



## LANGUAGE LEARNING

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### ROLE OF MANUALS IN TEACHING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AND LEXIS OF FUTURE EFL TEACHERS

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*The article explicates the significance of the use of educators' practical manuals for teaching English pronunciation and lexis at higher education. It proves that manuals help to adapt the main information from the course books according to the needs and abilities of future EFL teachers. It appears to be the fact that manuals support and complement educators and their ways of teaching. It reveals that cognitive, emotional and volitional abilities of every student with his individual characteristics should be taken into account when choosing and organizing exercises. It points out that teaching aids and manuals can be considered a remarkable complement to the main literature of the compulsory English practical courses at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Uman State Pedagogical University. The article also reveals possible types of lexical and pronunciation practice activities and tasks at higher education. The analysis of the activities was conducted on the basis of compulsory practical English courses at Faculty of Foreign Languages of Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University. It depicts that most of the analysed activities and tasks can be divided into groups due to the development of productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and reading) skills. It points out that lexis and pronunciation are the main bases of any communication. The study claims about the advantages and disadvantages of teaching manuals. It examines the most commonly used tasks for teaching pronunciation and lexis. The article indicates that there is the difficulty to differentiate between the exercises and tasks to study vocabulary and grammar. Nowadays, studying a word as only the unit or phrase is not enough. The main goal of teaching lexis is an «internal study» of the meaning of words, some set expressions and words combinations, which can be easily recalled and quickly used without thinking of the necessity to make up new expressions or sentences, while remembering all the grammatical rules in every sentence. Nevertheless, lexis does not comprise only the information on the use of the essential vocabulary; the grammar aspects of language should be taken into account.*



*It concludes that that an important advantage of most manuals is contextualization. The other area of manuals advantage is individual needs. Personalisation is the other pro of manuals. All in all, manuals help to avoid the commonplace that one book can fit all learners. The article also distinguishes some manuals' pitfalls for educators. First of all, all of the analysed manuals do not reflect the clear learners achievements and progression. Yet, the educators are limited in time.*

*Key words: educators' manuals, course books, teaching lexis and pronunciation, productive skills, receptive skills, future EFL teachers.*

*У статті розкривається важливість використання навчально-методичних посібників, розроблених викладачами для вивчення англійської мови у закладах вищої освіти. Досліджено, що посібники вважаються додатковим джерелом інформації та доповненням до основної літератури; вони враховують потреби та здібності здобувачів вищої освіти, а саме майбутніх учителів англійської мови. Проаналізовано використання можливих типів вправ та завдань для розвитку навичок говоріння, аудіювання. Аналіз різноманітних завдань було здійснено на базі основних практичних курсів на факультеті іноземних мов Уманського державного педагогічного університету імені Павла Тичини. Встановлено, що більшість вправ можна розподілити на групи відповідно до розвитку продуктивних (говоріння та письмо) та рецептивних умінь (аудіювання та читання). Доведено, що лексика та фонетика – основа будь-якої комунікації. У статті також вивчаються переваги та недоліки використання навчально-методичних посібників; наголошується, що вивчення лексики включає не лише знання правильного вживання лексичного запасу слів, а й граматичні аспекти мови також відіграють важливу роль.*

*Ключові слова: навчально-методичні посібники, навчальні підручники, вивчення лексики та фонетики, продуктивні вміння, рецептивні вміння, майбутні вчителі англійської мови.*

**Introduction.** The dramatic changes that happen in all sectors of public life, dictated by the demands of time, transform the main purpose and content of a foreign language education – to provide the professional development of a competitive specialist, able to solve the set tasks in a multilingual and multicultural world society in a quick and creative way. Such conditions generally affect the complex speaking skills of a student as a future EFL teacher.

A number of researchers have reported that the main aim to study a foreign language at higher education is to satisfy students' communicative needs, «to develop ... the capacity for intercultural communication as an important means of partnership interaction and the necessary mechanism in the dialogue of cultures» (Redko, 2017, p. 273). The realization of this aim can be implemented by basic English textbooks and a set of extra communicative tasks and exercises developed by educators for better understanding and mastering educational material in the process of studying compulsory practical English courses at different stages of training.



