

Silent Way Grammar teaching

ROD EXERCISES (notes to SPEAC Summer Japan Program teachers)

You may want to use the rods every day, or only once in a while. We've tried to give suggestions for daily use in the first 2½ weeks, but you may want to divide the rod experiences differently. However you use them (and we hope you'll give them a try) we suggest that you follow the progression given for the first couple of days. (That is, if you don't use the rods until later, do begin with the suggestions for lessons one and two.) You may want to familiarize yourself with rod suggestions for all lessons before beginning.

Introduction of Rods

Purpose: review colors
identify rods
familiarize Ss with the procedure
practice l/r distinction--"light green rod"

The teacher holds up a rod, then another, etc. while saying "a rod...a rod..." After two or three modelings, T has students identify rods--encourages Ss to listen to each other for correction as well as to the teacher (something to remember: this is not a traditional pronunciation drill, so try not to over-model).

Practice of Prepositions "around" and "between"

T: I'm going to take a red rod and put it on the table. Now I'm going to take some green rods and put them around the red one.
Does so, repeating if necessary with other colors
Now, Keiko, you try it. Take a (color) rod and put it on the table. Good. Now take some (color) rods and put them around it.

Directs one or two more Ss with different color rods
Now, who can tell me how to do it? Masaki, will you try?
Elicits the same directions from the Ss--first to the T, then to the other Ss

When it seems appropriate, introduce "Where is/are the ___ rods?"
Ask Ss, have Ss ask each other and answer.

Repeat the above procedures to elicit "between." When they have practiced that, mix commands and questions and "around" and "between"--ask the Ss, have Ss ask you and each other.

Encourage Ss to ask and direct each other--not to depend on you for anything but the first stimulus.

Practice of Previous Material and "there is/are"

Note: The "th" may be a problem.

Set up rod situations to elicit "between" and "around."

T: I'm going to describe what I see. There's a/some ___ between/around some/a ___.

Sets up new rod-situations
Now you describe what you see.

Note: Please try not to have the students repeat after you. Rather, set up similar rod situations for them where they may use the pattern you have modeled to produce their own original utterances. Let them create their own language within your structured situations.

Practice with "have/has, some, any, a, one, tell/ask me"

The teacher passes out rods to Ss or has a S pass them out. Then,
 T: I have a ___ rod and some ___ ones. She has some ___ rods and a ___ one. Tell me what you have/what he/she has.
 After new distribution of rods
 Do I have a ___ rod? Yes, I have one. Do I have any ___ rods?
 Yes, I have some/No, I don't have any.
 Asks Ss Do you/does he/she have a/any ___ rods?
 Ss reply
 T directs Ss Ask me /her/him about the rods.

Practice with Commands and Requests

T: Tell/ask me/him/her to take a/some ___ rods.
 Please give me/her/them a/some ___ rods and a ___ one.
 Can I please have ___?
 Do you mind if I take ___?
 Would you mind if I took ___?

Again, after you have set up the situation and patterns, encourage the students to take over with minimal assistance from you.

Practicing Commands and Questions; "give" and "take," Past, Present, Future/Object Pronouns

T: I'm going to take a ___ rod and some ___ rods. Now I'm going to give them to him/her/them/you.
 Now you try it. Take ___ and give ___ to ___.
 Now you tell me/him/her/them to do it.

These commands can remain fairly simple or become as complex as the students can handle, i.e., "Take a red rod, two light green ones and five pink ones. Give the pink ones to her, (point) the green ones to him, and the red one to me."

When commands are smoothly articulated and carried out, ask "What are you/is he/she/are they doing?" and later, "What did ___ do?" and "What are you/is he/she going to do?" Use your own judgement to decide when to add each tense. Have them direct and ask each other without your modeling as soon as you can after introducing each new bit.

Review Questions and Statements with "have"

Introduce "have got" as in "I've got a ___ and some ___." Have you got any ___? What has she got?" etc.

