

## LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR ESP STUDENTS WITH SUGGESTOPEDIA METHOD APPLICATION

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**Abstract.** As a result of global changes in the world, the role of a foreign language in the education system has altered. From an ordinary university subject, a foreign language has turned into one of the basic elements of the modern education system, a means to achieve professional realization for the individual. These changes demand new approaches and methods of teaching. The paper is dedicated to the issues of non-traditional methods of language acquisition in non-linguistic universities, namely the suggestopedia method for ESP students of engineering specialties considering perspectives of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is supposed an important factor in sustainable development at the global, national, and local levels. The research widens the standards to progress speaking competence. A total of 80 undergraduate students of engineering majors at the Podillia State University (Ukraine) completed the mandatory ESP course in the 2021-2022 academic year and were involved in the experiment, being divided into two groups: the first group, where the traditional approach to mastering conversational skills was applied, and the second one, which practiced a communicative approach to language learning. Based on the results of the experiment, the hypothesis regarding the effectiveness of the communicative approach to learning a foreign language as opposed to the traditional approach to learning has been justified. The conducted research proves the effectiveness of the suggestopedia method for improving speaking skills as a way of developing the linguistic competence of students and leading to obtaining lifelong learning habits.

**Keywords:** foreign language acquisition, non-traditional approaches for EFL, suggestopedia method, ESP, lifelong learning.

### Introduction

The idea of lifelong learning is associated with the concept of a half-life of knowledge. It was proposed by the Austrian American economist Fritz Machlup in the 20th century [1]. The essence of the concept is simple: the world changes so dynamically and new information spreads so quickly that some knowledge ceases to be relevant even before we acquire it. Accordingly, there are professions for which aging and decay of knowledge occur very quickly, for example, the field of information technologies. And there are those where it happens more slowly: professions based on knowledge of mathematics or language. Under such conditions, academic education needs constant updating, and to keep up with information, it is necessary to study throughout life. The prerequisite to becoming a lifelong learner is to become a person with an active and continuous learning capacity.

At the present stage of development of the methodology of teaching foreign languages, special emphasis is placed on new trends in the selection of methods focused on the goal of learning – the formation of the main features of a language personality in students. The material acquired with the help of such methods should be perceived as a tool and means of social interaction with communication partners. One of the modern methods of teaching is suggestive learning (from the Latin *suggestio*) – it is a relatively new system of education that uses the means of suggestion for educational and educational purposes. The technology of suggestive learning is based on expanding the hidden capabilities of a person, which in turn allows for deepening and making the learning process more effective. Suggestive learning is widely used in the methodology of teaching foreign languages. The Bulgarian psychiatrist G. Lozanov proposed a kind of suggestive learning technology - a purposeful suggestion based on relaxation (relaxation, reduction of tension) in a normal state of consciousness, which leads to the effect of hypermnnesia (super-memorization). The scientist created a kind of “concert” mood in his suggestopedic classes, turning to bright images, facial expressions, music, and others. The science Lozanov called “suggestology” reveals, in his opinion, the mechanisms that ensure the release and mobilization of a person’s reserve capabilities to better remember, learn, and communicate [2].

The suggestopedia method is considered Accelerated Learning Movement as it involves the rapid acquisition of language patterns due to the human mind’s potential and ability to memorize information by suggestions. This method uses certain memory concepts to teach English as a second language. Students are given segments of the new information in the original language, and it is read aloud to

classical music in the framework. This practice is also identified as a concert reading. The idea behind suggestopedia is to create a restful informal atmosphere for the mind to absorb and store this information. Against the background of such concert pseudo-passivity, in the presence of a suggestive mindset for super-memorization, anti-suggestive barriers are more easily overcome, and the reserve possibilities of the psyche are released. Thus, in the created suggestive atmosphere, not only memory functions are increased to the level of hypermnesia (super memory), but also strength is restored in the learning process. This method is rather applicable if the student is shy or fearful and occurred to be very relevant due to the war situation in Ukraine and the constant need for stress resilience by teachers and students.

Several national and foreign scholars and scientists have already studied the topic of non-traditional methods of studying languages, thus there are some papers worth to be mentioned.

