

Konrad Szamryk
Uniwersytet w Białymstoku

Approaches to alcohol in textbooks for teaching foreign languages for beginners. An investigation of English, Spanish, Russian and Polish textbooks

1. Introduction

Although alcohol is a fundamental part of Western culture, it cannot be recognized as a neutral product of consumption. In the history of humankind, it has been one of the most controversial parts of a diet – both nourishing and intoxicating to the human body (Gately, 2008, p. 10). Through the centuries it fulfilled a lot of different functions, consequently penetrating almost every sphere of human life. Alcohol is not only a component of nutrition; for example, in ancient Greece it became a part of religious rituals; in the Middle Ages it was used as a panacea, whereas in the Romantic period it was perceived as a source of inspiration (Gately, 2008, pp. 21, 55, 104, 261–277). In other cultures and religions it was banned or strongly discouraged, like within Islamic Arabic countries (Grigg, 2004, p. 102).

Nowadays, harmful alcohol consumption is a major issue in many societies, although it has not been a significant concern only in the 21st century (Gately, 2008, pp. 88–103, 178–185). As Roderick Phillips highlighted: “Ever since humans began to consume alcohol, they have had a difficult relationship with it” (Phillips, 2014, p. 1), that is why the polarity of views towards alcohol is more than obvious. In fact, there is no doubt that alcohol on its own might be perceived as a provocative topic. It is enough to invoke the title of the renowned book: *Bad habits: drinking, smoking, taking drugs, gambling, sexual misbehavior, and swearing in American history* by John Burnham (1993).

The aim of this study is to examine alcohol in various textbooks for teaching foreign languages [TFL]. Our primary goal is to investigate the extent to which beer, wine, vodka and other liquors, as well as other terms closely related to alcohol con-

sumption lexemes, occur in materials for teaching English, Spanish, Russian and Polish. Consequently, we will attempt to detect if there are any relations between different types of alcoholic beverages and the culture of the country of origin of the textbooks published. The second goal is to characterize, based on all-encompassed excerpt material, the ways of displaying alcohol in the course books, as some of them entirely avoid alcoholic beverages, and others utilize drinks to a wide extent.

2. Literature review

The issue of including alcohol in foreign languages [FL] course books, or, broadly, in TFL, has never been dealt with in-depth. Although there are several remarks about liquors in various studies, academics have not reached a common agreement. Depending on different cultural backgrounds, cultural approaches of textbooks, authors, scholars and language instructors fluctuate between two extremes. Generally, the theme is highly delicate for members of those societies which officially banned alcohol or perceive it as a taboo topic. Melanie Gobert considers alcohol consumption in English foreign languages [EFL] textbooks as one of the most controversial topics for Muslims; it is as strongly offensive as eating pork or pre-marital dating (Gobert, 2003, pp. 109–126, 2014, p. 119). Moreover, a few researchers have addressed the problem of alcoholic drinks in studies on the subject of evaluation and assessment of EFL textbooks. In their opinion the following topics: politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, -isms (such as communism, capitalism, feminism) and pornography – also known by the abbreviation PARSNIP – should be avoided in TFL materials since they might be controversial or offensive for students from different nations and cultures (Akbari, 2008, p. 281).

On the other end of the spectrum, language instructors and researchers from Poland are convinced that teaching vocabulary and idioms associated with the consumption of alcohol should not only be kept in instructional resources (Dąbrowska, Pasięka, 2009, p. 3, Kajak, 2011, p. 195), but alcohol-related topics are crucial for a more intimate understanding of Polish culture, tradition, habits, and literature (Garncarek, 1997, p. 110).

Both standpoints have some benefits and drawbacks. Avoiding alcohol is didactically safe as TFL materials should showcase a sanitized reality and postulated models, and these textbooks should help develop positive attitudes towards target languages and cultures. Nonetheless, avoidance of the vocabulary related to alcohol might cause some gaps and deficiencies in learners' communicative competence (Dąbrowska, Pasięka, 2009, p. 241) and lead to a superficial understanding of targeted culture (Byram, 1989, p. 30).