Practicing "too"

Make an outline of a square or another simple figure on the table, using rods of different lengths together to make up each side. (You could be talking while you're doing this. "What am I doing? I'm making a square. What am I using to make it. What colors are they?" etc.)

Then make an identical figure next to it, complete except for part of one side. As your final rod to complete the figure, choose one that obviously doesn't fit. Ask the students, "Will this one finish the square?" or "Can I use this one?" When they answer "no," ask why. If they can't answer, then you provide it for them. "Because it's too long/short."

Set up several more similar situations and elicit responses. See if someone else can ask the questions or build the figures.

Contrasting "very" and "too"

Make the outlines of two squares, one with orange rods and one with light green ones. Then compare the sizes of the rods: "Are these orange rods very long? (Yes, they are.) Are they too long for this square?" Point to the light green square. "Yes, they're too long for that one." "Are these green rods very short? (Yes, they are.) Are they too short for this square?" Point to the green square. "No, they're not. Are they too short for that square? Yes, they're too short for that one."

Or, make a standing line of red rods, a standing line of pink or dark green rods, and a standing line of orange rods. Compare red and orange for "very tall--very short." Exchange one red and one orange in the lines for "too tall--too short." Put a shorter one in the middle line for "too short"--put another one on top of it to compensate and have it "too tall," etc.

Possessive Pronouns

Give each student one or more rods, only one color.

Model: "Your rod is yellow. Mine are red. Hers is pink. His is light green." Say this while pointing.

Then let another student try; then change old ones for new, only one color to a student, and have others try.

Questions: "My rod is yellow. What color is hers? What color are his?"

Or, have each student put his rods in a special place. "My rods are in my hand. Where are yours? Are hers under the table? etc."

Guessing Game with Possessive Pronouns

Have each student put a rod or other small object under an overturned box. The others should not see what it is. Then the box is removed and students try to guess who owns the different objects. ("Keiko, is this yours? Class, do you think this is hers?" etc.)

Possessive Pronouns, Relative Clauses

Give each student in the group a different colored rod (if more than 10 students in the group, break into two groups). Have them build a single structure with their rods. Then take turns describing their rods: "Mine is the one that is under the pink rod and next to the blue one," etc. Then others guess: "Is it the red rod? The yellow one?" etc.

Contrast Definite and Indefinite Pronouns ("it" vs. "one")

Pass out rods to everyone, making sure that some students have more than one color, and that the same color goes to more than one student. Make students aware of what you're doing.

Then ask, "Who has a _____ rod?" (first time, model the reply: "I have one, she has some, he has one.")

Variation: "Do you have a/any _____ rods? Yes, I have one/some."

Then collect those rods and pass out others. Each student gets a rod or rods of only one color. Each student gets a different color. Make students aware of what you're doing. Ask, "Who has the _____ rod/rods? You have it/them."

To Practice "other, another, the other, the others, some others"

Note: Usage of these terms is a particular problem for Japanese speakers. Also watch for pronunciation problems with _____, which may sound like /z/.

Take out small groups of rods of different colors--for instance, five pink rods, three blue ones, six black ones, etc.

T: I have five pink rods on the table. [Demonstrating] I just picked up a pink rod, another pink one, some other pink ones, and the other pick one. I'm going to pick up some black rods...Now I'm going to pick up another one...And now the other one. Etc.

After a couple of examples, elicit responses from the students. Then set up different groups of rods and let students take the initiative.

Variation: "Put another (in/on/under/behind) the _____."

Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

Lay out several different-sized rods. Describe them or ask questions about them:

T: The _____ rod is longer/shorter than the _____ rod.
Is the _____ rod the shortest? [Also use plurals]
Which rod is _____-er/est?

Encourage students to make their own statements and questions.

For "more, most, less, least": Put little price tags on some of the rods.

