SUGGESTOPEDIA

Sekta Lonir Oscarini Wati Bhakti

(Staf Pengajar Jurusan Teknik Sipil Politeknik Negeri Samarinda)

Abstract

Suggestopedia is one of teaching methods that introduced by Georgi Lozanov. The main objection of this method is to motivate more of students’ mental potential to learn and which obtained by suggestion. In this method, there are six principal theoretical components that make it different from the other methods. And to achieve those components, it also puts suggestions into practice by making use of instructional techniques. There are also three kinds of teaching tools that used in suggestopedia such as, psychological means, didactic means, and artistic means. And also, there is a multitude of skills that someone needs to acquire in order to become a “suggestopedic” teacher. In every method, there are always some advantages and weaknesses, and so does the suggestopedia.

Key-Word: teaching method, suggestopedia, music

INTRODUCTION

Background

Suggestopedia is a specific set of learning recommendations derived from Suggestology. It is a method developed by Georgi Lozanov, the Bulgarian psychologist and educator, in 1975. He created suggestopedia for learning that capitalized on relaxed states of mind for maximum retention material. By using kind of method, memorization in learning by the suggestopedic method seems to be accelerated 25 times over that in learning by conventional methods (Lozanov 1978:27). Lozanov also claimed that there is no sector public life where suggestology would not be useful (Lozanov 1978:2).

The most important objectives of suggestopedia is to motivate more of students’ mental potential to learn and which obtained by suggestion. Suggestopedia focuses on how to deal with the relationship between mental potential and learning efficiency.

Approach: Theory of Language and Learning

Lozanov (1978) cited in Priyatmojo (2009) argued that learners have difficulties in acquiring English as the second language because of the fear of the students to make mistakes. If the learners are in this condition, their heart and blood pressure raise. He believes that there is a mental block in the learners’ brain (affective filter). This filter blocks the input, so the learners have the difficulties to acquire language cause by their fear. The combination desuggestion and suggestion is to lower affective filter and motivate students’ mental potential to learn, aiming to accelerate the process by which they learn to understand and use the target language for communication to achieve superlearning. It is the final goal of suggestopedia. So we can conclude that there are three fundamental aims of suggestopedia according to Lozanov:

(1) to demonstrate that the human personality possesses potential capabilities far exceeding those recognized by generally accepted social norms;

(2) to analyze the extent to which various individual achievements could be expected from all or from most members of society; and

(3) to promote interest in the search for methods of exploration. (4, p.9)
According to Richard and Rogers (1998), there are six principal theoretical components through which desuggestion and suggestion operate:

1. **Authority** students remember best and are influenced when information comes from an authority or teachers,

2. **Infantilization** learners may regain self-confidence in a relation of student-teacher like that of parent to children,

3. **Double-planedness** learning comes not only from direct instruction but also from the environment in which instruction takes places, and

4. **Intonation, rhythm, and concert pseudo-passiveness** varying tone and rhythm of presentation frees the instruction from boredom, and presenting linguistic material with music gets the benefit of the effect produced on body.

Moreover, Dumitrana delivered there three principles constitute a framework of suggestopedia:

1. **Joyful and spontaneous concentrative calmness**,  
   According to this method, human beings continuously perceive and store the stimuli in their environment at both conscious and subconscious levels. The conscious represents the verbal, rational, cognitive whereas the subconscious the non-verbal, emotional and intuitive aspects of the self. The learners who start the learning process bring a great deal of content stored in their own subconscious and during the process of learning the stimuli coming from the classroom environment exert both conscious and subconscious influences on mind.

2. **Dynamic, structured and hierarchical global**, and

3. **Desuggestive set-up with the aim of the spontaneous freeing of the reserve capacities of the mind and brain.**

The method of suggestopedia can be analyzed by focusing on two components, namely the perceptual levels of the learners and the techniques of controlling them. (Kemaloglu: 2005).

1. **The Perceptual levels of the learners: The Subconscious and conscious.**
   According to this method, human beings continuously perceive and store the stimuli in their environment at both conscious and subconscious levels. The conscious represents the verbal, rational, cognitive whereas the subconscious the non-verbal, emotional and intuitive aspects of the self. The learners who start the learning process bring a great deal of content stored in their own subconscious and during the process of learning the stimuli coming from the classroom environment exert both conscious and subconscious influences on mind.