Nevertheless, as textbooks should picture the daily life of a country in a realistic light, with its advantages and disadvantages, along with its citizens' typical behavior, some textbooks include alcohol. Some argue that course books should not be

neutral, monolithic and one-dimensional entities, but they should implicitly and explicitly reflect a view of the value system of its culture (Mar-Molinero, 1992, Cunningsworth, 1995, Kajak, 2011). Yet, it raises another concern – how to introduce alcohol-related vocabulary into FL materials and classes, and how to deliberate its infusion without inadvertently encouraging students towards alcohol use?

The problem seems to be particularly important in regard to textbooks, especially those used at the outset of TFL. The importance of course books is indisputable (Sándorová, 2014, pp. 102–103), since textbooks, besides students and teachers, are a key component in most language programs and constitute the basis for developing linguistic competences in targeted languages, therefore their appropriateness and usefulness require critical attention (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 7). To accomplish this task, authors and publishers of any course book for TFL have to definitely choose a side, deciding whether or not to include alcoholic beverages into their materials, especially since most researchers assume that textbook discourse consolidates legitimized knowledge and preconceived notions of a targeted culture (Kramersch, 1987, pp. 98–105). Therefore, the use of alcohol in FL course books in a broader aspect is strongly associated with preparing, writing and evaluating TFL course books, which has concerned academics for decades (Cunningsworth, 1995, Byram, 1989, Skopinska, 2003).

3. Methods and Materials

As a research method, this study employs content analysis, one of the most frequently applied methods in the field of education (Sándorová, 2014, p. 95). According to Weber (1990, p. 117): “content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text”. In fact, it follows different methods that can ensure the trustworthiness of the research in terms of significance and reliability. The content analysis strategy is broadly and successfully used to investigate TFL textbooks. A number of scholars published a significant number of papers within the frame of this method (see: Sándorová 2014, pp. 107–120).

Several academics emphasize that the best content-analytic studies combine both quantitative and qualitative techniques (Weber, 1990, p. 117, Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, Sándorová, 2014, p. 96). Henceforth, this study consists of two phases. The first part, based on figures, tabulates the comprehensive data on alcoholic beverages (with a distinction between beer, wine, vodka and other liquors) excerpted from each textbook in order to detect if there are any interconnections between alcohol-related factors and the language of published textbooks. The second part of this study includes evaluation and interpretation of the all-encompassed material with the description how alcohol is omitted in some books and delivered in different ways in others.

Based upon the most fundamental principles of content analysis, for this article, we investigated 12 course books for teaching different FL in the A1 level¹ (the complete list of the textbooks is included in the appendix to this paper). Among the used materials were course books for teaching English, Spanish, Russian and Polish. Although the diversity of the randomly chosen textbooks for teaching four languages in terms of investigated issues are primarily intentional, in fact, all the textbooks fulfilled the following conditions of being:

- prepared in the frame of a direct method,
- dedicated to secondary and university students or adults (not intended for children),
- prepared by the native authors of targeted languages,
- published in the states of targeted languages,
- edited or re-edited between the years 2000–2013.

As the main goal of this study is to discuss the overall idea of presenting alcohol in instructional materials, we decided to choose textbooks for teaching four FL, which represent various cultures and nations. Therefore, the textbooks exemplify cultures traditionally closely associated with different alcoholic preferences: wine (Spain), beer (the United Kingdom), and spirits (Poland, Russia) (Grigg, 2004). However, those traditional preferences do not reflect the current drinking habits, as beer become the most popular alcoholic drink world-wide (Karlsson & Simpura, 2001, pp. 84–96). To analyze if there are any common features in the ways of presenting alcohol in textbooks for teaching the same language, we decided to examine 3 textbooks per each language.

In this paper we are also trying to discover whether we can distinguish different attitudes towards presenting alcohol in textbooks for teaching FL. We assume that those attitudes can be detected both by the number of references to alcohol, as well as the context in which drinks are mentioned. For this reason, we conducted a thorough excerption of the vocabulary referring to alcoholic beverages from the course books (including proper names), and lexis strongly related with the consumption of alcohol (i.e. *alcoholism*, *hangover*). Except for an aggregated comparison, we present the reference data for beer, wine, vodka (the most common drinks), and other vocabulary in each course book. In the following sections of the article, the quantitative analysis outlines the correlation among textbooks, the targeted language (culture) and alcoholic beverages, whereas the qualitative description states overall contexts for including or excluding alcoholic beverages in course books. This qualitative part is based on a method delivered by Melliti with distinction to controversial topics avoided, treated with caution or mentioned (2013, pp. 6–7).