For instance, a \$5 price tag on an orange rod, a \$9 price tag on a green rod, a \$16 price tag on a yellow rod. (Price all the different colors.) Say, "The green rod is more expensive than the orange one." Or make it generic: "The green rods are more expensive than..." Encourage students to make their own statements and questions.

You can make it more interesting by making sure that the longest rods are not the most expensive and the shortest not the least expensive, so that capable students could produce sentences like, "The orange rod is longer than the green one, but it's less expensive." Etc.

To Practice Passives

Put a bunch of rods on the table. Have each student take one or more. Then ask, "Where's the _____ rod? It was taken by (name). Where are the _____ rods? They were taken by (name) and (name)."

Then ask the same question of the students--let them respond. Then have students give back their rods and choose new ones. Have questions and answers come from students.

Another Way to Practice Passives

Have each student take one or more rods, and give them to someone else. Then ask, "Where did _____ get that/those rods? They were given to her by _____."

Then ask another student directly, "Where did you get that rod?" (Student should reply, "It was given to me by _____." If student has trouble, model another example or two with other people's rods: "Where did he get his rods? They were given to him by _____." Then have the student try again with her/his own rod.

Relative Clauses

T: Masa, give me a rod. Yuri, give me a rod.
Kimi, take the rod that Yuri gave me.

Or: Teacher and students make an interesting arrangement of rods, hopefully employing such concepts as "in, under, behind, between, on top of, on the right," etc. Be careful to use at least two of each color rod.

Teacher can initiate commands and questions, encouraging students to think up their own as soon as they can. For example,

T: Give Setsu the red rod that is under the paper (no, not the one that is on the book, the one that is under the paper! Yes, that's right...)

Setsu, which red rod did he give you?

Hiroimi, what color is the rod that he gave her?

Take the rod that is _____ and put it _____.

Which rod do you want? (I want the one that is _____.)

Ask her to give you the rod that she took.

Tell him to put the rod that I gave him on the table.

Ask them where they put the rods that I gave them.

Who has the rod that was on the box?

Who has the rod that Keiko took? Etc.

Practice "can/can't"

Teacher builds a rather precarious structure of rods; is about to add the final rod, which will obviously topple the building. Ask, "Can I put this rod here? No, you can't. Why not? Because the building will fall; because it's too long, etc. Where can I put it?" Etc.

Practice "can/can't"; "could/couldn't"

Teacher shows five or six different colored rods; then puts some under the lid of the rod-box and some on the lid (or small box, or notebook).

T: I can see the _____ and _____ rods, but I can't see the _____ and _____ rods.
Why not? Because they're under the lid.

Then change the positions of rods--the ones formerly on top are now underneath, and vice versa.

T: I could see the _____ rod before, but I can't see it now, because it's under the lid.
I couldn't see the _____ rod before, but I can see it now, because it's on top of the lid.

If these sentences seem too long, take off the "because" clause and make it a new sentence, prompted by "why."

Have students direct, ask and answer each other as soon as they can.

Practice with Present Perfect

T: I'm going to give Keiko ten pink rods, one at a time. So far, I've given her three rods. Now I've given her five rods. How many have I given her so far? Have I finished yet? I've given her eight rods, but I haven't finished yet. Etc.

Teruko, take eight yellow rods, one at a time. Class, how many has she taken so far? How many has she taken now? Ask each other. [If the student tries to take rods too quickly, slow her down, stay her hand or do whatever necessary to pace the action to the speech.] Has she finished yet? Etc.

Practice with Gerunds and Infinitives

Spread some rods out on the table.

T: I'm going to pick up those rods. I started picking them up. Have I finished picking them up? Not yet. Now I've finished. Tell me what I've finished. That's right; I've finished picking up the rods.

Vary with "give" and "take." Make it more interesting by specifying only certain rods--the longest ones, the blue ones, the ones that are under Sachiko's notebook, the ones inside the box....whatever is relevant to your surrounds, reviews structures the students have been working on, and is interesting to you and the students.