The teaching-learning experience comprises three crucial elements: the educator, the student and instructional materials. One of the widely spread and commonly used instructional materials is the textbook or course book as the primary resource in teaching and learning EFL. Researchers' claim that the above instructional materials can not be fully predisposed to new and challenging 'foreign' ideas, emanate from the native English-speaking countries of Britain and North America (Crewe, 2011, p. 12). Consequently, all these cause the necessity to design educator's manuals as the extra materials to teach EFL.

It is noteworthy that the system of tasks and exercises in the textbooks is focused on the development of key competence of the future EFL teacher, presented in the development of productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and reading) skills. A considerable amount of methodological literature gives various ways and approaches to teach grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. However, in most cases the aforementioned array does not include teaching pronunciation and lexis as the background of successful communication.

The other implication is also clear: educators and learners have been the focus of a vast body of discussion on the subjects of teaching and learning English and much less attention has been given to textbooks and manuals.

The aim of this study has therefore been to try and establish the main ways to enhance the communicative skills in English at higher education (based on compulsory subjects in English at Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University); to analyse the role of manuals in teaching pronunciation and lexis as the core elements of communication. We synthesize educators' own materials to teach pronunciation and lexis; consider the main advantages and disadvantages to use manuals and other educator-designed materials in class.

**Methodology.** Our study was exploratory and interpretative in nature. The methodological approach taken in this research is a mixed methodology based on a critical analysis of pedagogical and methodological sources on the study issue; generalization the author's first-hand experience of the exercises selection and their usage for teaching English pronunciation and lexis; monographic method – to interpret the results obtained in a coherent logical perspective.

We also placed the emphasis on a qualitative method. By employing qualitative modes of enquiry, we attempt to illuminate the most effective exercises and activities for teaching English pronunciation and lexis at Faculty of Foreign Languages of Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University (USPU), to analyse the role of educators' manuals in teaching pronunciation and lexis.

**Results and Discussion.** Teaching pronunciation and lexis are considered to be one of the most difficult but essential aspects in a foreign language to teach and learn. It might be explained by the idea that if students' communication is not easy to understand and they are not able to use lexis properly in their speech, their communication will be unsuccessful – it is «like throwing a ball at a moving target – difficult, frustrating, and likely to fail» (Yoshida, 2016). One may say that the main goal in teaching pronunciation and lexis is to express thoughts with good pronunciation. Nevertheless, the problem is that researchers can not come to the agreement what the good pronunciation and lexis (vocabulary) mean. The answer «to sound like a good



native speaker» is not relevant, as there are so many varieties of English in the world. We tend to think that it is impossible to achieve «ideal» pronunciation and learn all possible English words, but we can teach students intelligible pronunciation and communication – speaking in a way that most listeners can understand without too much effort (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010; Yoshida, 2016).

Most of textbooks for teaching English as a foreign language propose set of exercises for pronunciation and lexis. They are oriented on the accuracy as a part of good pronunciation. Fluency is also important but it can not be only achieved by saying one sound or a single word. It is crucial to teach pronunciation and lexis in real world-speaking situations, in a real context. Educators' manuals can really help to solve this problem where pronunciation and lexis are considered one of the core subjects of teaching. The other fact is that various textbooks in English relate to more general information, but the main idea of manuals is to adapt the crucial information to the students' needs and demands. It appears to be the fact that manuals support and complement educators and their ways of teaching.

However, in teaching English as a foreign language, as well as other subjects, it is difficult to find and choose a unified system of exercises, for all cases in education and for developing productive and receptive skills of future teachers. In this context, we consider it advisable to take into account «Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment» (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2002), which clearly outlines a common basis for the development of language curricula, standard programs, examinations, textbooks, etc. in Europe – person-oriented approach. Language users are considered to be «social agents» or members of society who can perform a variety of tasks (not necessarily related to the abilities and skills to speak) (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2002, p. 24). In such circumstances, when choosing and organizing exercises and tasks in the methodological way, we should take into account cognitive, emotional and volitional abilities of every student with his individual characteristics.