¹ Exceptionally, I used textbook ES-EM for joined A1-A2 (beginner/elementary) levels.

4. Approaches to alcohol – quantitative analysis

Table 1 contains a quantification list of alcoholic beverages appearing in the investigated materials. Additionally, to summarize the data, the columns for beer, wine, vodka and other vocabulary associated with alcohol are itemized. The other alcoholic vocabulary is detailed in the footnotes.

	language	Textbook	all	beer	wine	vodka	others ²
1	Polish	PL-C	118	44	52	5	17 ³
2	Polish	PL-K	62	33	16	8	5 ⁴
3	Russian	RU-P	42	15	14	9	4 ⁵
4	Polish	PL-H	27	17	6	1	2 ⁶
5	Russian	RU-PN	25	8	13	-	4 ⁷
6	English	EN-NE	25	5	9	1	10 ⁸
7	English	EN-EL	21	9	9	-	3 ⁹
8	Spanish	ES-AI	10	5	2	1	2 ¹⁰
9	Spanish	ES-EM	2	-	-	-	2 ¹¹
10	English	EN-SO	0	-	-	-	-
11	Spanish	ES-NV	0	-	-	-	-
12	Russian	RU-DR	0	-	-	-	-

Table 1. Alcohol in foreign language textbooks - quantitative approach (author's compilation)

Quantitative analysis of the materials shows that alcohol in FL textbooks occurs within a varying range – from 0 to 118 references. In overall terms, although this paper is only an outline and does not intend to draw categorical conclusions, it seems possible to try to make some generalizations.

At the top of the table there are materials for teaching Polish and Russian (rank 1–5). They are characterized by a high frequency of liquors (from 25 to 118). On the

² Vocabulary and phrases referred to alcohol.

³ Others: *alkohol, drink bar* 'pub', *napoje bezalkoholowe* 'alcoholic beverages'.

⁴ Others: *alkohol, drink* 'alcoholic beverage', *kac* 'hangover'.

⁵ Others: *коньяк* 'cognac', *шампанское* 'champagne', *мёд* 'mead'.

⁶ Others; *alkohol*.

⁷ Others: *коньяк* 'cognac'.

⁸ Others: *alkohol, drink, whisky, champagne*.

⁹ Others: *hangover*.

¹⁰ Others: *alkohol, alcoholismo*.

¹¹ Others: *alkohol, tomar una copa* 'drink (alcoholic) beverage'.

other side of the spectrum, at the bottom part of the table (rank 6–11), are materials for English and Spanish (alcohol reference from 0 to 25). In those materials alcoholic lexis is less common. The only aberration that distorts the results is RU-DR (rank 12). In this course book alcoholic vocabulary does not appear even once, but it has to be mentioned that among books for teaching Russian as a foreign language, this one is recommended by the Expert Commission of the State Testing System in Russian for Foreign Citizens. Although the boundary in the table is not sharp as among the alcoholic moderate materials we found books for teaching Polish, Russian and English (rank 4–7 with its reference 21–27), it is presumed that there is a certain relationship between the presence of alcohol in textbooks and the language taught (or the culture of the published textbook). Russian and Polish TFL materials tend to be more tolerant towards alcohol, whereas textbooks for teaching English and Spanish seem to reveal restraints.

Another quantitative analysis, this time based on all-encompassing alcoholic references, allows the division of textbooks into three groups. The first one contains three books, from which alcohol was completely excluded (EN-SO, ES-NV, RU-DR). In the second group, which consists of 6 other course books (ES-EM, ES-AI, EN-EL, ES-NE, RU-PN, PL-H) the presence of alcohol is reduced or moderate, as each book contains fewer than 27 alcoholic references, which is below average¹². And in the last one, encompassing 3 textbooks (RU-P, PL-K, PL-C), the presence of alcohol-related vocabulary is recognized and substantial, as the course books contain an above average level of alcohol-related words. Those books can be regarded as open towards alcohol, however, even in this alcohol-significant set of textbooks, the references to alcohol range from 42 to 118.

