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Chapter 6

The Silent Way

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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Gattegno uses "silence" for a purpose which is somewhat different from that of the extended listening period employed by Asher and colleagues. In Gattegno's approach the silence of the teacher is an inducement for the students to take the initiative. They must experiment with the target language internally at first and later overtly. At the outset, the teacher provides a model utterance which refers in an obvious way to a small rod selected from a set of rods which are used to provide a kind of pragmatic context. The teacher may hold up the green rod and say, "A rod" (in the target language). Then, the teacher may add, holding up the same rod, "A green rod." Then, the teacher may pick up a red one and repeat the procedure. "A rod." Pause. "A red rod." After some manageable chunk of the target language has been presented, the teacher remains silent while the pressure for some one of the students to fill the silence grows to a crescendo level. Inevitably someone speaks up, and if the utterance indicates some initial comprehension and appropriateness the teacher reacts with nonverbal acknowledgment and encourages other students to follow suit. Or the teacher may encourage further attempts until a recognizable facsimile of the initial utterance is attained. Next a new chunk of language is introduced, and so on it goes. This method has often been criticized as "strained, artificial, intimidating," and the like, but no one who has submitted to it (and "submitted" is the right word) can deny that it generates an intense level of cognitive activity. First the students are placed under tremendous pressure to figure out what the teacher has said (comprehension) and subsequently to repeat the act of saying it with comprehension—e.g., saying "a green rod" when pointing to the green one. The Silent Way invites teachers and students to engage in an intense cognitive wrestling match where communicative use of the target language is both the arena and the reward.

The learning of a new language is considered to be that of a foreign language (when it is not normally in circulation in the environment). People talk of the "natural" way of learning, and of the "direct way" of teaching, referring somehow to a way similar to that of a baby learning his mother tongue. It is my contention that we shall not score much success if we continue in that way, since circumstances in the learner are on the whole incomparable with those prevailing in the first case.

If it is true that a new language will require from the learner a new adaptation, it is equally true that apprenticeships in the mother tongue and in a foreign language have little in common. In the former, a baby has no clue of what to do to reach meaning in words; in the latter, the learner has acquired a language and knows what languages are for. Consciously or unconsciously, he brings with him training in the association of sounds and situations, structures and meanings, intonation and quality of experience, sets of words and particular experience: perceptible attributes as well as words for concepts several stages removed, symbols, images, etc. He knows how to produce a verbal stream and to find in it the power of expression, the necessity of expression—mechanisms that ensure that what is said is adequate to the purpose, etc.

That all this is more unconscious than conscious is relevant in this discussion, since it can be proved that consciousness of one's own earlier activity can be brought to throw light upon the whole of the learning process.

My proposal is to replace a "natural" approach by one that is very "artificial" and, for some purposes, strictly controlled, and to use all that there is to be tapped in every mind in every school.

As a teacher, I know that no proposal of mine can be successful unless it really meets the requirements of classroom situations. It will be really successful (1) if I have taken into account the problems teachers of language meet in their own minds and in their training; (2) if I have made allowance for the capabilities of students, their habits and expectations, the demands of circumstances, etc.; (3) if I have not followed my own bent when suggesting a course, but have made my materials as flexible as will be required by the variety of conditions in the schools where languages are taught.

As I developed my techniques while subordinating my teaching to the learning, I found that I could very early transfer the responsibility for the use of the language to my students, so that I became able to teach using fewer and fewer words. It is this aspect of my techniques of teaching that prompted me to call the approach *The Silent Way of Teaching Foreign Languages*. If there is one feature I value in my approach, it is well described by the word "silent," since it will convey at once that there are means of letting the learners learn while the teacher stops interfering or sidetracking. Scores of teachers who are using the Silent Way recognize silence to be one of the powerful tools in their teaching.

Much Language and Little Vocabulary

Let us imagine that we are looking at a class of interested students of any age (6 or 11 or 14 or adults), and that the teacher enters the room for the first time. The class knows that it will study a foreign language, and the teacher is determined not to use one single word of the vernacular, which he may know, or which may even be his mother tongue.

