

The Silent Way (Ch5)

Introduction

In this lesson, students will learn about the Silent Way. The Silent Way was developed by Caleb Gattegno, a math teacher with an interest in language learning. Key features of the Silent Way are Cuisenaire Rods, Fidel Charts, teacher silence, and accurate repetition of sentences modeled by the teacher.

Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about the Silent Way and its techniques and principles.

Learning Outcomes

- **Principles:** Students will be able to describe key principles of the Silent Way such as its goal, a learner's inner criteria, and subordinating teaching to learning.
- **Techniques:** Students will be able to describe and express their thoughts about the predominant techniques and resources used in a Silent Way lesson.
- **Application:** Students will be able to create a sequence of activities that act as a suitable follow-up for the video lesson (i.e., *The Floor Plan of a Typical American House*) and that follow the principles and techniques of the Silent Way.

Key Vocabulary

- Underlying abstract rules (p. 51)
- Habit formation versus rule formation (p. 51)
- Cognitive processing (p. 51)
- Mental effort (p. 51)
- Formulating hypotheses (p. 51)
- Caleb Gattegno (p. 52)
- Subordination (p. 52)
- A learner's inner resources or inner criteria (e.g., perception, awareness, cognition, imagination, intuition, creativity, etc.) (p. 52, p. 59)
- Phoneme (p. 53)
- Tap out (p. 54)
- Sound-colour combination (p. 54)
- Unique spirit (p. 63)
- Sound-Colour Chart, Cuisenaire Rods, Word Chart, Fidel Chart (pp. 65-66)

Video (watch before class)

- <https://youtu.be/xqLzbLCpack>

Understanding the Silent Way

1. What is the goal of the Silent Way?
2. What influence did Noam Chomsky have on arguments about language acquisition? How did those arguments influence the Silent Way?
3. One of the basic principles of the Silent Way is that “teaching should be subordinated to learning”. What does this principle mean? How does it influence the role of the teacher and the role of the student?

Experience

4. Consider the Silent Way video, the sample lesson in the textbook (pp. 52-58), and the observations and principles of the Silent Way (pp. 58-65).
 - a) How does the teacher present the new material?
 - b) How does the teacher have the students practice the new material?
 - c) The balance of teacher control and student initiative exists to differing degrees in every lesson. The ideal balance is for the teacher to be in control yet for the students to be able to initiate as much language use as possible. In these Silent Way lessons, what aspects does the teacher control and how does he control them?
 - d) How does the teacher correct the student errors?
 - e) One of the key principles of the Silent Way is “moving from the known to the new or unknown”. How did you see this principle put into practice in the lessons?

Reviewing the Techniques

5. Look at the list of techniques on textbook pages 65-67. There are four key resources used in a Silent Way class. Describe what they are and how they are used:

Resource	What is it? How is it used?
Sound-Color Chart	
Cuisenaire Rods	
Word Chart	
Fidel Charts	

6. Look at the list of techniques on textbook pages 65-67. There are four key techniques used in a Silent Way class. Describe what they are and how they work:

Technique	How does it work?
Teacher’s silence	
Peer correction	
Self-correction gestures	
Structured feedback	

What do you think?

8. Let’s find out what everyone thinks about the Silent Way. The textbook on pages 67-68 asks several questions for reflection. First, **choose one question** that you want to discuss with your classmates. Second, **prepare a sample answer** to share with the class.
- a) Do you believe teaching should be subordinated to learning?
 - b) Does it make sense to you that learners should be encouraged to be independent of the teacher and autonomous in making their own choices?
 - c) Do you think students can learn from one another?
 - d) Should a teacher look for progress, not perfection?
 - e) Are there any other principles of the Silent Way you believe in? Which ones?
 - f) Are there Silent Way materials which would be of use to you?
 - g) Should a teacher remain silent as much as possible?
 - h) Is structured feedback a useful thing for teachers to elicit from their students?
 - i) Which techniques can you adapt to your own approach to language teaching?
-
-
-

In-Class Activity

7. In this question, you will apply what you have understood about the Silent Way. You have been asked to teach a **middle school beginner** language class.

The Floor Plan of a Typical American House

Recall the second Silent Way lesson described in the textbook on pages 57-58. This is the same lesson shown in the video. The vocabulary in this lesson relates to parts of a house (e.g., front door, back door, dining room, bedroom), and the grammar point seems to be prepositions of location (e.g., in the middle, in the dining room, at the head of the table).