Or:

T: Yoko, why don't you take some brown rods? Class, what did I say to Yoko? I suggested taking some brown rods. Did she say okay? That means she agreed to take them.

Do the same with another student. This time, elicit "suggest" + Gerund and "agree" + Infinitive without explanation. Similar situations can be set up with "give," "put," etc. You can mix these structures with verbs in simple past, future, etc. For example:

T: Sachiko, why don't you put an orange rod on Yuko's notebook?
Class, what is she going to do? (going to put...)
Why is she going to do it? (Because you suggested doing...)
When I suggested it, what did she say? (She agreed to...)
What is she doing now? (She's putting...)
Where's the brown rod? (It's on Yuko's notebook.)
What did Sachiko do? (She put...)
Why did she do that? (Because you suggested putting...)
Describe the rod that was taken by Sachiko.
Who has the rod that I was talking about? Etc.

Contrasting Spoken Directions with Polite Requests

Divide the class into teams of three. The teams will compete against each other to build the most complex rod structure possible in ten minutes. However, each direction must be relayed from the foreman to the construction workers. Below is a model dialogue showing how directions must be given:

S1 to S2 : Ask S3 to give you a/some red rod/rods. ("Tell" can be substituted for "ask.")

S2 to S3 : Please give me a/some red rod/rods.

S3 giving the rod to S2 : Here's the red rod/Here it is/Here they are.

S2 then begins making a structure with the first rod. Each direction is relayed from S1 (the foreman) to S2 (the construction worker) to S3 (the supply clerk). The team having the most complex structure at the end of ten minutes wins (they also have the direction and request patterns down pat).

Practice Making and Answering Negative Questions

Distribute rods to students, or have them take their own. Then ask negative questions about them. Be sure that some can be answered with "yes" and some with "no." Encourage students to ask each other negative questions.

Some examples: Don't you have a/some _____?
 Didn't she take a _____?
 Aren't you holding some _____?
 Isn't that a _____?

Have students reply, based on your model, with "yes" or "no" and a long answer, using "some," "any," or "one" where appropriate.

Practice with "if"

Construct some figure with the rods so that it is almost complete (a geometric figure with one side missing, a letter of the alphabet with one part gone, or some other recognizable configuration). Then ask:

T: If I had another _____ rod, what could I make?
 Or: Could I make a _____ if I had another _____ rod?
 Do I have another _____ rod? No.
 Can I make a _____, then? No.
 But if I had another _____ rod/some other _____ rods, could I make a _____?
 Okay, now tell me: "If you ..."

Embedded Wh- Clauses with "who"

Give each student all the rods of one color. The students should not know the colors of each other's rods. (You might want to put the rods in paper bags or something.) Model the conversation below and then initiate "chain dialogues" so each student gets to play each part.

S1: I wonder who has the (color) rods?
 S2: I don't know. I'll ask S3. S3, do you have the (color) rods?
 S3: Yes, I have them/No, I don't have them.

Embedded "If" Clauses

Proceed as in the activity above, but use the following conversation:

S1: I wonder if S3 has the (color) rods?
 S2: I don't know. I'll ask (him/her). S3, do you have the (color) rods?

Embedded Wh- Clauses with "where"

The idea here is for one person to wonder out loud in a monologue. After modeling the conversation and explaining what is to be done, ask one student (S1) to leave the room. Give all the rods of one color to one of the remaining students. Bring the first student back into the room and tell him/her to find the (color) rods.

The conversation should go something like this:

S1: I wonder where the (color) rods are? May S2 has them. I'll ask (him/her) if (he/she) has the (color) rods. S2, do you have the (color) rods?
 S2: Yes, I have them/No, I don't have them.

S1 repeats until locating the rods. The person who had the rods then becomes S1, and the process starts all over again. Continue until each student has been S1.