The approach is, as I have insisted, most artificial. The box of colored rods that the teacher places on his desk is all he carries. He opens it and draws out of it one rod and shows it to the class while saying in the foreign language the word for rod, with the indefinite article if it exists in that language. He puts it down in silence and picks up another of a different color and says the same (one or two) words again, and so on, going through seven or eight rods and never asking for anything. The intrigued students have attentively noted the events and heard some noises which to them will seem the same while their eyes see only different objects and a repetition of the same action. Without any fuss the teacher then lifts a rod and asks in mime for the sounds he uttered. Bewildered, the class would not respond, in general, but the teacher says "a rod" and asks again in mime for another effort from the class. Invariably someone guesses (perhaps from the habits ingrained in traditional teaching) that the teacher wants back what he gave. When in his own way the pupil says something approximating what the teacher said, the teacher may smile or nod, showing how content he is at being understood. At the next trial almost the whole class repeats the sounds for a rod (very approximately in most cases). The teacher does not inquire whether some students are thinking of a piece of wood, others of lifting something, or something different. Contact has been established without the vernacular, and that is all that was wanted so far.

The teacher then introduces the names for four or five of the colors, giving the sounds for "a blue rod," "a black rod," "a red rod," "a yellow rod," "a green rod" or any other combination of the ten colors available. Because the names of the colors are now added, the pupils can no longer imagine that different expressions mean the same action and are forced to conclude that the teacher is giving the phrases that summarily describe these objects. The exercise is now shifted to practice in uttering the foreign sounds for the six or seven objects, so that as soon as one rod replaces another, one utterance replaces another, which would be the case in the vernacular.

This may be the end of the first lesson. Usually it is not, and the teacher motions two pupils to come and stand near him. He turns to one and says in the foreign language: "take a blue rod." (He has previously made sure that the set of rods on which this action is to be performed has more than one rod of each color.) Naturally, no response is to be expected, except perhaps the utterance of the words for "a blue rod." So the teacher says the words again while putting the pupil's hand over the set and making his fingers take a blue rod from the pile. Then he says: "take a brown rod" or "take a yellow rod," etc., and can expect a correct action as a response. He does this a number of times, for it is natural that while the pupil is concentrating on choosing the correct rod he does not produce the substitute in his own mind for the word "take." The teacher then turns to the other student and does what he did before but fewer times. Then dramatically he changes places with one of the students and indicates that the student should now utter the words first. Someone in the class usually gets the idea. If not, the teacher goes back to the previous situation and does what he did before once or twice again. The exchange of places this time yields the required results: the equivalent of "take a blue (or red ...) rod" is uttered by one or the other of the

students. When the teacher complies with this, he is conveying an agreement that the rules of the game are being observed.

The next lesson usually shows that the time separating the two sessions has served the students well. The quick revision of the sounds for the names of the colored rods proves that the class pronounces them on the whole much better than the previous time.

Calling two other students, the teacher says: "take ...," and the action is performed at once, usually correctly. But this time the teacher adds: "give it to me," and indicates with his hand that he wants it. As he does it with different rods and alternately with each of the two students, the set of noises for "give it to me" is put into circulation. Then, after saying "take a ...," the teacher says: "give it to him" (or "her," according to the sex of the student and the demands of a particular language) and indicates that this time it is to be given to the other student (the teacher may have to use his hands to convey the meaning).

The class has heard phrases and sentences being used from the start by a number of students, or even all of them, more or less adequately, but at least approximately recognizably. The language covered is: a rod, a yellow, red, blue ... rod, take a ... rod, give it to him, her, me.

What is significant is that the set of rods has helped:

- To avoid the vernacular.
- To create simple linguistic situations that are under the complete control of the teacher.
- To pass on to the learners the responsibility for the utterance of the descriptions of the objects shown or the actions performed.
- To let the teacher concentrate on what the students say and how they are saying it, drawing their attention to the differences in pronunciation and the flow of words.
- To generate a serious gamelike situation in which the rules are implicitly agreed upon by giving meaning to the gestures of the teacher and his mime.
- To permit almost from the start a switch from the lone voice of the teacher using the foreign language to a number of voices using it. This introduces components of pitch, timbre, intensity that will constantly reduce the impact of one voice and hence reduce imitation and encourage personal production of one's own brand of the sounds.
- To provide the support of perception and action to the intellectual guess of what the noises may mean, thus bringing in the arsenal of the usual criteria of experience already developed and automatic in one's use of the mother tongue.
- To provide durations of spontaneous speech upon which the teacher and the students can work to obtain a similarity of melody to the one heard, thus providing melodic integrative schemata from the start.