Your task is to prepare a follow-up lesson (keep the same topic) that uses the Silent Way resources on the following page and introduces one of the following grammar patterns (your choice):

- “...er” comparatives** (smaller, bigger, shorter, taller)

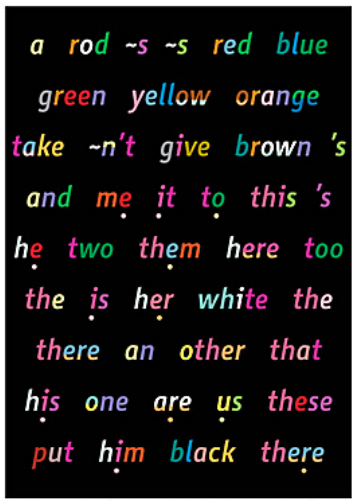
possessive adjectives (my, your, our, his, hers)

plurals (chairs, rooms, windows, lamps)

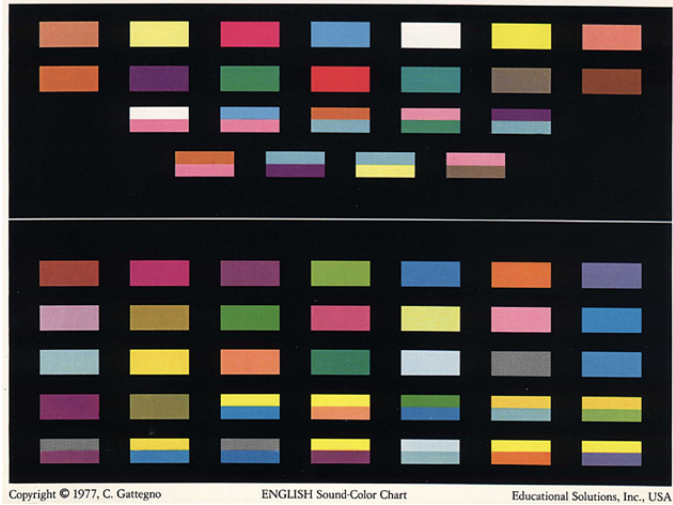
Remember, you (as the teacher) should remain mostly as silent as possible, so instead of you speaking, use the resources on the following page (i.e., Word Charts, Sound Charts, Fidel Charts, Cuisenaire Rods) to make meaning clear to the students.

Silent Way Resources

Word Charts



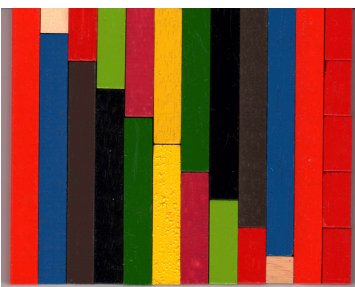
Sound Charts



Fidel Chart

a	u	i	e	o	a	ar	al	or	/	o	or	a	u	e	o	a	are	a	o	oo	ou	ee	er		
ai	oe	ey	ea	ho	u	ur	lo	ur	l	ou	our	ay	eau	ee	oe	al	air	ar	oo	ou	hou	eer	oy		
	ou	u	ai	ow	o	or	ol	ere	igh	oo	oor	el	ew	ei	owe	ea	ear	ah	ough	o	ough	ear			
	oo	o	u	au	l	ir	eo	urr	ie	au	aur	el	eue	le	oa	e	ere	ear	ou			e			
up	e	ie	a	ou	y	yr	el	lr	eye	oa	oar	el	leu	ee	ew	ae	eir	ear	u			ere			
		ai	ay	a	ou	le	our	el	ye	hou	hor	ea	leu	ee	ew	oyor	er	ue				ie			
		hi	ei	a	ou	ough	ier	ae	ough	ough	ort	oo	lew	oe	eau	ayer	arrh	ui			ier	o			
		ee	ae		ou	hea	r	he	ais	ough	ore	oo	ui	oy	ough		arra	ew			er				
		ea	eo		ou	fou	re	ure	el	aw	ure	au	ewe	oy	eo		au	wo			ir	oir			
		is	eo		ou	eu	oar	oar	ir	awe		ae	you	ae	oo		ou	oeu							
p	t	s	s	m	n	f	f	d	y	/	th	th	w	k	r	b	h	g	sh	ch	s	ng	j	qu	x
pp	tt	ss	ss	mm	nn	ff	ff	dd	u	ll	the	the	wh	kk	rr	bb	wh	gg	ch	tch	z	n	d	cqu	xe
pe	te	se	se	me	ne	fe	ve	de	i	le		h	o	ke	re	be	gu	gu	t	che	ga	ngue	ge	xc	
ph	ed	's	's	mb	kn	ph	lvo	ed	j	lle			u	ck	rh	bu	gh	gh	s	che			gg	cc	
	cht	z	c	gm	pn	lf		id						c	wr		gue	ce	che			dgo	dj		
	ct	ze	ce	mn	gn	gh								lk	rrh			ss	sch			gg			
	bt	ze	sw	lm	mn	ft							wh	qu				ss	ss			dj			
	pt	si	st	mme	dne	ffe								quo				ci	ci						
	tte	x	sc			pph								cch				c	c						
	th		sch			u								che											
			ps											cc											
			sse											cqu											
			sth											kh											

Cuisenaire Rods



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent_Way/