

# The Application of 'Suggestopedia' in English Teaching

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**Abstract.** Suggestion teaching method was put forward by psychotherapist George Lozano in the 1960s, which provides a new idea for the development of English reading teaching. Suggestive media points out that people are suggestive and positive suggestions can put people's bodies in a relaxed state and minds in an active state. This good physical and mental state can enable learners to give full play to their potential and improve the efficiency of foreign language learning. This paper studies the application of Suggestopedia in English teaching. Suggestopedia puts forward eight suggested strategies, such as a relaxed and intuitive environment, positive unconscious cues, double communication and other strategies. It found that there are some problems with the suggested teaching method. The suggested teaching method has high requirements for conditions and pays too much attention to form. The education administrators should pay attention to teaching reform, and improve their own quality and other methods.

**Keywords:** Suggestopedia; Childishness; Double Communication.

## 1. Introduction

Suggestopedia was founded by Bulgarian psychologist Lozanov in the mid-1960s [1]. He used music, words, actions, eyes, environment and other means to establish an unconscious psychological tendency and create a relaxed and happy atmosphere. It will affect people's perception, memory, imagination, thinking, emotion, will and other psychological activities, and advocate creating high motivation, establishing and stimulating personal potential, starting from the fact that the student is a complete individual. In the process of learning and communication, people strive to organize various unconscious suggestion factors to fully explore the unconscious psychological potential of individuals, so as to improve the teaching effect [1].

Bancroft believes that suggestiveness is the use of psychology, physiology and other knowledge to inspire students' subconsciousness, and develop their perception and potential, which is conducive to students overcoming tension and depression in learning and adjusting the pace of learning [2]. Deny et al.'s point of view is suggestive education, which refers to the influence on students' thoughts and behaviors through language, action, etc. under the condition of no confrontation, so that they can unconsciously accept a certain point of view or opinion of the suggestive person. That is, the educator carries out activities in a certain way according to the suggestive [3].

It is not difficult to find that the three scholars have the same point of view: by giving positive psychological hints, create a relaxed learning environment, so as to promote students' unconscious learning mechanism, develop their learning potential, and ultimately improve their learning ability in an all-round way. This paper will study the application of Suggestopedia in English teaching.

## 2. Literature Review

In foreign countries, suggestive gastropedia has developed well and become mature. Bancroft mentioned that suggestive gastropedia has gone through four stages abroad [4].

### 2.1. Research Stage (Before 1971)

At this stage, Lozanov was a clinical psychologist and psychiatrist. He used suggestively to control people's bodies. He has successfully applied suggestiveness to surgery, enabling patients to complete surgery without pain and without anesthesia. In the practice of clinical medical research, he found

that some methods similar to the treatment of patients can be used to improve the memory training of normal people and improve people's learning efficiency. So, he submitted this idea to UNESCO as a research report, and introduced suggestiveness in his book published in 1971.

## **2.2. Results Publishing and Verification Stage (1971-1984)**

The first international suggestion seminar was held in Bulgaria in 1971. In 1976, an academic conference on suggestive teaching was held in Los Angeles, the United States. After that, suggestive teaching was introduced in many countries. In 1978, Lozanov's research monograph published in 1971 was translated into English and in 1984 into French. In this book, Lozanov clarifies several characteristics of suggestiveness: directness, large quantity, high speed, accuracy and economy. At the same time, Lozanov believes that the technique is also very important. It is necessary to eliminate all obstacles, because it is directly related to the effect of hinting teaching. Because Lozanov was educated in the Soviet Union, many factors influenced his suggestive academic foundation.

It is related to the content of Soviet psychology, so it is rapidly recognized in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. But at that time, the Soviet Union and the western countries were in a political opposition position, especially in North America, and the scientific nature of its teaching theory and effect was rejected. It was not until the publication of the book *Psychological Discovery behind the Iron Curtain* by Sheila Ostrand and others in 1970 that Western countries began to pay attention to suggestive theories and teaching technologies [5].

In Asia, Japan published the *American Super Learning Method* in 1980, which caused a sensation in Japan. Although Japan introduced it late, due to the complete laboratory equipment, they made their own cassette tapes based on the principle of suggestive audiopedia, and provided suggestive audiopedia cassette tapes to other countries [6].