In the first few lessons this will be deliberate, but it will soon become a framework of conventional handling of this teaching. The students will be astonished to find that their

teacher stands through much of the lessons, that he keeps them concentrating all the time, that he says less and less and they more and more, that he neither approves nor disapproves but throws them back upon their own tools of judgment, indicating that they must listen better, use their mouths differently, stress here or there, shorten one sound and prolong another. Very soon, the more or less arbitrary conventions he introduces become accepted between himself and his class.

In four or five lessons the vocabulary will have increased very little. The *plurals* of "rod," of the *adjectives* (if they exist) and of the *pronouns* are introduced, plus the *conjunction* "and"; some *possessive adjectives*, and perhaps one or two demonstrative ones. The *numerals* "one," "two," and perhaps "three" are added—generally there may be about thirty words in circulation.

These are: one noun: *rod*; color adjectives: *red*, *green*, *yellow*, *black*, *brown*, *blue*; numeral adjectives: *one*, *two*, *three*; articles: *a* and *the* (of one gender or neutral only, in languages that require them); verbs in the imperative: *take*, *give* and, perhaps, *put*; personal pronouns: *me*, *him*, *her*, *it*, *them*; possessive adjectives: *his*, *her*, *my*; the adverbs: *here*, *there*; the preposition: *to*; the conjunction: *and*—or 27 words.

But with them we have heard and understood, and uttered and understood:

> take a _____ rod (six or seven colors)
>
> give it to _____ (him, her, me)

and their conjunctions:

> take a _____ and give it to _____
>
> or: take _____ rods and give them to _____

These produce a large number of sentences. Obviously, there are hundreds of different utterances possible, though the general impression is that the number is much smaller because the changes between one phrase and the next may be of only one word. More utterances are easily found if we use the conjunctions as well:

> take a _____ rod and a _____ rod and give them to _____ ... , and even longer ones.

The importance of this exercise is that it allows us to work on the formation of a natural way of using the melody of the foreign language. This allows the learners to gain from the start something of the spirit of the language that is usually left for much later in linguistic studies.

It is my contention that we are giving our students something of great value by restricting the vocabulary but extending as much as we can the length of the statements uttered with ease, and in the way one uses one's own language.

Since the way we breathe has a cultural component, and since uttering statements is connected with breathing, we can see why we will be gaining more and more of the spirit of the language as we learn to alter our breathing to suit its melody.

For the teacher, the technique is a conscious way of affecting his students' unconscious relation to this new speech. As a result of it, the students will gain what cannot be passed on by explanation but can be reached by intuition and the surrender to the traditions absorbed in the spirit of a particular language.

To reinforce this awareness, the use of the disks or tapes can be invaluable. The question put implicitly to the class is: "Which of the speeches you hear is the language we have been studying?" There is no question of the students' understanding the meaning of the words used on the record, but if they can distinguish the one they are meeting in class from others as well as from their mother tongue, we must agree that their ear has been sensitized to the recognition of something that is part of each language but outside the vocabulary: this, I repeat, is part of the spirit of a language.

To further reinforce this awareness, we use a new tool and a new technique. This tool is our set of wallcharts, on which are printed in colors the words we have learned so far. Whether or not the script of the foreign language is familiar to the learner will make a slight difference. We will proceed in our argument without considering that point here, but we will do so briefly later in this discussion.

We will use only Wallchart No. 1 first. [See Figure 1.] On it are printed at random all the 27 words which have been learned plus a few more according to the demands of the language studied, one exception being that the first words are "a rod" (or "rod"). Using a long pointer, the teacher points at words, one by one, asking the class to say them (this no longer requires his saying the words, since the previous games have established the convention). When in doubt about the ability of some of the students to do it, he asks individuals to say the words on their own. In this way, the teacher can find out whether the learners recognize the printed equivalents of the oral words they have met in factual situations with the rods.

