

Exploring the use of the Silent Way Method Using Cuisenaire Rods in Teaching Vocabulary at SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak

Femy Chandra Winata *, Ribby Violin Sembiring, Dhea Natasya Sitepu, Herman Herman

Department of English Education, Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar
Jl. Sangnawaluh No.4, Siopat Suhu, Kec. Siantar Tim., Kota Pematang Siantar, Sumatera Utara 21136, Indonesia

Article Info

Article history:

Received May 23, 2025

Revised June 17, 2025

Accepted July 6, 2025

Keywords:

Silent Way, Cuisenaire Rods,
Vocabulary Teaching,
Elementary Students

ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve the English vocabulary mastery of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak through the application of the Silent Way method using Cuisenaire Rods. The main problem faced by the students was their limited vocabulary and lack of confidence in using it actively. The subjects of the study were 20 fifth-grade students. The instruments used included vocabulary tests, observation sheets, documentation of the learning process, and teaching media in the form of Cuisenaire Rods to support the implementation of the Silent Way method. The results showed that the Silent Way method with the help of Cuisenaire Rods was quite helpful in enabling students to recognize and remember the vocabulary taught. However, the effectiveness of this method was hindered by the minimal verbal interaction during the learning process, as the teacher relied solely on gestures and visual aids without much spoken explanation. This caused confusion among several students in understanding the context of vocabulary usage. Therefore, the Silent Way method is not fully effective for vocabulary instruction at the elementary school level without adequate verbal support and adjustments.

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Corresponding Author:

Femy Chandra Winata
Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar
Email: femychandrawinata05@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, English has become one of the most essential languages for communication across the world. As a global lingua franca, English plays a crucial role in education, business, science, and technology. Consequently, English language learning has been integrated into school curricula starting from an early age, including at the elementary school level. One of the most fundamental components of language acquisition, especially for young learners, is vocabulary. Vocabulary mastery is the foundation of language skills, enabling students to construct sentences, express ideas, and comprehend spoken and written language (Purba et al., 2024). Without sufficient vocabulary, students may struggle to communicate effectively, even if they have a basic understanding of grammar or pronunciation.

Sinaga et al (2020) defined that teaching vocabulary to young learners requires a method that is both engaging and effective (Nainggolan et al., 2024). Elementary school students, especially those in the fifth grade, are in a cognitive development stage where they learn best through concrete examples, visual aids, and interactive activities. Traditional methods such as rote memorization often

fail to capture students' interest and may not lead to long-term vocabulary retention. Therefore, language educators and researchers continuously seek innovative approaches to teach vocabulary more meaningfully and effectively (Sinaga et al., 2025). One such alternative is the Silent Way method, a language teaching approach introduced by Caleb Gattegno in the 1960s.

The Silent Way method emphasizes student autonomy, discovery learning, and minimal teacher talking time. It encourages learners to explore and internalize language structures through guided problem-solving and active engagement. One of the unique features of this method is the use of Cuisenaire Rods, a set of colored wooden rods of varying lengths used as visual and manipulative tools to represent linguistic elements. The rods can help learners understand sentence patterns, word order, and vocabulary meaning through physical arrangement and visual association, without heavy reliance on verbal instruction. This method can be particularly useful in elementary classrooms, where concrete and hands-on learning materials are known to support comprehension.

Despite its innovative approach, the Silent Way method has been the subject of debate regarding its suitability for young learners, especially in contexts where students are still developing their basic language skills. While the method fosters independence and critical thinking, it also requires a certain level of learner maturity and familiarity with self-directed learning. Moreover, the minimal verbal input from the teacher can create challenges, especially in classrooms where students are accustomed to more guided instruction. These characteristics raise important questions about the effectiveness of the Silent Way in enhancing vocabulary mastery among elementary school students.