## **2.3. Application and Revision Stage (1985-1992)**

During this period, Lozanov continued to promote and study their achievements. They transformed the results obtained in the original laboratory into teaching practices that can be implemented in general classrooms, and constantly improved the quality and acceptability of their experiments. For example, Lozanov et al. selected 6 foreign language classes (4 French classes and 2 English classes). After learning the first batch of 1000 words, they randomly selected 100 words for the test. The recall rate of all classes reached 92.9% - 99.7%. Later, subjects aged 22-60 were selected for the experiment, and the recall rate was also as high as 98.08% [7]. With the gradual improvement of Lozanov's experiment, some western developed countries gradually accepted his teaching ideas. Some educators also tried to use this method for reference, and created new teaching methods. Especially with the introduction of multimedia technology, the theory and technology of suggestive teaching became more mature, evolved into a new learning method - super quick learning method, and was also promoted and applied in other fields.

## **2.4. Maturity and Promotion Stage (1993 Present)**

Western countries began to accept the theory and practice of suggestive teaching. At this time, problems occurred in Bulgaria's political and economic development. Therefore, talents engaged in suggestive teaching research have moved to western countries, and the research center of suggestive teaching theory and practice has gradually moved to Germany, Austria and other developed countries. In 1998, Professor Lozanov and others established an international center for teacher training courses and research in Austria. It requires that those engaged in suggestive teaching and other work related to suggestive teaching must go through two stages of 160-240 class hours of training before they can truly master the suggestive teaching technology. With the promotion and application of suggestive pedagogy in western developed countries, new teaching methods and technologies have been derived from suggestive pedagogy and methods, and the theory of suggestive teaching system has been continuously enriched and demonstrated [8].

### **3. Principles of Suggestiveness**

After suggestionstopedia became a new type of educational theory, three closely related principles also emerged, which are interrelated and indispensable.

#### **3.1. The Principle of Happiness Without Tension**

Psychology research by the author Harmer found that positive emotions such as lightness, cheerfulness, optimism and self-confidence can strengthen intellectual activities, while negative emotions such as nervousness, worry, pessimism and depression can inhibit the development of intelligence [9]. Therefore, suggestiveness is to create a relaxed and cheerful classroom atmosphere, so as to stimulate students' positive emotions, help students build self-confidence, and let students actively learn.

#### **3.2. Principle of the Unity of Consciousness and Unconsciousness**

The traditional teaching concept only focuses on students' conscious learning. That is, students' mechanical memory is emphasized, and teachers' dominant position is emphasized. Suggestiveness takes students' unconscious minds as the main object of research. Students can have rich associations, often fluctuating emotions and highly concentrated thinking when they are relaxed. Therefore, only when conscious and unconscious are unified, are students' memory, and understanding. Imagination can be fully developed, and unconscious potential can also be further developed [10].

#### **3.3. Principle of the Interaction of Suggestive Means**

Teachers can keep good communication with students and encourage students to build self-confidence by using suggestive means that are consistent with the actual situation of students. Students can learn to respect their teachers in this process. The establishment of such mutual respect, mutual trust between teachers and students, and harmonious interpersonal relationships will help students' physical and mental health, improve learning efficiency, and also enable teachers to affirm their work value. In this principle, teachers' initiative of suggestion is emphasized, that is, teachers are usually the givers of suggestions, while students' acceptability of certain suggestions will vary due to different factors such as age, seniority, status and personality.

### **4. Basic Methods of Suggestiveness in Teaching**

Guided by the three basic principles of suggestiveness, a variety of suggestive methods in line with the actual teaching situation in the English classroom have entered the public's vision and complement each other.

#### **4.1. Easy and Intuitive Environment Hint**

##### **4.1.1. The Classroom Is Decorated with Warm Colors and a Light Tone**

Teachers should create a situation where students are most susceptible to influence, and display teaching materials in a way that can most encourage students to accept and retain them [11]. Therefore, teachers should strive to adopt a classroom decoration style that conforms to the students' aesthetics at different stages. For example, primary school students are suitable for a classroom environment with bright colors and a warm atmosphere, while freshmen are more suitable for a classroom environment with simple colors and a simple layout, but it is undoubtedly to create a comfortable and relaxed learning environment for students; In addition, people can also break the conventional seat arrangement, and boldly try new arrangements such as group seats and round seats. In English classes that focus on oral communication, such seats are more conducive to students' easy and free discussion.