Once he is sure of this, the teacher links words, using the pointer, with the convention that if it points at one word followed by a pause (at which time the pointer is no longer pointing at a word), that word is uttered alone; if it points at two or more words in succession, all these words must be uttered and in that order. This convention is established in no time. Clearly, the teacher is silent during all the movements of the pointer and afterward, when turning to the students and waiting for a volunteer or volunteers to utter the phrase or sentence. When the class can sufficiently well utter these words in succession, the speed of pointing can be varied so that the convention of the speed of flow of words is brought in again. We call this exercise *visual dictation*.

une réglette -s moi a	a rod-s-s blue
jaune j'ai bleue noire	green yellow black
verte avons ici brune	brown take red give
aussi elle rouge vous	as to it and not
donnez deux la prenez	back here her is the
avez ils elles ont à	them two him an me
lui il et les oui nous	orange the are one he
notre leur mettez sa	another these white
là ma votre est non	put end too his
French	English as a second language
Wallchart number 1	Wallchart number 1

Figure 1

This new technique is extremely powerful in that now the learner's mind is still more in contact with his own self. Moreover, visual imagery is brought in without any fuss or lengthy preparation, and it sustains the words heard in the foreign language as it already does in the mother tongue. Because visual images are swift and have extension and depth, they will give the learners new powers not contained in temporal sequences. In heard and uttered sentences, the temporal sequence is linear, that is, it is not reversible without real alteration of the sequence. With the chart in front of the pupils the words are all *seen* simultaneously, and contain a large number of possible choices of subsets that can be objectified by the convention of moving the pointer to create links between words. Until now, actions and perception have commanded the utterances, which were thus linked with the language and integrated as a result of the active lessons; but from now on, since it is known that words pointed at suggest noises to be made, any sequence of noises can be generated—nonsense statements as well as rational ones, including the ones that have been mastered. Here, therefore, is a new way of producing statements by simply selecting some of the words on the charts, thus giving rise to exercises that can serve new ends and test mastery of certain parts of the language.

If the teacher shows, for example, "Give me a blue rod," the pupils can obviously say it, but it is not at all certain that they will understand the meaning, since so far they have only been told in certain definite circumstances which no longer obtain: "Give it to me." Nevertheless, if someone came to the table, took a blue rod, and gave it to the teacher, no one would doubt that he had made sense of the new sequence of words. If no one can do it, all that has been gained so far is an ability to use the chart to produce sequences of sounds with a certain intonation, at a certain speed—which indicates some acquaintance with the melody of the language. This is not negligible.

As this silent exercise goes on, the teacher can increase the number of words pointed at; he can show them with quicker and quicker movements of the pointer and at the end get the

whole statement from some pupils. Is it a small thing to have students of 7 or 11 who do not know much of the language breathe out, with a command of diction that is quite acceptable, a sentence of the following length?—"Take a blue rod and a green rod and give her the blue one and give him the green one."

If we have succeeded in establishing the rule that the sequence selected will be shown only once, the success of this exercise is a clear indication that the learners are now capable of behaving somehow as native speakers with respect to their breathing and their association of sound and sign. Students who can achieve such feats after so few lessons are teaching us that they can easily be taken much further than we have ever believed possible.

Visual dictation is a twofold technique in which the teacher points at words and the students say what was shown, or the students find the words on the charts after the teacher has uttered a whole sentence. This second exercise will easily be changed into oral dictation, in which a full sentence is said and the learners write it down. If all the vocabulary contained in the sentence is covered by the charts, there are two stages in this oral dictation. In one, the learners can look up at the charts to find any word they cannot write: in the other, it is agreed not to look at the charts, or these are removed.

Before pursuing this matter, let us consider the case of a foreign language whose script is entirely alien to the learners, which uses different shapes and different conventions for their formation and their alignment on paper. There are many such cases among the languages of the world: some people write from left to right, others from right to left, some above, others below the line, others vertically instead of horizontally; some use characters that are difficult to disentangle (as are the Chinese or Japanese ideograms), others use signs for whole syllables, or additional conventions that represent tone, etc. The writer's experiments have been only with some of these, and his conclusions may not be universally valid. Still, for what they are, it is a fact that there has never been need to introduce the writing conventions as such, but simply to make the writing follow the oral exercises and to associate noises already met with signs now introduced. No difference has been noted between peoples using the same script to represent different sounds (as, for example, for English and Spanish) and peoples using very different conventions (as in the case of Israelis who meet English for the first time, after being accustomed to a different script, when they write from right to left and do not write their vowels; or Amharas learning French, while their own characters are different, number 251, and are syllables and not letters). The learners could even recognize in the written speech conventions that were not pointed out to them, and used the clues to decipher written words that they had never yet heard. For example, while teaching Hindi to users of the Latin alphabet who had never seen Sanskrit letters, I wrote a sentence meaning "Take a yellow rod and give it to me." Then I showed the class which word was "give." This clue was sufficient for a Champollionesque deciphering of the whole sentence, and the formation of a list of signs whose associated sounds were

ascertained by cross reference and by my silent acceptance of the solution. A number of words were then added and read correctly, though no sound was uttered for them by me.