It can be assumed that the authors of the explored materials for TFL give beer and wine an easier pass than vodka, possibly because vodka is more associated with alcohol abuse. This leniency is apparent if we compare the average frequency of alcoholic beverages mentioned within just the textbooks containing alcohol-related vocabulary (ranks from 1 to 8 in the table). In 8 textbooks (PL-C, PL-K, PL-H, RU-P, EN-EL, RU-PN, EN-NE, ES-AI¹³) beer appears 136 times with an average reference of 17 times. A very similar comment applies to wine – it occurs altogether 121 times in exactly the same 8 books (PL-C, PL-K, RU-P, RU-PN, EN-EL, EN-NE, ES-AI), with an average appearance of 15.125.

Vodka is featured only a total of 25 times in 6 course books (RU-P, PL-K, PL-C, EN-NE, PL-H, E-AI) with the average frequency of use being 4.16. This shows that in the investigated textbooks the average frequency for vodka is approximately 4 times lower than that of beer or wine. In fact, the remarkable common feature of the analyzed textbooks is that among all types of alcoholic beverages, vodka is the least frequently mentioned – in 6 books it is completely absent, whereas in 3 others it oc-

¹² The average presence of all alcohol references in textbooks is 27.66.

¹³ The order presents textbooks from the highest to the lowest rank of beer, wine and vodka occurrence.

curs only once (ES-AI, EN-NE, PL-H). None of the examined textbooks referenced vodka in more than 10 instances (the lexeme *vodka* is the most frequent in RU-P, PL-K). It may be assumed that vodka is strongly associated with alcohol, and that is why no textbook mentions it too frequently. It is also clear that if vodka appears in a textbook several times (the number is 3 in: RU-P, PL-K, PL-C), other liquors tend to be presented frequently. However, the reverse relation does not hold – even a moderate distribution of beer and wine does not imply the occurrence of strong alcoholic beverages (i.e.: EN-EL, RU-PN). For example, in the textbooks EN-EL, PL-H, PL-C, RU-PN, the presence of beer and wine is accompanied with zero or only one mention of vodka.

Based on these quantitative findings, we can distinguish among the examined textbooks which ones present liberal and open attitudes towards alcohol. We assume that a textbook is alcohol-friendly if its overall alcoholic references and particular notes for wine, beer and vodka are higher than average for each category. Within the framework of these criteria the following books fit the bill: PL-C, PL-K, although RU-P is very close to fitting the parameters as well, as the beer and wine references are slightly below median. As those three books are the ones we found alcohol-friendly based only on overall data, it only confirms that high alcoholic reference favours high references to individual beverages.

5. Approaches to alcohol – qualitative analysis

In addition to quantitative analyses, a qualitative analysis is carried out to get the holistic view of alcohol represented in the given course books. These qualitative descriptions allow us to distinguish three kinds of approaches to alcohol in the investigated materials: tabooing, cautionary treatment and an affirmative approach.

It should be noted that only tabooing can be found as a cohesive attitude, which comes down to definitively removing any traces of ingesting alcoholic drinks from didactic materials. In other investigated textbooks alcohol is presented in both positive and negative contexts. Although, some of the materials, are visibly skewed towards one of the attitudes, the aim of the qualitative analysis phase is to focus on the variety of presenting alcohol in textbooks. Since none of the materials come out to contain purely positive or negative presentations of alcohol use, the material in the quantitative part is described all together. However, it is noteworthy to highlight that just introducing alcohol-related vocabulary in teaching materials, should be recognized as an indication of fostering to include those words into a process of teaching targeted languages and cultures, even if this lexis is presented without any context or wider background.

In the coming part of the article, the attitudes and ways of presenting alcohol-related vocabulary will be described in detail, including the methods of avoiding alcohol, highlighting disapproving contexts, and finally, the different quotes where alcohol is pictured as a value.

5.1. Tabooing

Tabooing is one of the approaches to alcoholic issues, which might be detected in textbooks for TFL. Tabooing denotes using taboo, which is defined as “prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame” (Wardhaugh, 2006, p. 239). In consequence, some things, in this case alcoholic beverages, cannot be said or mentioned.

Complete tabooing of alcohol has been recognized in the following course books: EN-SO, ES-NV and RU-DR. In some of the books taboo is so pervasive that alcohol is not only excluded from restaurant menus (ES-NV, pp. 56, 76), but also unmentioned even as a medical topic. For example, during an examination, a medical practitioner asked a patient about their diet and regular physical exercise, whereas questions about alcohol consumption were completely omitted. (ES-NV, p. 154). Moreover, in EN-SO no liquors are mentioned in the unit titled ‘bad habits,’ although in the same text we find information about smoking (EN-SO, pp. 52–53). This undoubtedly proves that some TFL materials are much more sanitized of alcohol than from cigarettes.