##### **4.1.2. Abandon the Learning Viewpoint of "Learning Is Endless"**

In traditional teaching, teachers tend to overemphasize and exaggerate the difficulty of learning. For example, the famous aphorisms of "hard work are the way to the mountain of books" on the walls

of the "dominating" classroom undoubtedly has negative implications for students' enthusiasm for learning. Therefore, in teaching, especially in a classroom layout and learning mobilization meetings, people should avoid such psychological implications to avoid unnecessary psychological pressure on students, and even attack their initiative to learn.

#### **4.1.3. Use Rich Music Resources**

Suggestiastopedia enables students to retain teaching materials to the maximum extent by making use of their relaxed brains in teaching, and music plays an important role in the implementation of this teaching method [12]. For example, when teaching the unit "Friendship" (People's Education Press, Senior One), teachers can first play English songs about friendship that students are familiar with, such as "Shining friends", so that students can relax the tension caused by the upcoming class and help students predict the content of this lesson. Therefore, integrating music into the teaching process can not only arouse students' interest in learning, but also create a happy atmosphere for receiving textbooks, memory and understanding. At the same time, it will inevitably promote the psychological tendency of suggestion - attitude, motivation, etc. [13].

### **4.2. Positive Unconscious Cues**

#### **4.2.1. Positive Suggestions**

Suggestiveness emphasizes the subjectivity of external factors such as teachers, but students' spontaneous hints can also play a role that is ignored. Students stimulate themselves by subjectively imagining the existence of certain special people and things, so as to change their behavior [14]. When reciting the words in the new unit, positive self, such as "other students can recite all the words, so can I. If you insist, I will win!" can effectively overcome the adverse reactions caused by negative emotions.

#### **4.2.2. "Sidetrack"**

The so-called "sidetrack" refers to teachers deliberately jumping out of the chapters and sections of the text and naturally introducing metaphorical examples, materials, or their own life experiences in teaching activities. The seemingly extraneous gossip is actually a hint of a sideswipe, which finally makes students understand and suddenly realize it [15]. For example, when teaching the lesson "Saving the ants", the teacher consciously stuck to the theme of "protecting endangered animals" by showing pictures and videos of various kinds of stolen and endangered animals, while the students unconsciously accepted such information input, and in the following article analysis, they smoothly understood the general idea of the article and easily obtained the theme of protecting animals. Suggestopedia believes that in this learning process, students can unconsciously accept the teacher's suggestions and get better learning results [13].

### **4.3. Suggestion for Good Teacher-student Relationship**

The teacher-student relationship of mutual respect and trust is, to a large extent, cultivated by teachers' constant bodies. Body suggestion refers to the positive influence of teachers' nonverbal behaviors, such as eyes, expressions and gestures, on students' emotional changes, knowledge acquisition and skill mastery. For example, in the English class, when students retell the general idea of the article in fluent English, the teacher will nod his head and hint in an affirmative way, which can make students feel happy, more interested in English learning, more agree with the teacher's teaching methods, and thus establish a harmonious teacher-student relationship. As Mashayekh and Hashemi said, teachers create a harmonious, informal and supportive environment for students through their friendly, helpful and cooperative behaviors to make students feel comfortable and natural when speaking English in class [12].

#### **4.4. Authorizations of Teachers and Textbooks**

The so-called teacher authority does not mean that the teacher is always serious in front of the students, does not laugh, demands a strict look at the students' words and deeds, and does not allow students to have any objection to them. In a real sense, gaining authority over teachers requires teachers to have profound professional knowledge and broad knowledge, be able to use some artistic means to solve students' questions well, be approachable and amiable to students, and be able to establish a good teacher-student relationship with students. The authority of teaching materials means that the information source provided to students is authoritative, because people tend to remember the information of authoritative figures or authorities most easily. Such information sources can strengthen the suggestive effect of memory, and are students' role models.