This indicates that students have all the necessary equipment to meet the challenges presented, and that it is unnecessary to give special lessons to introduce the letters or characters of the foreign language as long as a sufficient number of clues is provided. In this approach, the clues are that part of the spoken language that has already been mastered and used. It is preferable when a new script is presented not to show a chart but to write first on the board, step by step, the words that will become the content of the first chart. No colored chalks are necessary in my experience, but if they are available they can be used with better results.

Let us stress that the introduction of the written word can be postponed until the teacher feels that it will make the greatest contribution. It has not yet been clearly established whether the fifth or tenth or thirtieth lesson is the most appropriate time for it. Each teacher will learn by trial and error, mainly by error.

It is to be understood that an approach like this one, based as it is on awareness and on personal responsibility for learning, cannot be conceived as rigid. In order to help as much as I could in the direction of flexibility, I have included in the first few charts words of the functional vocabulary that could form groups of lessons in some degree independent of each other. The teachers can work around one or the other group according to taste, circumstances, and personal philosophy.

Of special interest is the numerals chart [not pictured here]. It contains the words for the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on, that one needs in order to be able to read and say any number of any length. The various languages we publish require a different set of words, since the various cultures have developed their own description of number. The number 83 is *eighty-three* in English, *drei und achtzig* in German, *quatre-vingt-trois* in French, *ochenta y tres* in Spanish, etc. But with about 30 words, we can form as many number names as we wish. The pointer and this chart can, in a lesson or little more, provide experience in naming all numbers. Let us describe its use for the English language.

The words, arranged at random and printed in the color-code are: *one, two, three ... ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fifteen, -teen, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, -ty, eighty, hundred, thousand, million, a, and*: 26 words or signs.

The teacher has already used the rods to teach the first few numerals, and the students know how to count in their own language, but the younger students may not necessarily know how to read long strings of figures. Using the pointer, the teacher gets the class to say, in chorus, each word on the chart following the sequence 1, 2, 3 ... When he reaches sixteen, he forms it by sliding the pointer to join *six* and *-teen*; when he reaches *twenty-one*, he joins *twenty* and *one*, thus showing that the pointer is used here to produce the name of one

entity: a numeral. The analysis of its component parts is imposed upon the learner as it is on the native speakers. He must accept it as a convention if he wants to play this game. As we advance in the sequence of numerals, the numeration rules are made evident, so that we acquire the power to form millions of sounds in different combinations for millions of distinct entities. Long names of numerals provide not only exercises in elocution, breathing, and melody in the foreign language, but also an intellectual exercise. For it is permissible to use the pointer to join a number of the words on the chart and ask the learners to write the corresponding figures; we can ask the class to read it and have one of the students point out on the chart the corresponding component words. When he is mistaken, he is corrected by others. It is clear that it is not necessary to know how to read numerals in one's own language in order to carry out this exercise correctly in the new one. This exercise can, in a short time, provide the mastery of reading numerals in a new language even if it is not yet available in the mother tongue. More than a new capacity is acquired here. The new language has gained the positive emotional value of having served to increase one's insight into one's own language. This contribution is made so early in the study of the new language that it is worth mentioning here. Usually one expects such results only from much wider knowledge and from a prolonged acquaintance with a foreign language.