2. **The Psychological techniques of controlling the subconscious and conscious in the learning environment** Suggestopedia holds that the starting point in the language teaching process should be getting control of both conscious and subconscious influences and use them to optimize learning. This can be achieved by “suggestion”. The ways how suggestion and its derivatives such as desuggestion, direct and indirect suggestion can be extended into the learning environment are described from the perspective of Suggestopedia as follows:

   (a) **Desuggestion and suggestion.**  
   Desuggestion means unloading the memory banks, or reserves, off wanted or blocking memories. It deals with by creating a learning atmosphere where all messages have a positive emotional content. The learning atmosphere is involved by the students’ internal environment (the self) and the external environment (the classroom). Suggestion then means loading the memory banks with desires and facilitating memories. It is believed that if this was done, the learners would be able to overcome the barriers to learning and use their maximum potential capacity, which means retention and recall of what has been learnt in the long term.

   (b) **Direct and indirect suggestion.** Based on his studies on yoga, Lazanov claims that the best learning takes place in a relaxed but focused state. To achieved this, instruction takes place on two planes. On the conscious plane there is direct suggestion and the language itself is used here. On the subconscious plane instruction is achieved indirect suggestion by using elements which surround the language.

   To achieve the components above, suggestopedia puts suggestion into practice by making use of instructional techniques which can be grouped under the following titles (Kemaloglu: 2005):

   **Techniques used in environmental set-up.**
   The environment of the classroom must be as comfortable as possible. In learning process, it needs having a pleasing, relaxing, and stimulating arrangement of the classroom. To do this there is soft-cushioned seating arranged in the form of a semicircle, dim lighting and soft music played in the classroom. It also necessary to hung some posters around the classroom to encourage “peripheral learning” and some works of fine arts such as classical paintings to give a shooting and facilitating effect on human psychology.

   **Authority-building techniques underlying the teachers’ and the learners’ role.**
   It is maintained that information which is considered to be coming from an authority source
is likely to be remembered best and be the most influential of all information types. This belief
indeed highlights the teacher’s role and the learner’s role in this method. The teacher’s role is
the teacher has the complete authority and control in the classroom. The teacher should have
absolute confidence in the method, be organized and punctual, be very careful about choosing smart
clothes and reflect the teacher’s self confidence and enthusiasm by communicating reassuringly
with the learner through facial expressions, body language, voice intonations, warmth and sensitivity.
And since the teacher treats the students like a parent, the student assumes a child-like role. The
students engage in role plays, song and breathing exercises that are believed to have the potential of
making them feel self confident, spontaneous and receptive like children.

Then techniques concerning presentation of the linguistic material.

It consist of:

(a) The layout and content of the linguistic material.
The linguistic material presented to the students is in the forms of lengthy (but not
difficult) dialogues or stories in the target language. It is to avoid the students to be felt
that they are capable of managing the subject matter, which will increase their self
confidence. The material should not include logical, effective and ethнич barriers. Each
linguistic material should be presented on a page divided into two, including the target
language in the right and its translation into the native language on the left. There is a
research that the readers have a tendency to focus on the right hand-side of the page.
After distributing the material to the students, the teacher gives time to the students to have
a look it and then partly in the native language and partly through body language the teacher
outlines the flow off the text and gives a quick and brief explanation of the grammar point(s)
to be covered. Following this, a presentation session with music starts.

(b) Presentation of the harmony with the classical music.
Concert session is part of lesson where the teacher read the text twice while listening the
classical music playing in the background. This session consist of two stages, there are:

(1) Active concert: the teacher turns on the tape recorder to play classical music for
relieving effects. The teacher allow the students to get into the mood of the music
for a few minutes and then starts reading

varying his/her intonation and rhythm in accordance with the music as if his/her
voice were one of the instruments in the orchestra. The students at the same time
follow the text actively.

(2) Passive concert: It this concert, another classical music work, which is slower than
the former one, plays in the background. The teacher again give some time to
students to listen the music and then
reads the text for the second time.

Techniques concerning the follow-up stages.
There are two follow up stages aiming student activation to present the text. At the
primary activation stage, students are asked to
reread the dialogues aloud in a dramatic way by
embedding various emotions in it as individuals and
in groups. They may also be provided with
costumes and wigs to make the role play more
realistic. Dramatization is done because of the
significance attached to arts, that is to say, in
addition to the use of fine arts and music
dramatisation is also deemed to be an important
artistic technique that should be used to facilitate
learning. At the second activation stage, students
engage in a variety of activities such as singing
songs, making conversations, playing games and
creating and acting role-plays. All the activities are
grammatically and lexically relevant to the
presented material but this is not brought to
student’s attention since the focus is on the
communicative meaning, not on form. Also the
activities are often carried out in pairs /groups at
these stages.