#### **4.5. Childishness**

Many older people think that they are difficult to master a foreign language, lack confidence in themselves, and lack flexibility in learning. Childishness is to regard oneself as a child, take advantage of children's characteristics such as spontaneity, self-confidence and strong curiosity, eliminate adult interference factors and negative hints, get rid of the shackles of traditional ideas, and learn as easily as a child, especially learning a language. As English learner, people can play various roles in the learning process like a child, fully integrate into the performance, and eliminate tense negative emotions, The passivity of consciousness and the relaxation of the body makes teaching easier, and the learning effect of students will also be greatly increased [16].

#### **4.6. Language Harmony and Rhythm**

No language in the world is spoken with a single tone, and English is no exception. In classroom teaching, if the teacher's intonation is single and inflexible, without any fluctuation, it will only make students feel auditory fatigue, and naturally, the learning efficiency will be low. Once the voice changes in height and priority, the real and emphasized information can be displayed, and the content of the speech can also be strengthened. In teaching, if teachers can use artistic intonation and music to integrate, they will create an environment of accepting hints, adjust students' psychological state in time, and students' memory will be stronger and more lasting. Rhythm is the expression of the form of the center of gravity and the length of words' syllables. It can make the brain in the best control and coordination state. Once words or phrases appear in the form of appropriate pauses, the intonation can achieve the best effect. The combination of different intonations and rhythms can make teaching produce subtle changes and make students' memory reach the best state.

#### **4.7. Double Communication**

Double communication refers to the unconscious stimulation from the environment and the teachers' teaching characteristics to the students' unconscious psychology. The stimulus of the environment means that teachers should create a good teaching environment. The classroom is neatly arranged, the light is soft, and the teaching atmosphere is relaxed and pleasant, so that students have no psychological pressure. The teaching characteristics of teachers refer to that teachers should not be expressionless in the teaching process. They should combine their own expressions, intonation and teaching attitude with the content of the teaching. Teachers should be dignified and decent, so that students feel full of vitality and passion. Such teaching environment and teaching characteristics can attract students' unintentional attention, thus stimulating students' learning motivation and interest.

#### **4.8. False-negative State of Music**

The false negative state of music refers to the state in which the receiver is most likely to realize the suggestion in the deep relaxation state. The so-called deep relaxation does not mean being completely out of the teaching environment, but refers to the individual's physical relaxation, but the psychological activity is very positive, which is also called false negativity. Suggestopedia requires

teachers to use music as the background to teach the text in the teaching process. Music becomes a hint force in the teaching process to help students create a good psychological atmosphere. On the surface, students are in a state of physical relaxation and a happy mood, but in fact, students' thinking is highly concentrated. According to the research of the suggestiastopedia research laboratory, the memory rate of textbooks with music accompaniment is 2.17-2.50 times higher than that of textbooks without music accompaniment [15]. At ordinary times, the high-speed learning function of the right hemisphere of our brain is not well developed. However, psychologists have found that music can develop the right brain. Music is perceived by the right brain, and the right brain operates at a high speed, automatically processing information, while the left brain operates at a low speed, consciously processing information. Therefore, creating a music background can tap the potential of the right brain, let the left and right brains work together, and greatly improve learning efficiency.

It can be seen that as a flexible and innovative English teaching method, "suggestive to pedia" not only focuses on guiding students to give play to their personal potential and super memory, but also focuses on guiding students to give play to various sensory skills. At the same time, teachers effectively use various suggestive skills in the teaching process to eliminate various obstacles encountered by students in the learning process, so as to improve the quality of English teaching.

However, this method also has some shortcomings. The following will point out these problems and propose solutions.

## 5. Problems That Will Encounter

Allwright et al. found that many of the English teachers who have been accustomed to traditional teaching methods for many years, do not understand the new effective teaching methods developed in modern times, let alone consciously apply these teaching methods to practice [17].

Meng pointed out that suggestionstopedia has high requirements for conditions, such as a beautiful environment, excellent equipment and well-trained teachers. But the traditional teaching method saves time and effort, which makes many school administrators and teachers unwilling to waste time and effort to change the status quo. Therefore, the implementation and promotion of suggestiveness are limited [16].