Detailed examination of textbooks and activities for studying foreign languages by Redko (2017) showed that the qualitative and quantitative structure of exercises at each level of foreign language proficiency depends on the complexity of the language units and the difficulties of their acquisition, which can only be determined in the process of experimental verification. In our opinion, teaching aids and manuals can also be considered a significant part of teaching English; it is a remarkable complement to the main literature of the compulsory English practical courses at the Faculty of Foreign Languages (USPU).

Oxford dictionary gives the following meaning of «manual» – it is «a book giving instructions or information» (Lexico. Oxford Dictionary, 2019). If we stretch the notion of manuals for teaching English at higher education, we might also add that it is the educator-prepared materials for teaching as part of textbook and lesson package: authentic print materials (different articles and literary extracts, authentic materials downloaded from the Internet; worksheets, quizzes and tests designed by educators and downloaded from the Internet; activities developed to accompany authentic and textbook materials, games rules).



In view of all that has been mentioned so far, we will try to analyze the system of exercises that influences the formation of key competence of future EFL teachers and the effective way to teach lexis and pronunciation, on the example of the content of educators' manuals at Faculty of Foreign Languages (USPU).

We consider that the process of teaching pronunciation and lexis is stimulated by three conditions: «someone to talk to, something to talk about, and a desire to understand and make yourself understood» (Howatt, 2004, p. 210). All these conditions may be implemented in the course in case of the activities and exercises are devised in a real-life context. It draws students' attention and their desire to talk that is so important in teaching pronunciation and lexis.

It is apparent from the analysis of methodological literature that most of tasks classifications take into account the gradual development of students' skills and abilities. This fact is clearly demonstrated in textbooks focused on learning a foreign language at secondary schools. We believe that such a sequence is difficult to note in the textbooks and manuals for teaching English at higher education (we analyse teaching aids and manuals at Faculty of Foreign Languages of USPU). This is explained by the specificities of teaching the main compulsory English practical disciplines at each level of studying (Fig. 1) and students' high level of English (this conclusion was made on the analysis of students' tests results at the end of each course).



Figure 1. Compulsory Practical English Courses at Faculty of Foreign Languages of USPU

Nevertheless, the analysis of the curricula and English course books at Faculty of Foreign Languages shows that a particular system of exercises has been developed to form students' specific language skills and abilities during all years of studying. This system is also focused on mastering the educational material of such professional disciplines as: English practice, English grammar, practical phonetics (Fig. 1). The analysis of educational and methodological researches has given the possibility



to distinguish the main advantages of course books: time reduction for lesson preparation; a visible, coherent programme; support; a convenient resource for learners; a convenient administrative tool; visually appealing, cultural artefacts; additional resources for both classroom use and self-access purposes (McGrath, 2013). However, despite the current reach array of English course books and their great advantages, the educators' manuals are practically always used in teaching practice. It is obvious that the advantages of the latter materials can be considered as disadvantages of the course books. All in all, we examine the most commonly used tasks and ways to teach pronunciation and lexis presented in the manuals.

Communicative tasks and activities are prevalent in manuals of English Practice and Practical Course of English (Bilenka & Kolomiets (2019), Bondaruk (2017), Brit, Halai & Kovalenko (2017), Slobodianiyl & Postolenko (2016)). The main target of all activities is mainly to enhance students' specific abilities, productive and receptive skills. Thus, it is obvious that teaching lexis and pronunciation is the core of most English disciples. Therefore, lexis and pronunciation are considered to be the main bases of any communication.

It is necessary to emphasise that the exercises for the development of phonetic skills (pronunciation) are significantly presented in the manual «Practical Phonetics» (Galai & Kovalenko, 2017) for the first and second years of studying. Among the wide variety of exercises, particular attention is paid to tasks focused on:

➤ Articulation gymnastics

*(Practice proverbs and sayings:*

1. *Near an ear, a nearer ear, a near eerie ear;*
2. *Peter Piper picked a pick of pickled peppers,  
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.  
If Peter Piper is a peck of pickled peppers,  
Where's the Peck of Pickled Peppers Peter Piper picked.).*

➤ Development of listening skills

*(1. Listen carefully to the following conversational situations. Concentrate your attention on the intonation of the replies ...).*

➤ Formation of pronunciation skills

1. *Make up alternative questions using the following sentences ...;*
2. *Read the drill sentences according to the given models. Observe the difference in meaning ...;*
3. *Listen carefully to the following sentences, repeat them ...).*

So, apart from the fact that the course of practical phonetics is significant and educators developed the manuals for pronunciation teaching at different levels of mastering English, it gives only the basic background for real practicing in other disciplines. Practical tasks and activities are also given in lessons of English Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> year) and Practical Course of English (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years) at Faculty of Foreign Languages. We consider that the main specific feature of manuals for these disciplines is that most tasks and activities are presented in a real context; it helps to practice real situations and design the possible variants of conversation development.