This study focuses on fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak, a public elementary school where English is taught as a foreign language. Based on preliminary observations, it was found that students struggled with vocabulary retention and usage. Many were unfamiliar with simple English words and lacked confidence in applying them in spoken or written contexts. To address this issue, the researcher implemented the Silent Way method using Cuisenaire Rods in vocabulary lessons, aiming to investigate whether this approach could help students better recognize, remember, and use new vocabulary.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to the field of English language teaching (ELT) for young learners by providing insights into alternative instructional strategies. By exploring the use of the Silent Way method, the study aims to assess whether a less conventional, more visual and kinesthetic teaching approach can support vocabulary development among elementary students. In addition, this research can inform teachers and curriculum developers on the benefits and limitations of using non-traditional methods in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings, especially in schools with limited resources and large class sizes.

Preliminary findings of the study indicated that while students were able to recognize and recall vocabulary presented through Cuisenaire Rods, they experienced confusion due to the lack of verbal explanation and limited opportunities for verbal practice. Many students relied heavily on the visual cues provided by the rods but struggled to transfer the vocabulary into active use, particularly in speaking. These observations raise concerns about the method's ability to develop communicative competence, which requires not only passive vocabulary knowledge but also active language use.

Therefore, this research seeks to explore both the potential and the limitations of the Silent Way method in the context of elementary-level vocabulary instruction. It aims to answer the central question: To what extent can the Silent Way method using Cuisenaire Rods support vocabulary learning among fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak? By evaluating students' vocabulary mastery before and after the intervention, and observing their responses during the learning process, this study offers valuable evidence about the practical application of the Silent Way method in Indonesian elementary schools.

METHOD

The type of research used in this study is qualitative with a descriptive design. This approach was chosen to describe and interpret the real learning experiences of students during the implementation of the Silent Way method using Cuisenaire Rods as the main instructional media. The goal of this research is not to measure statistical outcomes, but to explore how students respond to a specific teaching method and to provide a detailed description of the learning phenomena that occurred in the classroom.

The study was conducted at SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak, located on Jl. Medan Km 10.5, Tapan Dolok, Simalungun. The research was carried out on May 5, 2025, during the 2024/2025 academic year in class 5C, during regular school hours.

A total of 19 students participated in this study, consisting of 10 male students and 9 female students. The participants were chosen based on initial observations that showed they had difficulty expressing vocabulary in structured sentences, especially when learning new topics such as shapes and combining them with colors. To identify students' vocabulary knowledge, the teacher conducted a brief oral observation at the beginning of the activity. Students were asked informally about color vocabulary and shown colored rods. Most students responded confidently to color names, but many showed confusion when introduced to shape vocabulary such as circle or triangle. This observation became the basis for the treatment implementation.

The treatment applied the Silent Way method supported by Cuisenaire Rods as visual and manipulative tools. According to Silent Way principles, the teacher minimized verbal instructions and avoided direct correction. Instead, nonverbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions, and visual cues were used to help students understand the material. The rods were used to introduce both color vocabulary and shape vocabulary, which were later combined into simple sentence structures.

The learning process was divided into two main sessions. In the first session, the teacher used Cuisenaire Rods in the colors red, blue, yellow, green, white, and black. Each rod was silently shown to the students while the teacher pointed to the corresponding vocabulary words written on the whiteboard: Red, Blue

Yellow, Green, White, Black.

To encourage repetition, the teacher made a circular hand gesture as a nonverbal cue. Students were asked to repeat the words aloud. No verbal correction was given; instead, the teacher used facial expressions such as a smile, a nod, or a puzzled look to indicate whether the response was accurate. This indirect feedback encouraged students to self-correct and actively engage without fear of making mistakes.

In the second session, the activity was extended to include shape vocabulary. The teacher began by drawing several basic shapes on the whiteboard—such as a circle, square, and triangle. Then, colored Cuisenaire Rods were placed next to each shape. For example, a red rod was placed beside a circle, a blue rod next to a square, and so on. After showing these combinations, the teacher pointed to the object and then to a sample sentence on the board, such as: “a red circle”, “a blue square”, or “a green triangle.”

The students observed and repeated these combinations aloud. If a student said something like “This is yellow circle,” the teacher did not correct the sentence directly. Instead, the correct version—“This is a yellow circle”—was written on the board with a smile, and the teacher pointed to both the sentence and the object. Students then repeated the correct form naturally, without feeling they had made a mistake. This strategy aligns with the Silent Way's emphasis on self-discovery and non-intrusive correction.

