

TECHNIQUES & PRINCIPLES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING SILENT WAY



جامعة ساوة

كلية التربية

قسم اللغة الانكليزية

المرحلة 3

QUESTIONS OF THE SILENT WAY

I. what are the goals of teachers who use the **Silent Way**?

Students should be able to use the language for self-expression—to express their thoughts, perceptions, and feelings. In order to do this, they need to develop independence from the teacher, to develop their own inner criteria for correctness. Students become independent by relying on themselves. The teacher, therefore, should give them only what they absolutely need to promote their learning.





QUESTIONS OF SILENT WAY

2. What is the role of the teacher? What is the role of the students?

The teacher is a technician or engineer. ‘Only the learner can do the learning,’ but the teacher, relying on what his students already know, can give what help is necessary, focus the students’ perceptions, ‘force their awareness,’ and ‘provide exercises to insure their facility’ with the language. The teacher should respect the autonomy of the learners in their attempts at relating and interacting with the new challenges. The role of the students is to make use of what they know, to free themselves of any obstacles that would interfere with giving their utmost attention to the learning task, and to actively engage in exploring the language. No one can learn for us, Gattegno would say; to learn is our personal responsibility. As Gattegno says, ‘The teacher works with the student; the student works on the language.’

QUESTIONS OF THE SILENT WAY

3. What are some characteristics of the teaching/learning process?

Students begin their study of the language through its basic building blocks, its sounds. These are introduced through a language-specific sound–color chart. Relying on what sounds students already know from their knowledge of their native language, teachers lead their students to associate the sounds of the target language with particular colors. Later, these same colors are used to help students learn the spellings that correspond to the sounds (through the color-coded Fidel Charts) and how to read and pronounce words properly (through the color-coded word charts).





4. **What is the nature of student–teacher interaction? What is the nature of student student interaction?**

For much of the student–teacher interaction, the teacher is silent. He is still very active, however—setting up situations to force awareness,‘ listening attentively to students‘ speech, and silently working with them on their production through the use of nonverbal gestures and the tools he has available. When the teacher does speak, it is to give clues, not to model the language. Student–student verbal interaction is desirable (students can learn from one another) and is therefore encouraged. The teacher’s silence is one way to do this.

QUESTIONS OF THE SILENT WAY



5 How are the feelings of the students dealt with?

The teacher constantly observes the students. When their feelings interfere, the teacher tries to find ways for the students to overcome them. Also, through feedback sessions at the end of lessons, students have an opportunity to express how they feel. The teacher takes what they say into consideration and works with the students to help them overcome negative feelings which might otherwise interfere with their learning. Finally, because students are encouraged throughout each lesson to cooperate with one another, it is hoped that a relaxed, enjoyable learning environment will be created.

THE QUESTIONS OF SILENT WAY

6 How is the language viewed?

How is culture viewed? Languages of the world share a number of features. However, each language also has its own unique reality, or spirit, since it is the expression of a particular group of people. Their culture, as reflected in their own unique world view, is inseparable from their language.



QUESTIONS OF THE SILENT WAY



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7. What areas of language are emphasized? What language skills are emphasized? Since the sounds are basic to any language, pronunciation is worked on from the beginning. It is important that students acquire the melody of the language. There is also a focus on the structures of the language, although explicit grammar rules may never be supplied. Vocabulary is somewhat restricted at first. There is no fixed, linear, structural syllabus. Instead, the teacher starts with what the students know and builds from one structure to the next. As the learners' repertoire is expanded, previously introduced structures are continually being recycled. The syllabus develops according to learning needs. All four skills are worked on from the beginning of the course, although there is a sequence in that students learn to read and write what they have already produced orally. The skills reinforce what students are learning.

THE QUESTIONS OF SILENT WAY



8 What is the role of the students' native language?

Meaning is made clear by focusing the students' perceptions, not by translation. The students' native language can, however, be used to give instructions when necessary, to help a student improve his or her pronunciation, for instance. The native language is also used (at L 29 least at beginning levels of proficiency) during the feedback sessions. More important, knowledge students already possess of their native language can be exploited by the teacher of the target language. For example, the teacher knows that many of the sounds in the students' native language will be similar, if not identical, to sounds in the target language; he assumes, then, and that he can build upon this existing knowledge to introduce the new sounds in the target language.

QUESTIONS OF THE SILENT WAY

9 How is evaluation accomplished?

Although the teacher may never give a formal test, he assesses student learning all the time. Since teaching is subordinated to learning, the teacher must be responsive to immediate learning needs. The teacher's silence frees him to attend to his students and to be aware of these needs. The needs will be apparent to a teacher who is observant of his students' behavior. One criterion of whether or not students have learned is their ability to transfer what they have been studying to new contexts. The teacher does not praise or criticize student behavior since this would interfere with students' developing their own inner criteria. He expects students to learn at different rates. The teacher looks for steady progress, not perfection.

QUESTIONS OF THE SILENT WAY

10 How does the teacher respond to student errors?

Student errors are seen as a natural, indispensable part of the learning process. Errors are inevitable since the students are encouraged to explore the language. The teacher uses student errors as a basis for deciding where further work is necessary. The teacher works with the students in getting them to self-correct. Students are not thought to learn much if the teacher merely supplies the correct language. Students need to learn to listen to themselves and to compare their own production with their developing inner criteria. If the students are unable to self-correct and peers cannot help, then the teacher would supply the correct language, but only as a last resort.