The use of the numerals chart is a good example of how with little vocabulary we can generate much language, since we have now potentially produced an infinite set of words in the foreign language to describe an infinite set of objects that exist, like all other objects, outside of languages. Students do feel that when this chart and its various uses have been mastered they have made a big step forward. This feeling is a positive ally that will assist progress and increase the speed of learning, the depth of awareness and familiarity with the language. It is easy to imagine that, if two or three weeks after starting the study of a foreign language children or adults can say the name of a number as long as 3,644,572,893,608, they legitimately feel that their mind and body are at par with those of native speakers. In fact, in this field, they have no reason to envy the ordinary users of that language. They have achieved the maximum; it is within themselves, and they can have recourse to it if they wish to feel the language, its melody, and its requirements upon their breathing. Since numerals form a "closed experience" on the linguistic plane, it seems sensible to introduce them early and gain all that their study can contribute: it is much more than one would ever be able to do with an equal number of words of any other category (names or colors, for example) that cannot produce meaning by being strung together. The numerals chart is a veritable mine for our purposes in this approach.

Each one of the charts will extend the powers of the learners, for they will find in it a set of words that will permit them to talk and write about relationships that occur constantly in life.

Some of the charts are linked with experiences other than the ones considered so far but which can still be described with the rods. Spatial relations such as being between, above,

next to, perpendicular to, parallel to, across, on top, in front, etc., can be studied with their reciprocity of dissymmetry. *Larger than* does not reverse except to *smaller than*, while *parallel to* is a reciprocal relationship. *Between* A and B is equivalent to *between* B and A, but B *bigger than* A and *smaller than* C becomes A *smaller than* B and C. These variations on the theme are an obvious source of much language but are based upon perception and describing with very few words all that can be said within one situation.

The comparative and the superlative of adjectives are, in the case of some obvious attributes, well practiced with the rods and easily transferred to the charts and visual dictation.

Temporal relationships can be exemplified by actions in which the rods only play the role of objects that can be introduced in situations, but they could have been replaced by different ones. *After, before, successively, slowly, quickly, alternately, first, second, then, with, at the same time as, intermittently, simultaneously, while*, etc., are easily illustrated by situations produced especially for that purpose. Tenses too can be brought in by the same means, first orally, in situations, then by forming sentences with the pointer and words on the charts.

We must include in the functional vocabulary the forms of irregular verbs as well as the conjugation of most usual verbs. It is well known that irregularity in languages comes from use: the more words are used, the more they wear out, and this is shown in their irregularities. So the most often used words will require special study, but they will appear often enough in statements not to demand a special effort of memory.

On the charts are included the various forms of the irregular verbs that are most common in the description of spatio-temporal situations. A number of exercises with the pointer will provide the oral practice necessary to establish sounds in the minds of the learners. Whenever possible, situations will be generated to illustrate some of these forms. The remainder of the forms can be learned on the charts, since otherwise it would mean that true transfer of knowledge from words to general experience has not taken place and that work on previous situations is still required.

We see in the list of words on the charts that the words for box, for the lid of the box, color, length, top, end, and side are included. These are obviously not "functional," but because of their small number they will not create a problem. On the contrary, they are essential for meaningful use of the whole functional vocabulary: they will, for example, give experience of noun genders if these exist in the language.

Excluded from our charts are proper nouns or names, though they may have been used extensively in the class. This justifies the use of the personal pronouns in the first charts.

It is obvious that very soon the use of both the rods and the charts with the pointer will become second nature, and that the learners will have understood what is the meaning of a controlled linguistic situation and what one can get from it. They will soon find that as soon

as some words are put into circulation their area of application is definable and it often coincides with the same area in their mother tongue. They will meet the foreign language as a language, meant to be used for communication, with the possibilities and limitations of one's own. This is one of the additional virtues everyone would want to find in any language learning approach. Words can form sentences, but contradictory statements cannot be acceptable, even though they can be uttered. This is true for any language because the statements made in each are about reality, and it is this that commands acceptance or rejection. Even imagination has its logic, and fantasy does not mean nonsense. It is not difficult to say "a black white rod," but it seems impossible to figure what it is if no alteration is brought to the statement, for example by inserting "and" between "black" and "white," or some similar change. If the learner has any understanding of the words he has met, he will know, because of his general experience, that such strings of words are no more acceptable in the foreign language than in his own.

While it is hard to think of an actual situation that is contradictory, it is very easy to produce any number of contradictory statements by pointing to the words on the charts, or with pen on paper. These can serve as tests of whether understanding of the meaning of words used in various situations exists to a sufficient degree. A statement may be grammatically correct but logically unacceptable: for example, "the largest of these rods are the smallest among them."