In addition, Allwright et al. pointed out that from the perspective of students, they have long been used to the "inertia" formed by passive acceptance, which makes them feel nervous, at a loss, or even unwilling when faced with the requirement that they should speak and do actively [17].

Liang and Fang believed that because suggestionstopedia pays attention to students' participation, it may make some teachers tend to go to the other extreme when using this method of teaching, that is, they pay too much attention to the form and neglect to pay attention to the cultivation of students' solid basic language knowledge [13].

Ary et al. concluded through the survey that due to the limitations of teachers and teaching conditions, teaching in large classes with about 50 people is very common in China. Therefore, when implementing suggestive education activities, there will be too many students who cannot really participate in learning activities. This is likely to lead to the polarization of learning results [7].

## 6. Countermeasures

### 6.1. Education Administrators Should Attach Importance to Teachers' Teaching Reform from All Aspects

First of all, education managers should pay attention to learning and be knowledgeable. As a modern education manager, he should not only know his professional knowledge, education and psychological science knowledge, but also know politics, law and other aspects of knowledge. Only when managers improve their own level and fully understand the strategic position of education, can managers have a strong sense of career and political responsibility to revitalize education, and can they attach importance to the training of teachers engaged in teaching from the perspective of

ideology to broaden their horizons. Only in this way can teachers fundamentally change their ideas and consciously apply their advanced ideas to the teaching practice.

Secondly, managers should also be able to organize and coordinate effectively in specific work, that is, effectively use the human, material and financial resources of the organization, encourage and assist teachers who dare to carry out teaching reform practice, and help teachers solve various practical difficulties encountered in the improvement of suggestive teaching methods. So that more teachers can actively participate in the practice of the new teaching method.

## **6.2. Transformation of Teachers' Roles**

The new version of English textbooks used now more and more reflects the emphasis on students' subjectivity, and more attention is paid to students' subjective participation. Each unit is arranged with many related activities in combination with the teaching content. Suggestopedia is just such a teaching mode. Classes are like game performances. Usually, each lesson has a thematic dialogue, which is mainly completed by students with the help of teachers. This requires teachers to change their roles from the role of the teacher and controller in traditional education to that of the facilitator, director and cooperator of students' learning [10]. To successfully realize this role change, teachers should often communicate with students, establish a democratic and harmonious teacher-student relationship, care for and protect students, encourage and carefully observe students, find their highlights, enhance their interest and enthusiasm in learning, and thus promote English learning. Whether it is praise or encouragement, it is actually a positive external hint of teachers to students. In a word, teachers should prompt and constantly hint to students to adhere and relax, and encourage them to strive with benign language. Through repeated positive hints, the constant tapping of the same thought will make it imprinted in the students' subconscious, and the students' brains and behaviors will naturally form a positive conditioned reflex. From conscious self-control at the beginning to conscious action later, students will continue to strive along a benign track. In this way, due to the establishment of teachers' prestige and the active cooperation of students, the transformation of teachers' roles can be more easily realized.

At the same time, teachers should play different roles according to the specific situation of teaching to meet the needs of students. When using suggestive English teaching, teachers should pay more attention to the cultivation of students' self-study ability. For example, before the "ASKING FOR A JOB" teaching dialogue, students can arrange relevant questions and tasks such as "IS CHOOSING A JOB VITAL TO YOU? GIVE THE REASONS". Then select student representatives to report on the background or relevant knowledge of the content in the whole class before implementing specific teaching [6]. The teacher should summarize this content in time, evaluate and organize student group discussion or supplement some training. Let all students have a deep understanding and understanding of the role play dialogue in the job search. In order to effectively achieve the teaching objectives of these activities, teachers must have higher abilities and qualities.

## **6.3. Teachers Should Consciously and Comprehensively Improve Their Own Quality**

Suggestopedia applies interdisciplinary ideas and uses various means to teach. on the one hand, in order to make full use of these teaching methods, teachers should improve their abilities in all aspects. For example, teachers should be able to use fluent and appropriate English classroom language to organize classroom teaching and create an English language environment, which many English teachers are unable to do at present. Sometimes, in order to express the teaching content, teachers should use modern techniques such as singing, reading, choreography, rehearsal or multimedia technology according to the age and cognitive characteristics of students, so as to make abstract textbook knowledge vivid and form a learning process from easy to difficult. Teachers should also learn and study the psychological characteristics of students and have a sharp observation knife. They can figure out students' psychology and deal with emergencies, constantly give students positive hints, so that students can have a sense of achievement, so as to enhance their enthusiasm for

independent learning and help students gradually form an independent, active and creative personality [8].