C.Q. Nematova studied innovative methods of teaching English in the education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Implementing information and communication technologies in the process of teaching EFL proved to be beneficial for the development of students' logical thinking skills, language fluency, and accuracy. The author suggests games involved in the learning process as an efficient tool for mastering language skills and developing students' curiosity and free-thinking [3].

M. Drohomyretska presented an overview of different procedural approaches and the communicative method of foreign language teaching in her recent paper. The author concluded that due to the dynamic and reflective process of language acquisition, the implementation of different methods and their combination is crucial while learning a foreign language [4].

O. Chaikovska et al making their research on Podcast applications underlined the impact of technology on the assimilation of students' writing and speaking skills. The experiment was dedicated to finding the similarities and differences in obtaining writing and speaking skills by students of engineering specialties through Podcast implications. The experiment justified no significant variations for both skills mastering [5].

A. Polishchuk analyzed the application of the Internet services, software, and communication tools in the educational environment while training future agricultural engineers. The author substantiated the necessity of the utilization of innovative information and communication technologies for the modernization of the educational process [6].

M. Ghosh analyzed current language teaching trends worldwide and defined 9 different methods of teaching the English language in 2023. The scholar emphasizes the validity of the following methods: grammar paraphrasing, natural method, audio-lingual method, humanistic approach, suggestopedia, silent way method, method of total physical response, content and language integrated learning, and communicative language teaching. The author also defines 4 basic approaches to teaching in modern times, such as task-based approach, project-based approach, lexical syllabus, and the usage of smartphones in the classroom is also defined as a separate approach [7].

F. Herbert defined 8 methods of language teaching such as the direct method, grammar translation method, audio-lingual method, the structural approach, total physical response, communicative language teaching, task-based learning, and the natural approach. The scholar underlined the necessity of mixing the abovementioned methods and adapting them to the students' needs and levels [8].

Nevertheless, the set of educational methods and tools is constantly enlarging and being complemented with new ones. So, the suggestopedia method being a sort of combination of psychology and pedagogy is worth analyzing, especially taking into consideration the challenging situation for Ukrainian education now. Unusual circumstances demand non-traditional approaches. So, the purpose of the current research is to study the impact of non-traditional methods of language learning applied at ESP classes on the student's language acquisition and investigate the outcomes of the experiment conducted.

## Materials and methods

To achieve the set goals, we launched a combined research model based on quantitative, statistical, qualitative, and descriptive methods. Quantitative and statistical methods were used to obtain objective results, which helped us process the results of testing students of two groups, one of which used traditional methods of language learning (control group), and the second – a communicative

(suggestopedia) method of learning (experimental group). A qualitative method was developed to study students' opinions regarding the discussion of lesson problems. To confirm the hypothesis about the effectiveness of the suggestopedia method, a survey in the form of a written questionnaire was conducted. A descriptive method was used to analyze the student questionnaire and research results.

The experiment took place during the academic year of 2021-2022 with the bachelor students of engineering specialties such as Mechanical Engineering, Food Technologies, and Engineering, Transport Technologies, and Automobile Transport. Due to the curriculum the subject "Foreign Language (English)" covers 3 ECTS credits (90 hours) per year [9]. All the respondents were aware of the experiment and gave their contents for participation.

At the initial stage, the students were divided into two groups for the experiment: the control group and the experimental group. The total number of respondents was 80, with 40 people in each group.

To test the significance of acquiring linguistic competence, students of engineering specialties of the Podillia State University were offered a three-staged experiment: 1) evaluation stage: diagnostic testing aimed at verifying the primary linguistic competence of foreign language learners 2) study period (the academic year of 2021-2022) and 3) control: final testing intended to examine ultimate linguistic competence of learners of a foreign language.