Such considerable attention to the students' phonetic skills development in the first and second years is also brought about by the fact that the phonetic aspect of communication in English causes some difficulties, as spelling principle of pronunciation is dominated in this language. As a result, it requires more detailed study and analysis in lessons at higher education.

An important component of English Practice and Practical Course of English manuals are typical exercises for the development of lexical skills (teaching lexis) and for mastering the lexical unit at three levels: 1) level of meaning, 2) level of form (formation), 3) level of functions (areas of use) in the speech (Redko, 2017, p. 305–306). Redko (2017) proposes the following types of exercises for mastering the lexical units at different levels (p. 305–306):

- Exercises to present and use lexical units.
- Training exercises for developing receptive and productive skills:  
a) differentiation, b) repetition (duplication), c) comparison, d) grouping, e) filling in, e) choice using certain characteristics.
- Exercises to substitute units: a) to fill in the gaps, b) to replace, c) to supplement.
- Exercises to make up the units: a) to make up sentences using particular units, b) to «correct mistakes», c) to complete the communication, d) to fill in the gaps, e) to use synonyms/antonyms of some words, f) to make up the dialogue/monologue, etc. using the proposed expressions or words, g) to match sentences/expressions to pictures, headings, etc.
- Exercises for transforming: a) to expand the sentence/expression, b) to make the sentence/expression shorter, c) to paraphrase, d) to replace some parts of the sentence/expression using the given parts, e) to change the content of the expression, f) to transform: direct speech into indirect, other time reference of the sentence, g) to transform a dialogue into a monologue, h) to transform the content of the text according to the given instructions.
- Exercises to use lexis: a) to supplement, c) to fill in the gaps, d) to match, e) to give answers to questions (p. 305–306).

This division of exercises and tasks for the vocabulary study is quite convenient. Nevertheless, recent scientific and methodological reserches have indicated that there is the difficulty to differentiate between the exercises and tasks to study vocabulary and grammar. Scrivener (2017) indicates that teachers have changed their attitude to teaching vocabulary. The researcher emphasizes that it is better to use lexis (rather than the more familiar vocabulary) as it reflects a fundamental shift in understanding, attitude and approach (Scrivener, 2017, p. 185). When we teach vocabulary, we mean only separate words and phrases without correlation between sentences and coherent structure of communication.

The number of methodological literature, dictionaries, textbooks and grammar manuals as well as other resources demand new attitudes to tasks and exercises for learning English. The peculiar «explosion» of changes according to the importance of learning lexis began with the publication of influential book «The Lexical Approach» by Michael Lewis in 1993. It was focused on the weaknesses of doing much classroom vocabulary work and the importance of learning lexis (Lewis, 1993).



Nowadays, studying a word as only the unit (e.g. dog, table, teacher) or phrase (compact disk, flight attendant, set off) is not enough. The main goal of teaching lexis is an «internal study» of the meaning of words, some set expressions and words combinations, which can be easily recalled and quickly used without thinking of the necessity to make up new expressions or sentences, while remembering all the grammatical rules in every sentence. In this case grammar should play a cohesive role between phrases and collocations to express the precise and correct meaning (proper ending of a verb, a noun, a pronoun; the use of tense form, and so on). Word combinations, set expressions, some chunks and idioms consequently occupy an intermediate zone between vocabulary and grammar in English (Scrivener, 2017, p. 187) (Fig. 2).