5.2. Cautionary treatment

In this study cautionary treatment of alcohol is strongly connected with its negation in textbooks, where liquors are pictured in contexts discouraging their consumption or even their complete exclusion. Negation might also highlight the harmful and damaging consequences of alcoholic consumption. However, the discouragement of alcoholic consumption is emphasized with varying intensity. The following examples show an unambiguously negative perspective by either presenting people declining alcohol or demonstrating total teetotalism: *No bebo vino.* [*I don't drink wine.*] (ES-AI, p. 60), *No, thanks. I don't »drink« alcohol.* (EN-NE, p. 18), *Nigdy nie piję czarnej herbaty i alkoholu.* [*I never drink black tea and alcohol.*] (PL-C, p. 192). Slightly less categorical – but still quite strong in implication – seem passages emphasize the feeling of dislike or self-denial for particular drinks: *We don't like beer* (EN-EL, p. 22), *I don't like wine* (EN-EL, p. 87). Even though those excerpts might indicate some experience drinking liquors, they also bring out the rejection of some kinds of alcoholic beverages, or similarly the samplings about non-consuming or detesting particular drinks or their types: *Ja nie lubię tego wina. Nigdy go nie piję.* [*I don't like this wine. I never drink it.*] (PL-H, p. 73), *Nie lubię czerwonego wina.* [*I don't like red wine.*] (PL-K: 68).

The following examples might cause a certain ambivalence: *Would you like some wine? No, thanks. just mineral water for me* (EN-NE, p. 84), *Angela, ja nie chcę pić ani piwa, ani wódki, ani wina, żadnego drinka!* [*Angela, I don't want to drink any beer, vodka, wine or any drink!*] (PL-K, p. 67), *Ja też nie mam ochoty na piwo.* [*I don't feel like having a beer either.*] (PL-K, p. 79). On the one hand, the characters in the book

refuse to consume alcohol at a particular moment, but on the other hand, in a habitual aspect their statements imply drinking alcohol.

Not very frequent, but definitely worth mentioning, is presenting beverages as low or alcohol-free: *Tienen cerveza sin alcohol* [*They have a beer without alcohol.*] (ES-AI, p. 61). In this way, drinks in everyday life, inextricably associated with alcohol, were placed in textbooks without promoting active drinking attitudes.

The other way of presenting alcohol in textbooks with caution might be by highlighting the harmful impact of alcohol intake. In several textbooks health problems and afflictions are caused by alcohol abuse: *Nie mogę pić wódki, bo mam bardzo »słabą głowę«*¹⁴ [*I can't drink vodka, because »I am not much of a heavy drinker«*]. (PL-K, p. 166), *Не пейте пиво после водки: будет болеть голова.* [*Do not drink beer after vodka: your head will hurt.*] (RU-P, p. 222). However, the passages on alcohol abuse do not always have a clearly negative context. In comparison to the examples cited above, in the following example, we do not find any denunciative or reproachful attitudes. It is rather predicative: *He's got a hangover.* (EN-EL, p. 46), although it involves alcohol abuse, which is defined as a consumption of four or five alcoholic beverages in a single session (Phillips, 2014: 306).

In a negative approach, alcohol is perceived as a drug. That is why in textbooks it correlates with cigarettes: *People don't usually drink much alcohol or smoke* (EN-NE, p. 32); *artykuły spożywcze i napoje bezalkoholowe, alkohol i papierosy* [*groceries and alcohol-free drinks, alcohol and cigarettes*] (PL-C, p. 80). For the same reason alcohol is profiled as a substance the consumption of which is associated with numerous restrictions and prohibitions: *Nigdy nie »jeżdżę« (ja) samochodem, kiedy wcześniej piłem alkohol.* [*I never »drive« a car after drinking alcohol.*] (PL-K, p. 93), *W kinie można jeść, ale nie wolno pić alkoholu.* [*You can eat in the cinema, but you are not allowed to drink alcohol.*] (PL-C, p. 218), *I didn't drink any alcohol so I could drive* (EN-NE, p. 56).