Techniques concerning error treatment.
Errors are tolerated since the emphasis is
on content not structure. They are not corrected
immediately. When errors of form occur the teacher
uses the correct form in soft voice following the
activities. Another interesting technique to deal
with the errors affectively is the technique of giving
students new identities in the beginning of the
guestopedic classes. The belief is that by
assuming new names and roles in the target
language, the learners do not feel embarrassed as
the errors they make seem to be not their own. This
technique not also masks their errors but also
represents a break with the previous learning
experiences which might have been unsuccessful.

Techniques concerning homework.
The only homework given to the students is
re-reading the presented linguistic material once
before they go to sleep at night and once in the
morning just after they get up as these periods are
alleged to be the periods where optimal learning
takes place.
Evaluation Techniques.

The assessment of the students’ performance is made on the basis of students’ in-class involvement. Formal tests are avoided for the fear that they might deteriorate the relaxing aura of the classroom atmosphere and act as a threatening force against learner’s self-esteem.

According to Dumitrana, there are some teaching tools used in suggestopædia that divided in three groups:

(1) Psychological means.

*Psychological means* refer firstly to the overall organization of the teaching-learning communication. The important element here is the way the peripheral perceptions will be organized, that is they should stimulate rather than to illustrate these peripheral perceptions include beside the wall posters with the content of study the whole classroom atmosphere. The room has to be clean and arrange in an aesthetic way, not too much decorated with unnecessary objects, pictures. The visual material (posters, charts) is done also aesthetically. The teacher contributes in a very large measure to the classroom atmosphere; s/he should be animated, inspiring, calm, enjoying the work; his/her voice itself has to be fresh and melodious.

(2) Didactic means.

*Didactic means* refer to several elements: the hierarchical structure of the material, part-whole relation with the prevalence of the holistic the material used in an academic hour is two to ten times more than the amount of material used in a ‘traditional’ hour. The methods used are communicational, so the students’ attention is directed to the whole sentence, to its meaningful communicative aspect, to its place and role in the given amusing situation while the pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar remain on a second plane though not overlooked. The teacher draws the students’ attention to them only for a short time and then goes back quickly to the sense of the whole sentence and situation. Most of these grammar elements are learned along with the whole structure without any special attention given to them. (3, p.262).

(3) Artistic means.

*Artistic means* : Suggestopædia introduces a special type of didactic art in the teaching-learning process, in the content of the lessons (music, literature, visual material, acting and so on). “ The artistic means is used both to create a pleasant atmosphere during the process of receiving, memorizing and understanding the principal information given in the lesson and to enhance the suggestive set-up for reserves, attitude, motivation, and expectancy. Through the artistic means part of the material is immediately assimilated.”(4, pp.70-71; 22, p.262)

The suggestopædic teachers

There is a multitude of skills that someone needs to acquire in order to become a “suggestopædic” teacher. Here there are few of them according to Dumitrana:

(1) How to conduct teaching-learning communication on the edge of knowledge and on the edge of the believing system of the individual students in the group,

(2) How and when to vary the intonation and behaviour to convey the study material,

(3) How to master the “laughter” system in a practical way,

(4) How to practically master the “song” system,

(5) How to vary the intonation during the concert session,

(6) How to apply the dynamic global principle at each moment of teaching,

(7) How to make the transition from the whole to the part and from the part to the whole,

(8) How to use peripheral perceptions,

(9) How to prepare illustrative material and make it stimulating at the same time,

(10) How to plan both active and passive knowledge. How to recognize and at the same time use or avoid the placebo,

(11) How to recognize the inducement of a hypnotic state and how not to allow its occurrence,

(12) How to organize and utilize the three means of desuggestive teaching: didactic, psychological and artistic in their unity; so that there should not be a segment of work or rest etc. It should all flow,

(13) How to keep different intensity of work at the time of elaboration near the golden proportion, and,

(14) How to understand and to apply love for human beings.

The Effects of Suggestopedic Instruction

The design of suggestopedic instruction, outlined above, leads to the assumption that this kind of learning environment has positive cognitive, motivational, emotional, and social effects. Individual differences between learners are
taken into consideration as well, since it is the declared goal of suggestopedy to give special help to those learners with a somewhat more negative approach to learning, such as, for example, a high degree of dispositional anxiety.