The activity was followed by structured games in which students used rods and visual cues to form sentences, match vocabulary with objects, and guess words based on the color-shape combinations. While students showed improved recognition and memory of vocabulary, some of them struggled to combine colors and shapes into grammatically correct sentences. The limited use of verbal instruction led to confusion, especially for students who preferred auditory learning styles. Nonetheless, the visual and kinesthetic approach used in this method encouraged student engagement and creativity.

Instruments used in this study included observation sheets to monitor students' verbal responses, and photographic documentation to capture the use of Cuisenaire Rods and student engagement during the activity.

Overall, the goal of this activity was to observe how students respond to vocabulary instruction through visual, contextual, and kinesthetic input without relying on traditional verbal explanations. Although the method was helpful for vocabulary recognition, it showed limitations in helping students produce spoken sentences due to the lack of verbal modeling and interaction.

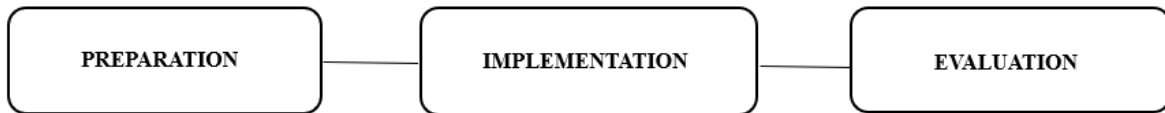


Figure 1. Stages of Method Implementation

Phase 1: Preparation

The preparation phase of this classroom-based research involved several coordinated steps to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the Silent Way method using Cuisenaire Rods as instructional media. The activities carried out during this stage included the following:

1. Coordinating with the supervising lecturer to finalize the research design, instructional method, and expected outcomes. This step ensured that the researcher had a firm understanding of the theoretical principles behind the Silent Way and how to apply them appropriately in an elementary classroom context.
2. Meeting with the principal of SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak to explain the research goals and schedule. The meeting also addressed administrative approval and arrangements for conducting the activity during lesson hours with students from Class 5C.
3. Collaborating with the homeroom teacher of Class 5C to gather student profiles, identify learning needs, and understand the existing level of vocabulary proficiency among students. The teacher provided helpful insights regarding classroom dynamics and student behavior to support the classroom activity.
4. Preparing instructional media and observation tools, including:
 - o A set of Cuisenaire Rods in various colors to be used for vocabulary introduction and sentence modeling.
 - o A whiteboard and markers for drawing shape representations and writing vocabulary combinations.
 - o Observation sheets to document student responses and behavior throughout the activity.
 - o Photographic documentation to visually capture the implementation of the Silent Way method and student engagement during the learning process.
5. Designing lesson procedures in line with the Silent Way approach, which emphasizes minimal teacher talk, indirect correction, visual guidance, and student discovery. The lesson steps were arranged to gradually introduce color and shape vocabulary through visual input and silent gestures, followed by student-generated sentences based on observed models.

Unlike conventional testing, no written vocabulary tests were used in this study. Instead, student understanding was assessed directly through oral interactions and their spontaneous responses during the classroom activity. This allowed the researcher to observe how students engaged with the material in real time and how they responded to non-verbal instruction.

This preparation phase ensured that all necessary materials were in place and that the activity was well-aligned with the research goals. It also set the foundation for a meaningful and student-centered learning experience.

Phase 2: Implementation

The implementation of the Silent Way method in this study was focused on introducing and reinforcing vocabulary related to colors and shapes using Cuisenaire Rods and minimal teacher talk. Although the Silent Way traditionally emphasizes learner autonomy and self-discovery, its

application in this context was adapted to suit the learning level of fifth-grade students. The teaching process was carried out through the following stages:

1. Introducing Color Vocabulary through Silent Demonstration

The teacher began the lesson by showing colored Cuisenaire Rods one by one (e.g., red, blue, yellow, green, white, black) without saying the names aloud. On the whiteboard, the teacher had already written the color names. As each rod was displayed, the teacher pointed to the corresponding word on the board. Students were prompted with a silent circular gesture to repeat the word aloud together.

No verbal feedback was given; instead, the teacher used facial expressions such as nodding or smiling when correct, or a confused look or headshake when students made mistakes. This allowed students to adjust their pronunciation or recall the correct vocabulary on their own.