Based on the above deliberations, there are some advantages to introducing alcohol-related vocabulary in negative contexts in textbooks. It is a way of confronting certain lexemes and topics, knowledge of which may be necessary from the point of view of a student at an A1 level, and at the same time not promoting attitudes encouraging alcoholic consumption.

5.3. Affirmative approach

In this paper, the affirmative approach to alcohol is perceived as a way of presenting the vocabulary related to alcoholic consumption, which through the contexts evokes positive associations. Additionally, we also included passages without purely negative context. Nevertheless, it should be noted that including alcoholic vocabulary itself and its high frequency state a positive approach to alcohol. It is assumed that

¹⁴ Words, which students have to fill in or choose to solve an exercise, are given in angle brackets.

topics, vocabulary and grammar in materials for TFL at level A1 have been carefully selected. Hence, what appears in the first-level textbooks should be considered didactically and culturally important.

Sentences containing the consumption of alcohol are a clear example of a positive attitude towards alcohol: *Oni »piją« piwo.* [*They drink beer.*] (PL-C, p. 61), *Wy »pijecie« czerwone wino.* [*You drink red wine.*] (PL-C, p. 61). Furthermore, the questions about the habits referring to alcoholic consumption are affirmative: *How often do you drink alcohol?* (EN-NE, p. 33), *»How much« beer do you drink a day?* (EN-NE, p. 78).

Samples expressing a preference of one liquor over others should be interpreted as encouraging drinking: *Wolisz czerwone wino czy białe? Wolę czerwone wino.* [*Do you prefer red or white wine? I prefer red.*] (PL-C, p. 61), *Wolę piwo niż wino.* [*I prefer beer over wine.*] (PL-C, p. 62). Despite the exclusion of certain beverages, the following examples also should be treated as affirmative towards alcoholic attitudes since such sentences indicate alcoholic consumption.: *We don't drink wine, but we drink beer* (EN-EL, p. 23), *Я пью всё, кр́оме водки, а вы?* [*I drink everything except vodka. And you?*] (RU-P, p. 170).

First of all, alcohol in textbooks is inherently related to food. Hence, it is presented in the menu cards as a gastronomic offer of restaurants or pubs (PL-H, pp. 50, 54, PL-K, p. 65; ES-AI, pp. 59, 62). Most often alcohol accompanies meals eaten with family and friends in restaurants: *We had coffee and apple cake then wine.* (EN-NE, p. 56), *Kelnerka: A co do picia? Angela: Dwie herbaty i dwa razy piwo* [*Waitress: What about to drink? Angela: Two teas and two beers.*] (PL-K, p. 65). In other textbooks, alcohol is also consumed with meals at home: *Do spaghetti? Piwo? Jeśli chcesz możesz kupić czerwone wino.* [*To go with spaghetti? Beer? You can buy red wine if you want to.*] (PL-K, p. 60), *Wino zaraz będziemy pić, więc możesz postawić w kuchni na stole.* [*We will drink the wine right away, so you can put it on the table in the kitchen.*] (PL-K, p. 129). However, although in a few samples drinking wine is still associated with having a meal, the participation of guests is no longer mentioned: *Do kolacji piję wodę mineralną, czasami wino.* [*I drink mineral water with dinner, sometimes wine.*] (PL-C, p. 107), *Wino do kolacji.* [*Wine with dinner.*] (PL-C, p.108).

In textbooks, alcohol is quite often presented as a drink bought in stores, which is why it is mentioned next to beverages such as: milk, juice, cola, coffee (EN-EL, p. 21, PL-H, p. 79, PL-K, pp. 98, 101). Therefore, in comparisons expressing a taste preference, it is equal with non-alcoholic beverages: *My lubimy piwo, one lubią herbatę.* [*We like beer, they like tea.*] (PL-C, p. 60), *Lubię zimny sok i wino.* [*I like juice and wine.*] (PL-C, p. 61). This clearly proves that alcohol is no longer perceived as a taboo, but is recognized as a culturally neutral product associated with everyday life.