**Cognitive effects: development of knowledge.**

The situational design of suggestopedic exercises as well as extensive exposure to the complex, authentic system of the target language in suggestopedic language instruction should lead to knowledge which can be easily activated in relevant situations. It can be expected that this exposure to complex, authentic language has an especially positive effect on the development of listening comprehension and the ability to communicate in a foreign language in everyday situations.

**Motivational effects.**

As suggestopedic instruction offers frequent opportunities to select the acquired knowledge according to personal interests or intent to apply the learning, learners should quite often experience the feeling of autonomy and self-determination. The manner in which different forms of practice are embedded in rich situational contexts helps the learner understand rather complex remarks even with a limited vocabulary. Experiences of success such as those are likely to frequently let learners experience a feeling of competence. Thus, overall, suggestopedic instruction can be expected to have positive motivational effects.

**Emotional effects:**

**Anxiety.**

Suggestopedic instruction responds to this emotional need through the frequent use of relaxation exercises as well as through reducing nervousness in movement-oriented exercises. We can therefore assume that suggestopedic instruction has a positive effect on the emotional dimension of the learning process. It is the learner with a relatively high level of learning and achievement anxiety who stands to profit the most from this kind of instruction.

**Social effects.**

By motivating independent groups of learners to work on a certain subject matter even after a corresponding course has ended ("groups of practice"), self-regulated and autonomous development of knowledge, especially on a long term basis, is promoted. A positive view of the shared process of learning is vital for the formation of such groups. Suggestopedic instruction frequently uses exercises which provide a high degree of social interaction and authentic communication. It is seen as very important that learners become acquainted with each other.

Therefore we can expect that students in a suggestopedic course will experience cooperation with other students as well as with the instructor in a positive way. In the study at hand we will examine the above mentioned effects of suggestopedic instruction (DGSL) by examining a suggestopedic language-course (English for beginners).

**The Disadvantages of Suggestopedia and Its Applicability to Teaching**

It is not fair to analyze only from the benefit aspects. Suggestopedia also has limitation since there is no single teaching method that is chatedorized as the best based on some consideration such as: the curriculum, students motivation, financial limitation, number of students, etc. The main disadvantages of suggestopedia are as follow:

1. **Environment limitation.**

   Most schools in developing countries have large classes. Each class consists of 30 to 40 students. One of the problems faced in utilizing this method is the number of students in the class. And also the situation of the country that is not quite enough to do relaxation in the classroom, such as the chaos

2. **The use of hypnosis.**

   Some people say that suggestopedia uses a hypnosis, so it has bad deep effects for human beings. Lazanov strongly denied about it.

3. **Infantilization learning.**

   Suggestopedia class is conditioned be child-like situation. There are some students who do not like to be treated like this as they think that they are mature

4. **The using of classical Music.**

   As there are people who find classical music irritating rather than stimulating and classical music in some cultures may sound “foreign”. Also there is the possibility that exaggeration of rhythm and intonation may be perceived “odd” and “illogical”

5. **The long text.**

   Some learners are apt to have a negative attitude to long texts. They often have a tendency to think that the longer the text is, the more boring learning will be.

6. **The “how” part of language learning.**

   The main components of language learning namely vocabulary, structures, functions and topics

http://www.karyaimiah.polnes.ac.id
are not harmonized on a sound basis so the failure in putting the language items in order may serve to confuse the learners rather than motivate them. There is “this” and “that” and learners are expected to pick them up randomly through internalization.

Conclusion

Using suggestopedia in teaching is very interesting but challenging to do. It can be seen from some considerations. In one side it has some benefits, but on the other side it also has some weaknesses. In addition, the key factors of effective teaching are not the approaches and methods in language teaching themselves but the teacher’s deliberate selection of different approaches and methods and the devoted practice of putting theories into real teaching activities in a corresponding social-cultural context.

All in all, as teachers we should not be the fanatics of just one method. Suggestopedia helps us with the brilliant idea that there should be pleasing memories in the learning environment for effective language acquisition. In order to create those memories the techniques that Suggestopedia has brought into the field of ELT can be harmonized with the current ones we apply so as to create a humanistic learning environment.

REFERENCES


Priyatmojo, Arif Suryo. 2009. Suggestopedia as a Method for Teaching Speaking for Young Learners in a Second Language Classroom from pps.unnes.ac.id/pps1/files/.../Arif%20Suryo%20P.doc