## Results and discussion

The diagnostic test ([http://prodibing.fkip.unsri.ac.id/userfiles/english\\_test.pdf/](http://prodibing.fkip.unsri.ac.id/userfiles/english_test.pdf/)) was suggested to the students of all groups at the first lesson. It involved two parts: a grammar block and a speaking session. The same grammar test and speaking tasks were given to the students at the end of the year as a final evaluation. The grammar tests consisted of 100 questions (0,5 points for each correct answer) and the speaking section comprised 5 oral assignments (maximum 10 points for each correct answer), the total score a student could get – was 100 points respectively. The answer analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Answer analysis

Score	Language proficiency level
0-20	elementary
21-50	lower intermediate
51-60	intermediate
61-80	upper intermediate
81-100	advanced

During the second stage – the study period – groups of students were expected to integrate grammar and vocabulary in close to real communicative situations. Both groups studied the same conversational topics based on vocabulary and grammar according to the program. However, the methods were completely different.

The control group that was taught English in traditional English methods was given the usual instructions with the explanation of new terms and subjects, the performance of oral and written tasks, and essay writing. The teacher played the role of an instructor who supervised all the activities of the students.

The experimental group had their ESP classes with the suggestopedia method application. All the lessons were conducted in professional laboratories equipped with engineering machinery. During the class, music plays softly in the background. Situationally organized language material, which is polylogues in a foreign language on certain topics and their translation into the students' native language, is read aloud by the teacher accompanied by classical music. Students are given the setting to listen to music and not text. Further processing of the material learned in this way for its use in free oral communication, which is considered the main goal of learning in this method, also takes place in an informal, comfortable atmosphere. Students actively use the acquired knowledge of a foreign language in classes, and in the afternoon, at home, they diligently repeat the words. Mistakes in their speech are allowed since the main thing is to create an attitude towards relaxed communication in a foreign language. Role-playing games are used, which allow students to use their creative potential and create

additional motivation. Here roles are distributed according to a pre-developed script. The role play in suggestopedia practice presupposes that each student from the very beginning receives a new name and a new biography. At the same time, the language of communication can also be changed. The assignment by students of a new name and biography creates a special effect of liberation from personal individual socio-psychological “clamps” that students may have. The game situations created in the future free a person from the pressure of his social position, facilitate the rapid removal of anti-suggestive barriers, and stimulate the spontaneous and direct manifestation of the personality’s capabilities. Such a relaxed atmosphere involuntarily leads a person to the need for communication, first with the help of a teacher, and then independently. People contact each other. At first, with some difficulties, and then more and more freely, they begin to communicate in a foreign language. Besides, it leads to extra motivation for lifelong learning and trying on different professional roles. Motivation itself is crucial in the context of knowledge acquisition [10].

After the last stage, to test the value of the suggestopedia method, the students of the experimental group practicing this approach were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire containing several statements with which the respondents agreed or disagreed. The questionnaire was composed of five multiple-choice questions that respondents could select from. These were closed-ended questions. The time required to accomplish the questionnaire was about 5-7 minutes.

Due to the results of the primary diagnostic test and the final one for the control group, the following chart was compiled (Table 2).

Table 2

#### Primary and final test results for the control group

Grades	Primary test		Final test		Variation
	Quantity of respondents	%	Quantity of respondents	%	%
A	2	5	5	12.5	+7.5
B	3	7.5	6	15	+9
C	21	52.5	22	55	+2.5
D	11	27.5	6	15	-12.5
E	3	7.5	1	2.5	-5
Total	40	100	40	100	–

Due to the results of the primary diagnostic test and the final one for the experimental group, the following chart was compiled (Table 3).

Table 3

#### Primary and final test results for the experimental group

Grades	Primary test		Final test		Variation
	Quantity of respondents	%	Quantity of respondents	%	%
A	2	5	5	12.5	+7.5
B	4	10	8	20	+10
C	19	47.5	25	62.5	+15
D	13	32.5	2	5	-27.5
E	2	5	–	–	-5
Total	40	100	40	100	–

Primary and final tests, which comprised communicative assignments (one part was concentrated on testing the skills of forming sentences, the other on the ability to operate sentences), were conducted for both groups of students. In the research, the p-value was determined to discover if there is statistical significance, which is usually displayed as a p-value from 0 to 1. To acquire the p-value index, the results of the entire group, not a single student, were estimated. The lower p-value specifies that the null hypothesis should be debated [11]. The statistics results are presented in Table 4.