2. Introducing Shapes through Board Illustrations

In the next stage, the teacher drew simple shapes on the board, such as circles, squares, and triangles. Colored rods were placed beside each shape to create visual combinations (e.g., a red rod next to a circle). The teacher then pointed to the object and the corresponding word phrase written on the board (e.g., “a red circle”), prompting students to repeat. This visual pairing of rod and shape helped students begin to form associations between colors, shapes, and English phrases.

3. Sentence Construction through Student Observation

Students were encouraged to observe the pattern and try forming sentences based on what they saw. For example, after several repetitions, students began to say sentences like “This is a green triangle” or “It is a blue square.” These sentences were first spoken in unison, then individual students were pointed at one by one and asked to repeat them aloud. If any mistakes occurred—such as missing articles or wrong word order—the teacher did not correct them verbally. Instead, the teacher wrote the correct form on the board and used visual cues to help students self-correct. This indirect correction allowed students to revise their speech without feeling pressured or criticized.

4. Repetition and Indirect Correction

To reinforce understanding, the teacher repeated combinations using different rods and shapes. Each time, the teacher relied solely on gestures, board illustrations, and previously written words. When errors were made, the teacher would simply shake their head, look at the student with a questioning expression, or write the correction quietly on the board. Over time, some students were able to identify and fix their mistakes without being told directly.

5. Reflection through Silent Guessing and Practice

At the end of the session, students were shown new combinations of colors and shapes without any written clues. They were asked to guess and say the full sentence in English. Although this activity helped some students feel more confident in vocabulary recall, many remained hesitant or confused due to the lack of verbal explanation.

Student engagement varied; while the use of colorful media helped visual learners, others found the silence challenging. This reflects a key feature of the Silent Way method: students must actively discover language patterns, which can be both empowering and confusing, especially for younger learners.

Phase 3: Evaluation

The final phase of the activity focused on evaluating student responses and reinforcing key vocabulary. Although there was no formal reflection session due to time constraints, the teacher took a few moments to review the learning outcomes and briefly discuss sentence accuracy with the students.

During the final moments of the session, students were shown various combinations of colors and shapes and were asked to construct complete sentences based on what they observed. This served as an informal oral evaluation of their vocabulary acquisition and ability to form simple English phrases such as “a blue square” or “This is a red triangle.”

Some students demonstrated an improved ability to recall and combine vocabulary correctly, while others still struggled, especially when asked to form full sentences independently. The teacher provided short written feedback by rewriting correct sentence forms on the whiteboard for the entire class to copy in their notebooks. This step served both as reinforcement and as a final learning closure.

While detailed field notes were not taken, the teacher observed a general pattern: students were more confident with color vocabulary than shape vocabulary. The use of silent cues and gestures, although aligned with the Silent Way method, created confusion for some students, especially those who relied more on verbal explanations.

Overall, this evaluation phase helped identify the areas where students showed progress and where further reinforcement might be needed, especially in combining multiple elements (color + shape) into structured spoken sentences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the implementation of the Silent Way method using Cuisenaire Rods to teach vocabulary related to colors and shapes, several important findings emerged. These findings reflect both the strengths and limitations of using this method in a fifth-grade classroom context. Although the activity succeeded in introducing target vocabulary and encouraging student participation through visual aids, several challenges also became apparent due to the non-verbal nature of the Silent Way. The discussion is presented according to the stages of implementation.

Phase 1: Preparation

a. Coordination with Supervising Lecturer

Coordination with the supervising lecturer was successfully conducted, ensuring that the teaching plan, learning objectives, and instructional strategies were aligned with the theoretical principles of the Silent Way. The lecturer provided constructive input on how to adapt the method to young learners. Continuous communication was essential during the preparation stage, and it is recommended to maintain consistent consultation for better alignment between practice and theory.

b. Meeting with the Principal of SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak

The meeting with the school principal was productive and resulted in clear scheduling and approval for classroom access. The principal's support enabled the smooth execution of the lesson during official class hours. Moving forward, scheduling joint reflections with the school could help enhance future collaborations and documentation.

