shown more consistently as two colors. They have also been grouped together on the Fidel.

4. Approximately twenty new graphemes have been added. Some represent new spellings and the others represent the new sounds.

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<sup>1</sup>Information sheet included with ESL Mini-Charts from Educational Solutions, Inc., 80 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York.

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