#### **6.4. Help Students Adapt to the Change from the Original Teaching Method to Suggestive Education**

When using suggestive education, teachers should carefully prepare before class, including the selection of main teaching content, key and difficult points, and what kind of suggestive means to use; On the basis of a full and correct understanding of the students, the teaching activity process and the reasonable application of hints are carefully designed to promote the progress and improvement of students' attitudes, emotions, values, scientific knowledge and various abilities by using the learned content.

The careful preparation before class is for teachers to naturally and insidiously use various hints in the process of organizing classes. In order to eliminate students' tension, let students learn in a "childish" state. The so-called childishness means that students should listen to music, play games and enter their own roles like children, carefree, free and happy. This is the moment when the brain's absorptive power and creativity can best play and carry out super inner activities, namely the so-called false negative state [5]. In the process of continuous circulation, encourage and help students to accept the new teaching method psychologically, let students feel the superiority of the new teaching method from the fact that their English level has been improved, and guide them to change from passive to active. At the same time, they should change their learning habits accordingly, and finally enable students to develop the ability to explore learning independently from activities under the guidance of teachers.

#### **6.5. Grammar Teaching Adopts the Combination of Traditional Teaching Method and Suggestiveness**

For Chinese students who are used to traditional teaching methods and have limited teachers and conditions for English teaching in schools, the author thinks that, first, the combination of traditional teaching methods and suggestive English teaching is a practical and feasible teaching approach. That is, it does not exclude traditional grammar teaching, so that students can master certain grammar knowledge through traditional teaching methods, and then use suggestive English teaching materials (and corresponding textbooks) to teach their grammar. Phonics and other knowledge are transformed into listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities in different activities.

Second, this situation is also a reality that teachers engaged in foreign language teaching should face. It is an urgent task for teachers to strengthen their own quality and give full play to the existing teaching conditions with their own intelligence. For example, body suggestion is a requirement for teachers' character cultivation, knowledge level and comprehensive quality level of demeanor and temperament; the environment and music hints also require teachers to use their brains and brainstorm to create many new activities according to the teaching content to promote the progress of students. However, in view of the common situation of more than 50 large classes, teachers can set up learning groups in the class. When assigning learning groups, teachers should pay attention to the reasonable combination between excellent students and temporarily lagging behind students, and determine the corresponding evaluation criteria according to the theme and task of each learning, so as to ensure the effectiveness of teaching activities [3].

### **7. Conclusions**

In conclusion, this paper first introduces three definitions of Suggestopedia and summarizes their common points. That is, by giving positive psychological hints, creating a relaxed learning environment, thus promoting students' unconscious learning mechanism, developing their learning potential, and ultimately improving their learning ability in an all-round way.

Therefore, this paper also introduces eight methods of using Suggestopedia in detail, which are relaxed and invasive environment suggestion, positive non-conscious suggestion, good teacher-study relationship suggestion, authoritative teacher and textbook, childishness, integration and rhythm, double communication, and false negative state of music. Finally, this paper expounds on the current dilemma of using Suggestopedia in English teaching and proposes solutions.

In order to improve the effect of English teaching, English teachers should pay attention to students' attributes toward English learning. Suggestopedia believes that in the process of introduction, teachers should create attractive learning situations related to the theme of English learning content to stimulate students' interest in learning. In the process before, during and after class, teachers should use certain strategies, such as changing intonation strategies, to attract students to participate in learning activities.

Suggestive teaching theory is still in constant improvement. How to effectively implement suggestiveness in English teaching and how to solve various problems encountered in the implementation of suggestiveness need people to constantly explore in practice. However, foreign language teachers can consciously change their teaching concepts, actively adopt suggestiveness, and combine traditional grammar teaching and other effective teaching methods to explain grammar knowledge and carry out various student independent learning activities, constantly practice and cultivate students' ability of "independent, active and creative learning". In this process, various creative methods of suggestive learning will emerge.

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