After the testing period, the participants were offered a questionnaire to find out their attitude to the method of suggestopedia, which was applied in the educational process in the ESP classes. The results

of the questionnaire data analysis are presented in Table 5 below. Many students (78%) support the use of the suggestopedia method in the learning process, and 75% of students consider the innovative methodology involved in the learning process quite useful for improving speaking skills and mastering their level of English.

Table 4

**Primary and final test results for both groups**

Group	Points	Speaking skills					
		Sentence forming			Sentence operating		
		Primary test results%	Final test results%	<i>p</i> -value	Primary test results%	Final test results%	<i>p</i> -value
Control	90-100	6.1	11.2	0.051321	5.1	10.2	0.051950
	82-89	6.7	11.8		7.7	12.8	
	75-81	50.3	44.2		51.3	46.2	
	66-74	30.2	23.5		28.2	20.5	
	50-65	6.7	9.3		7.7	10.3	
Experimental	90-100	4	18	0.000019	5	20	0.000069
	82-89	8.5	27		7.5	25	
	75-81	50	45		55	50	
	66-74	32	10		25	5	
	50-65	5.5	-		7.5	-	

Table 5

**Questionnaire results**

Statement	Highly agree%	Agree%	Not sure%	Disagree%	Highly disagree%
The Suggestopedia method for ESP class is rather essential	25	53	12	8	2
The Suggestopedia method for ESP class is more captivating than other methods	16	59	15	7	3
The Suggestopedia method tends to improve speaking skills	10	66	14	4	6
The Suggestopedia method tends to improve my level of English	13	62	16	5	4
I would rather study ESP with traditional methods	5	10	25	40	20

Hence, the results obtained confirmed the hypotheses: 1) that the communicative approach to language teaching is more effective than the traditional one in the context of language acquisition and helps students overcome language and psychological barriers and motivate them for lifelong learning; 2) EFL students do not have adequate linguistic competence and are not sufficiently able to use proper language structures to display various facts and attitudes towards them in professional communication until they are provided with a special ESP communicative course using the suggestopedia method.

Thus, it is important to note that the suggestopedia method in teaching foreign languages should not be ignored, because, thanks to a special technology, it can solve several educational problems much more successfully than other methods. Among these tasks, it should be noted teaching oral forms of communication, increasing the motivation for learning, and removing psychological barriers. In cases where a significant place is given to oral forms of communication (listening and speaking) in the

program goals, suggestopedia can be safely recommended as one of the most successful approaches to achieving these goals, for example, within the framework of the communicative approach. However, we should not forget that the use of the suggestopedia methodology requires a certain correction of theoretical provisions, retraining of teachers, and the creation of new training courses that correspond to the conditions of higher education.

### Conclusions

1. Recently, an interdisciplinary approach has become a characteristic feature of effectiveness in acquiring foreign language competence, the methods that combine psychological and pedagogical techniques of foreign language learning are especially rewarding, in particular the suggestopedia method.
2. The purpose of suggestopedia is to speed up the process of language learning. The relationship between teacher and students in suggestopedia teaching is similar to the relationship between parents and children. The educational process is “learner-centered”. The suggestopedia method has positive impacts on students: cognitive, motivational, emotional, and social.
3. Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that the communicative approach, namely the suggestopedia method of language teaching applied in the study insisted to increase the linguistic competence of EFL students in forming and operating language patterns appropriate to communicative situations and, as a result, to cultivate successful communication in professional situations. It is convinced to be more productive than the traditional approach to language teaching by the experiment results and is stimulating for lifelong learning.
4. The application of the suggestopedia method has proven its effectiveness, and therefore it can be applied in pedagogical practice not only within the limits of one educational subject or a certain country, but globally and worldwide.

### Author contributions

Conceptualization, I.H.; methodology, O.P. and O.M.; software, A.P.; validation, I.H. and A.P.; formal analysis, O.P. and O.M.; investigation, I.H., A.P., O.P. and O.M.; data curation, I.H., O.P. and O.M.; writing – original draft preparation, I.H.; writing – review and editing, I.H. and A.P.; visualization, O.P., O.M.; project administration, I.H.; funding acquisition, O.P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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