c. Collaboration with the Homeroom Teacher

The selection of Class 5C students for participation was conducted in collaboration with the homeroom teacher. Insights from the teacher regarding the students' learning behaviors and needs were helpful in anticipating classroom dynamics. The collaboration also helped align the instructional media with students' existing knowledge, especially regarding color vocabulary.

d. Preparation of Teaching Tools and Materials

Instructional tools, such as Cuisenaire Rods and a whiteboard, were prepared to facilitate the visual and kinesthetic aspects of learning. Observation sheets and a simple documentation strategy (photographs) were also arranged to monitor student engagement. While the tools supported visual learning well, additional verbal support may be needed in future activities to prevent student confusion, especially among those who are not used to discovery-based methods like Silent Way.

Phase 2. Implementation

The implementation of the Silent Way method using Cuisenaire Rods was carried out through a sequence of structured stages aimed at introducing and reinforcing vocabulary related to colors and shapes. This method emphasized minimal verbal instruction and relied heavily on visual cues, physical objects, and student self-correction to support learning.

To guide the instructional process, the teacher followed a visual framework consisting of five steps: introducing color vocabulary, associating it with written words, combining it with shapes,

constructing simple noun phrases and sentences, and applying indirect correction techniques. This instructional flow is illustrated in the following figure:

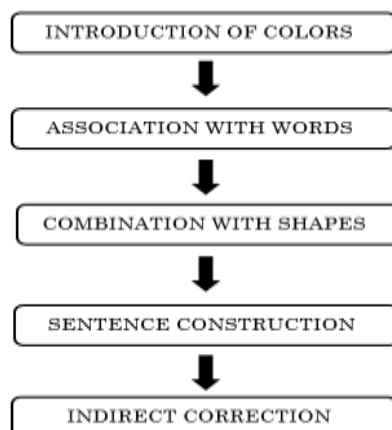


Figure 2 : Visual Framework of Silent Way Vocabulary Instruction with Cuisenaire Rods

Learning Focus:

- Vocabulary Topic:
 - o Basic color words (e.g., red, blue, yellow, green, black, white)
 - o Basic shape words (e.g., circle, square, triangle)
- Structure Focus:
 - o Noun phrases with adjectives and nouns (e.g., a red circle, a blue square)
 - o Simple descriptive sentences using “This is...” (e.g., This is a green triangle.)
- Speaking Skill Focus:
 - o Pronunciation and sentence rhythm through repetition
 - o Spontaneous sentence construction based on visual prompts
 - o Responding to gestures and silent cues without relying on verbal instruction
- Learning Objective:
 - o Students are able to identify and name colors and shapes in English.
 - o Students are able to combine two vocabulary elements (color + shape) into correct noun phrases and use them in simple sentences.
 - o Students develop awareness of sentence structure through modeling and indirect correction.

Implementation Process and Student Engagement

1. Vocabulary Introduction Using Silent Way Gestures

The teaching process began by introducing color vocabulary through the use of Cuisenaire Rods without any verbal explanation. The teacher silently held up rods of various colors—such as red, blue, green, yellow, white, and black—without naming them. Each time a color rod was shown, the teacher pointed to the corresponding written word on the whiteboard. Gestures such as a circular hand movement were used to signal students to repeat the word together.

Students responded well to this initial activity. Most of them could recognize basic color vocabulary like “red,” “blue,” and “green.” They repeated the words aloud in unison while observing the rods and the teacher’s gestures. However, the teacher refrained from giving any verbal corrections. If a student mispronounced a word, the teacher corrected it silently by writing or re-pointing to the word on the board while using facial expressions (nodding or raising eyebrows) to indicate correctness.

This stage allowed students to associate visual input with word forms and practice pronunciation in a low-pressure environment. It also aligned with the core principles of the Silent Way, encouraging student independence and discovery through minimal teacher talk.



Figure 3,4 : Students identifying color vocabulary through rods and repetition without verbal instruction

2. Color and Shape Sentence Construction

After mastering the basic color vocabulary, students were introduced to shape-related words such as circle, square, and triangle. Since most students were unfamiliar with shape terms, the teacher supported the learning process by drawing simple shapes on the whiteboard and placing color rods next to each shape. For example, a red rod was placed next to a drawn circle, while a blue rod was placed next to a square.