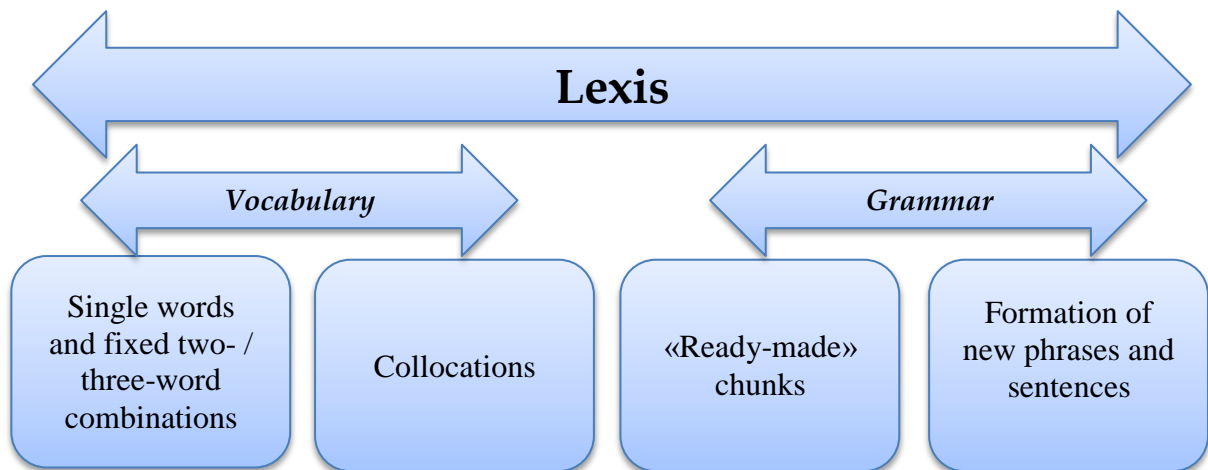


Figure 2. Correlation between vocabulary, lexis and grammar in modern English (Scrivener, 2017, p. 187)

It is clear that an important step in learning any lexical unit is practice: word recognition in a sentence, ability to use different forms of words in speech. In general, all tasks and exercises for teaching lexis at the stage of practical use can be divided into: 1) communicative tasks, discussions, dialogues using the learned lexis; 2) use of vocabulary in written tasks.

The following tasks can be a prime example of such exercises at Faculty of Foreign Languages (USPU):

- match pictures to lexical units;
- match the nouns with corresponding adjectives;
- match the words on the right to the corresponding ones on the left (collocations, opposites);
- use the prefixes or suffixes to build new words from given items;
- classify words into given groups or lists;
- use the given words to complete the sentences;
- fill in crosswords, grids, diagrams;
- fill in gaps and sentences;
- make up the crammed story with the given lexical items;
- memory games (Bilenka & Kolomiets (2019), Bondaruk (2017), Postolenko & Slobodanyk (2016)).





Another feature of the exercises and tasks for teaching lexis in manuals for English Practice and Practical Course of English is that most of them is closely related to the tasks for the development of receptive skills (reading and listening). The advantage of this combination is that students have the opportunity to study a lexem in a real context and to analyze its use and meaning. These exercises can be classified due to the route map of the lesson: pre-reading or pre-listening tasks; reading or listening tasks; post-reading or post-listening tasks. We consider it necessary to analyse every of the above groups of exercises and tasks.

The exercises that precede reading or listening to the text are mainly focused on the repetition, learning and practical use of some lexical units or expressions. In this case, the vocabulary is selected in such a way that it is easier to do the main task – to read or listen to the text.

The example of these exercises can be the set of laboratory works (a manual «English» (Postolenko & Slobodianyuk (2016)) on module «Every Man to His Trade» of the course English Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> year of studying), devoted to different professions. Students are advised to answer several questions before reading or listening, and check answers after reading or listening to the text.

Pre-text exercises help to study the essential vocabulary (e.g. professions, prejudices and traditions). They are the following (Bilenka & Kolomiets (2019), Bondaruk (2017)):

1. Read the title of the article. What kind of personality do you think you need to be a good political reporter?
2. Look at the photos. Do you think the people are typical English in the way they dress? Who do you think is dressed in the most eccentric way?
3. You are going to read an article about how the English dress. Before you read, discuss with a partner whether you think the following statements are true or false?