It now becomes clear that the work we do with our reduced number of words casts a net that would enclose almost as vast an area of experience as would the whole of the language, except for the details of special situations, which can be thought of as the spaces in the net.

The more we advance in the study of the charts, the less need will there be for detailed practice, since intelligence has a place in study and provides the generalizations, the transfers, the sense of exceptions, etc., that reduce the burdens upon memory. The way in which the charts are constructed will indicate that we have made use of the cumulative effect of learning. While in the beginning we give material that is to be used as units in their own right, later we present parts of words which can be involved in a number of words, perhaps with radically different meanings and certainly with varying meanings when connected with prefixes or suffixes. This enhancement of the challenges offered is a tribute to the increase of power in the learner, who now can tackle much harder tasks than in the earlier stages of his apprenticeship.

We have made sure from the outset that students listen to their own voices and watch all their utterances, both with respect to pronunciation and with respect to content. If this is properly carried out, the immediate formation of the inner criteria will be obvious. First, the students will have a really good diction in the new language, with a clear pronunciation of each word (as close as possible to that of natives) and an easy flow in sentence making, observing the melodic line of that language. Second, the students will feel and think in the new language, as will be evident from the correctness of their speech.

They will easily accept that their teacher never uses the vernacular and is inaccessible through it.

Because the teacher has never demanded immediate perfection, the relationship between him and his class will be conducive to constant reexamination of what can be done and what is being done. Improvement is visible suddenly and all the time: all the time through the awareness of what one is doing, and suddenly when a deeper understanding of the possibilities or of the requirements has taken place.

Teachers who refrain from pushing students who do not seem to respond or attempt to participate will be rewarded one day when these students join in as if they had never been out. Indeed, we cannot point to the particular needs of each mind to overcome the real or imaginary obstacles it is meeting. We can help more frequently and more effectively if we stop interfering.

It has been my repeated experience that whenever I am in doubt about a student's reasons for not joining in and I suspend action on, or reaction to him, the outcome is success at a later date. But whenever I enter too forcefully or too quickly into a situation of which I have inadequate understanding, my students entrench themselves in an uncooperative mood that does not serve anyone.

The pattern of progress in the gaining of skills is now well known. At first there is random or almost random feeling of the area of activity in question until one finds one or more cornerstones to build on. Then starts a systematic analysis, first by trial and error, later by directed experiment with practice of the acquired subareas until mastery follows. Emotionally, this mastery brings an inner peace which shows that one is not anxious about the results any longer. Intellectually, it shows that another level of awareness has been reached from which one can survey all activities of the past related to this area of experience. It is then that one suddenly appears to be a different person, both to oneself and to the observers. The learner's actions in this new area of experience reveal maturity and self-confidence. This provides constant confirmation of his control over his learning and gives a sense of power which is accompanied by efficiency.

Because the learner is now in control and operates with increased power, he can tackle larger tasks and more challenging developments. He can repeat the cycle of contact, analysis, mastery, not only for a different content, but also at a different tempo. This I call the cumulative effect of learning, and it is one of the results I expect through the silent approach.

If, therefore, after one term we have mastered the large integrative schemata that will facilitate the conquest of lexical items, we can expect that little memorization will be required, while much retention of related words will be experienced. Indeed, memory is a function of concentration in most of us (I exclude the pathological cases mentioned in the

literature on memory). We can see this at work in very young children, who are more concentrated than the older ones and retain much more and much faster than the older ones do. We can expect that less and less repetition will be needed to reach greater retention of vocabulary and enrichment of one's analytic knowledge of a language for more specialized uses. Perhaps if the technique mentioned in various places—that the learner alone is to decide when repetition is needed—is tried out, it will be found that its yield in remembered expressions is incomparably greater than that of repetition. In fact, repetition consumes time and encourages the scattered mind to remain scattered, whereas the teacher's strict avoidance of repetition forces alertness and concentration on the part of the learners. In my experience, this increases yield and efficiency, and saves time for further learning.

For those who measure achievement through examinations, I will now estimate what can be expected after one year of study of a language through this approach.

In an oral examination, most direct questions about oneself, one's education, one's family, travel, etc., should obtain answers that are correct, expressed with ease and a good accent. Any mistakes will be simply minor slips or else due to a misunderstanding of what was communicated.