The teacher pointed to the object combination (a red circle, a blue square) and gestured for the students to repeat the noun phrase. Students gradually began to combine the visual elements into phrases and full sentences such as:

- “This is a red circle.”
- “That is a green triangle.”
- “It is a yellow square.”

When mistakes occurred (e.g., “This is yellow circle”), the teacher did not interrupt verbally. Instead, the teacher smiled and wrote the corrected sentence (“This is a yellow circle”) on the board, then pointed to both the sentence and the visual. Students followed by repeating the corrected version.

Although verbal interaction from the teacher was minimal, this process helped students learn how to form noun phrases and basic descriptive sentences in English. However, several students appeared confused at this stage due to the abstract nature of the vocabulary and the absence of direct explanation.

Phase 3. Evaluation

The evaluation of this vocabulary learning activity aimed to observe students' understanding of basic descriptive words (colors and shapes) and their ability to apply them in simple noun phrases and sentences. The evaluation was conducted informally through direct classroom observation, student responses, and visual participation during the Silent Way method session.

a. Evaluation of the Teaching Process

The introduction of color vocabulary using Cuisenaire Rods was received positively by the majority of students. They were able to identify and repeat color names such as red, blue, and yellow correctly, especially when supported by visual cues and gestures. However, when shape vocabulary such as circle, square, and triangle was introduced, several students appeared confused, as these terms were unfamiliar and not directly translated or explained.

Despite the teacher's use of consistent gestures and written modeling on the board, some students had difficulty grasping the meaning of the shapes. The absence of direct verbal instruction, which is a key characteristic of the Silent Way, challenged students to rely more heavily on observation and inference. While this created moments of discovery for some learners, others struggled with uncertainty and required repeated visual input.

b. Student Response and Vocabulary Development

Through visual association between rods and drawings on the board, a portion of the class succeeded in forming descriptive noun phrases such as a green triangle or a black circle. When prompted with combinations (e.g., showing a triangle with a yellow rod), students were encouraged to say the matching phrase.

The teacher did not correct students verbally; instead, when an error occurred, the correct version of the sentence was written on the board silently. This technique encouraged students to recognize and correct their own mistakes with minimal teacher intervention. While some students adapted well to this method and began to self-correct, others needed more time and repetition.

c. Reflection and Observed Challenges

The Silent Way method, while effective in encouraging student autonomy, posed several challenges in this context. Some students found the lack of verbal explanation confusing, particularly when combining two unfamiliar vocabulary categories (color + shape). This often led to hesitation or silence when they were expected to respond.

Additionally, the minimal interaction from the teacher (limited to gestures and expressions) made it difficult for certain students to follow the lesson flow. While a few students showed improvement in recognizing and using descriptive vocabulary correctly, the overall effectiveness was limited by the students' need for more verbal support.

Nevertheless, the activity offered valuable insight into student learning styles. It revealed which students were more responsive to visual learning and provided the teacher with experience in applying non-traditional, discovery-based methods in the classroom.

Challenges in Implementing

During the implementation of the Silent Way method using Cuisenaire rods, several challenges emerged that affected the effectiveness of the learning process. One of the most prominent difficulties observed was the lack of self-confidence among students. When invited to repeat or respond, many students hesitated, remained silent, or showed uncertainty. Their reluctance to speak was often due to their unfamiliarity with the learning method, which required them to actively infer meaning without verbal guidance from the teacher.

Another challenge was related to the combination of color and shape vocabulary. While most students could identify color names with ease, they struggled when asked to connect those colors with unfamiliar shape vocabulary. For example, when shown a green rod placed beside a triangle drawing, some students had difficulty forming the phrase “a green triangle”. This confusion increased when the teacher maintained a silent approach, offering only gestures or written models as support.

Although pronunciation was not a major issue, and students generally managed to articulate the vocabulary well, the learning atmosphere lacked enthusiasm. This was likely influenced by the limited teacher interaction and verbal feedback, which made some students unsure whether they were progressing correctly. The silence, while purposeful in this method, created discomfort among students who were used to more traditional, verbally guided lessons.