The analysis of the educational and methodological literature gives the possibility to conclude that the system of exercises in reading and listening parts for teaching lexis can also be presented by the following tasks: insert a missing word or phrase, give synonyms/antonyms to the following expression / word, paraphrase a part of the sentence (Bilenka & Kolomiets (2019), Bondaruk (2017), Postolenko & Slobodianyuk (2016)), and so on.

In general, post-text exercises for teaching vocabulary are focused on students' communication: to discuss, to role-play a situation, to make up a dialogue, using the learned lexis (Bilenka & Kolomiets (2019), Bondaruk (2017), Postolenko & Slobodianyuk (2016)).

As a matter of fact, we think that it is obligatory to distinguish tasks and exercises for teaching lexis and developing productive and receptive skills. Receptive vocabulary is a set of lexical units that can be recognized and understood in a text or speech, but rarely used in everyday situations (Scrivener, 2017, p. 188). Therefore, having analysed the educational and methodological literature («English Practice» (Bondaruk, 2017), «Listening» (Postolenko & Slobodianyuk, 2016), «Instructional and methodological recommendations for the discipline «Practical Course of English» for 4<sup>th</sup> year students» (Bilenka & Kolomiets, 2019)) related to the compulsory practical



disciplines, we may conclude that most lexical units and practical tasks are divided in manuals thematically (e.g. vocabulary related to professions, medicine, theater, etc.), grammatically (e.g. only adjectives or nouns, etc), according to the particular situations (e.g. to describe geographical places, verbs to express movement), according to the peculiar situations (e.g. to persuade foreigners to buy hand-made souvenirs of your country).

Consequently, we may conclude that an important advantage of most manuals is contextualization. This feature gives the possibility to choose and adapt the learning materials to the learning environment. The manuals complement the lesson with the additional texts, materials and so on. The other area of manuals advantage is individual needs. This takes into account not only the fact where the lesson is performed, but students' desire and needs are of great importance. Personalisation is the other pro of manuals. Educators all the time may adapt the information given in the course book and students like when it has been changed according to their interests. This increases students' motivation and engagement in learning. The possibility to adapt the materials at favourable and useful time is considered the next advantage of manuals. Educators may change some information to respond to local events or international events. All in all, manuals help to avoid the commonplace that one book can fit all learners.

Despite all the merits of manuals, we may distinguish some pitfalls for educators. First of all, all of the analysed manuals do not reflect the clear learners achievements and progression. They only complement the main course books of the disciplines. Yet another disadvantage is the time limit. However patriotically and passionately one may think of additional teaching materials, the fact is that educators do not have the possibility to design manuals all the time.

Some researchers add quality as one of the main disadvantages of the teaching materials (Howard, 2004). «They may contain errors, be poorly constructed, lack clarity in layout and print and lack durability» (p. 103). We may agree to some extent, as the experienced educators design manuals as the complement to the main course book. In this case, we consider that the main book can be improved but not spoilt.

**Conclusion.** Despite the wide range of different books and textbooks for teaching English, the manuals also play important roles in organizing class activities of compulsory practical English courses. Their value is indicated by the chance to adapt the main information and material of textbooks and books to the needs and abilities of different students. On the other hand, manuals give possibilities to enlarge students' vocabulary, lexis in general. The teaching manuals can be considered the best supplement in teaching. It complements the area of materials and information in the correlation «educator – information – student». Despite the substantial advantages of manuals, they may have several disadvantages. We tend to the point that most demerits and gaps in course books can be analysed and successfully solved in educators' manuals for teaching pronunciation and lexis. Practical exercises and tasks in this field pronunciation and lexis teaching can be classified according to the gradual development of students' skills and abilities. Nevertheless, most of exercises for teaching pronunciation give the basic background for further development in English disciplines. The exercises for teaching lexis are closely connected with



grammar exercises and the development of receptive and productive skills. Researches proved the positive changes in the lexis importance; it is the key element of students' abilities to communicate in English.

This study does not cover all possible variants of tasks for teaching English. Types of exercises for the development of students' productive and receptive skills, different ways to develop students' critical thinking as the other core element of students' language awareness as well as the role of course books in this field also require further study and investigations.

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