If a picture is provided, whether in a written or an oral examination, the student will be able to describe in the foreign language most of what he sees, including the existing relationships that concern space, time, and numbers. As writing has been catered for with the charts, with the color code and various texts, spelling should be more than reasonably good, and in the case of nonphonetic languages, it should show a definite insight into why alternatives are reduced. As structure has been practiced in a variety of ways (through the ear, visual dictation, use of word cards, reading, writing, and talking), grammar should be adequate, which will be implicit in the correct usage, even if all the candidates are not able to formulate it explicitly. Idiosyncrasies of each language have been met as natural features and accepted as given, without comparison and memorization. So candidates would know what to do even if they did not yet know why.

Translations are possible, for in this approach, rather than understanding the text through words checked against words, the learners have passed from text to reality (sensed or imagined). As they can talk directly of such reality (if it is suitably selected) either in their mother tongue or in the other language, translations are direct expressions in either language of what was communicated by the original text. Naturally, we expect that the essence of a situation, as expressed by the functional vocabulary which is present in a given text, will not be missed, and that only the luxury components could be overlooked or wrongly grasped, hence mistranslated. Translation is an art for the specialist, not for the novice.

We can expect questions on a selected text to be handled adequately, as on the whole (provided they are not too sophisticated) they come naturally to the mind of a reader who has been asked from the start, and all the time, to consider texts as linguistic situations.

General questions about the culture of the peoples who use the languages studied should be satisfactorily answered. As we have taken care of extending the vocabulary with texts belonging to that culture, through documentary films that are full of information for the learner, and as we have considerably assisted the learners in reaching the spirit of the language through its sociological and historical components, it is clear that students who have learned in that way will be incomparably better equipped than students taken through traditional approaches or direct methods that are purely linguistic. The benefits gained from the alertness fostered by this approach can be seen again in the amount of incidental learning that takes place, with the materials designed to give cultural awareness implicitly even if no lessons are devoted to it; and also explicitly if one cares to do so and can find the time for it.

The interest in reading, and the availability of the whole of literature in the language studied may extend to all students a situation known to exist in the case of some: they like to read the original works and do read a great deal for their own enjoyment and cultivation. If literary questions are to be included in a certain examination, they should be answered satisfactorily by these students. The novelty will be that many more candidates may be interested in answering them and will be able to do so quite well.

To sum up what I believe to be reasonable to expect from an approach like this—and I am willing to be assessed on the results of colleagues giving it a fair trial—I would list the following:

- An accent as close as possible to that of the natives who are among really cultured members of the country whose language is being studied.
- From the start, an ease in conversation related to the vocabularies presented and studied.
- An ease at dictation with speeds related to the amount of visual dictation practiced and the difficulties of the text.
- An ease in composition about all topics whose vocabularies have been met.
- An ease at narrating events, describing pictures, at shopping in various shops, ordering in hotels and restaurants, and asking for directions, etc.
- An ability to render appropriate texts of either language into the other.

Additional questions will require first that one should know whether the learners have actually passed the level of study of the language as a vehicle and reached the level where the literature can be studied as a depository of the language and of its spirit.

A word in conclusion. In this piece of work, written for a public wider than that of foreign language specialists, I have attempted to add new challenges to what learners and their teachers usually meet; but I believe I have also added many more helpful techniques and materials.

Often we hear that language studies are essential today because of the shrinking world and for the sake of international understanding. I have considered that question elsewhere, at the time when I directed the International Training Institute and ran international seminars for human education, in which people of various countries and languages participated. Linguistic studies, like all others, may be a specialization, and they carry with them a narrow opening of one's sensitivity and perhaps serve very little toward the broad end in mind.

If we now develop language teaching in such a way as to consolidate the human dimensions of being, which include variety and individuality as essential factors for an acceptance of others as contributors to one's own life, I believe that we will be moving toward better and more lasting solutions of present-day conflicts. These, to my mind, are the outcome of our living on top of each other, our sensitivities turned inward, restricting ourselves, when we need to be absorbing others as they *are* in an enhanced and more open sensitivity.

To that end this Silent Way of teaching is devoted.

Notes

To read further about the Silent Way: https://silentway.online/

Charts for French and English can be seen at https://www.pronunciationscience.com/