Despite these challenges, the teacher attempted to ease the learning process by offering visual corrections on the board and using facial expressions to guide students toward the correct answers. While a few students eventually adapted and began to participate more actively, others remained hesitant throughout the session.

These findings highlight the importance of adjusting teaching strategies to the students' readiness and familiarity with alternative learning methods. In this case, while the Silent Way promoted independent discovery, it also required strong visual and cognitive support—particularly for young learners encountering abstract concepts like shape-based vocabulary for the first time.

Steps to Overcome the Challenges

To address the challenges encountered during the implementation of the Silent Way method using Cuisenaire rods, several adaptive strategies were taken to support students' comprehension and boost their engagement:

1. Enhancing Visual Support

Since many students showed confusion when combining shape and color vocabulary, the teacher added clear visual aids by drawing shapes on the whiteboard and placing the colored rods beside them. This helped clarify meaning and reduced the cognitive burden on students who were struggling to associate the abstract terms.

2. Writing Sentence Models on the Board

When students made mistakes or hesitated in forming phrases like “a blue square” or “a red triangle,” the teacher avoided direct correction. Instead, the correct sentence was written on the board silently. This non-verbal strategy allowed students to observe and imitate the correct structure without feeling pressured or embarrassed.

3. Repeating Input Using Gestures

The teacher repeated certain gesture cues — such as pointing to the rods, mimicking a circular motion for “repeat,” or nodding for correct answers — to help reinforce meaning. These silent cues became a consistent pattern that students began to understand and follow more easily over time.

4. Providing Gentle Encouragement

To build student confidence, the teacher used positive facial expressions, smiles, and eye contact to encourage hesitant students. Although verbal motivation was minimal, non-verbal affirmation played a key role in reducing anxiety.

5. Allowing Peer Observation

Instead of forcing all students to respond at once, the teacher first let students respond together, then invited individuals to try. This approach gave students time to observe their peers and mentally rehearse before attempting to speak on their own.

These strategies helped overcome several initial difficulties and improved student confidence in using basic English vocabulary to construct simple descriptive phrases. Although the Silent Way was unfamiliar to many students, with careful adaptation and patience, it proved to be a valuable method in supporting student-centered vocabulary learning.



Figure 5. Documentation of the teaching team and Class 5C students after the socialization

CONCLUSION

This community service activity was designed to introduce English vocabulary, specifically related to colors and shapes, through the application of the Silent Way method using Cuisenaire rods as the main teaching media. The program involved 19 fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak and was carried out through a structured teaching session focused on visual learning, minimal teacher talk, and student-led discovery. The results showed that while most students were able to recognize color vocabulary easily, they experienced significant challenges when combining shape and color into phrases or simple sentences. The Silent Way approach, which emphasizes gesture and student autonomy, proved beneficial for a few students who were more visually oriented and curious. However, for the majority of the class, the lack of verbal guidance made the learning process difficult and caused confusion, especially during the sentence construction activity. Although the method successfully encouraged some students to think more critically and observe actively, the overall effectiveness was limited by their unfamiliarity with silent instruction and abstract vocabulary. Nevertheless, the experience offered valuable insight into alternative vocabulary teaching techniques and highlighted the importance of adjusting instructional approaches to the students' readiness and learning styles.

Thank You Note

The community service team would like to extend our sincere gratitude to SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak for the opportunity and support provided during the implementation of the program entitled: "Exploring the Use of the Silent Way Method Using Cuisenaire Rods in Teaching Vocabulary at SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak." We express our heartfelt appreciation to the Principal of SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak for the kind permission, encouragement, and collaboration that enabled this activity to run smoothly and effectively. Special thanks are also extended to the homeroom teacher, staff, and school community, whose cooperation and openness played an important role in the success of this program. Most importantly, we sincerely thank all the students of Class 5C, who participated with enthusiasm and curiosity throughout the learning sessions. Your engagement in exploring English vocabulary through color and shape using rods and silent guidance was truly inspiring and meaningful. We hope that this activity has provided a valuable learning experience that will support the students' ongoing development in English, and serve as an inspiration for incorporating creative and student-centered teaching methods in the classroom.

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