Alcohol in textbooks also binds a social life, hence it is consumed in clubs and discos: *Może pójdziemy gdzieś do klubu na piwo, a potem potańczyć?* [*Maybe we'll go somewhere to a club for a beer and then dancing?*] (PL-K, p. 79), *W Warszawie spotkałem się też ze znajomymi w pubie i oczywiście piłem polskie piwo!* [*In Warsaw,*

I also met friends in a pub and of course I drank Polish beer!] (PL-K, p. 85). Therefore, there is socializing or networking: *Then some men at the next table started talking to us and bought us a drink.* (EN-NE, p. 56). In many instructional resources, drinking is pointed out as the principal aim of the meeting or going out to drinking places: *do irlandzkiego pubu na piwo [to an Irish pub for a beer]* (PL-H, p. 69), *Zapraszam na piwo. [Let's have a beer.]* (PL-C, p. 185), *W sobotę idę na imprezę i chcę »pić« piwo. [On Saturday I am going to a party, and I want to »drink« beer.]* (PL-C, p. 232).

Drinks also accompany meetings with friends in their homes (not necessarily as part of a meal). It is emphasized that liquors are gifts brought by guests to a host or constitute a guest's contribution to an event: *When people go to a party in Britain, they take a gift for the host(s). This is usually a bottle of wine, flowers, or a box of chocolates* (EN-EL, p. 59), *Я благодарю за приглашение, покупаю хорошее вино и иду. [Thank you for the invitation. I'll buy a good wine and I'm coming.]* (RU-PN, p. 212).

In teaching materials alcohol constitutes the culinary tradition of a country: *„Żywiec” to »polskie piwo«.* [„Żywiec” is a Polish beer.]. (PL-H, p. 26), *У вас есть грузинское вино? У вас есть русская водка? [Do you have Georgian wine? Do you have a Russian vodka?]* (RU-P, p. 181), *Конечно, все знают русские блин, икру, водку, щи, борщ. [Of course, everyone knows Russian pancakes, caviar, vodka, cabbage soup, borscht.]* (RU-P, p. 190), or a region: *Rośnie także tutaj aromatyczna trawa dodawana do znanej polskiej wódki „Żubrówka”.* [Aromatic grass that is added to the well-known Polish vodka “Żubrówka” also grows here.]. (PL-K, p. 132). In this way, alcoholic beverages build the cultural identity of a given country or region, which then might be presented as a sort of tourist attraction. Alcoholic beverages become a way of getting acquainted with other cultures: *W końcu »zjem« fish and chips i »wypiję« angielskie piwo. [Finally, I'll »eat« fish and chips and »drink« British beer.]* (PL-C, p. 300), and, as a result, an inseparable element of rest and spending leisure time: *Morze, plaża, piwo, piękne kobiety i relaks. [Sea, beach, beer, beautiful women and relaxation.]* (PL-H, p. 113).

Alcohol emphasizes and strengthens celebrating great and breakthrough moments in life, such as passing an exam: *Myszę, że po egzaminie »pójdziemy« wieczorem na piwo. [I think that after the exam »we'll« go for a beer in the evening.]* (PL-C: 300).

Some course books even emphasize the beneficial effects of drinks like wine: *Możesz też jeść ryby, ale tylko chude i pić czerwone wino do kolacji. [You can also eat fish, but only lean ones, and drink red wine with dinner.]* (PL-C, p. 139), *Red wine is »better« for you than white wine.* (EN-NE, p. 113), although reports about the harmfulness of alcohol were revealed to the public in the 1970s. Furthermore, recommendations published in the United States in the 1990s completely exclude alcohol from a diet (Gately, 2008, pp. 541–553).

Liquors in textbooks are definitely common among various social groups. Young adults are mostly the main characters in the books, and both men and women drink:

Ona lubi francuskie wina i ser. [*She likes French wine and cheese.*] (PL-C, p. 192), *Maria jest Hiszpanką. Lubi espresso, piwo i sushi.* [*Maria is Spanish. She likes espresso, beer and sushi.*] (PL-C, p. 2018), *They drink a lot of beer too – men and women* (EN-NE, p. 16). However, women mostly limit themselves to soft drinks: *Angela: Dwie herbaty i dwa razy piwo.* [*Angela: Two teas and two beers.*] (PL-K, p. 65), *Krystyna i Dominik »piją« czerwone wino.* [*Krystyna and Dominik »drink« red wine.*] (PL-C, p. 101).

6. Discussion and concluding remarks

The ambivalence towards the consumption of alcohol in European culture emphasized by the experts (Burnham, 1993, Gately, 2008, Phillips, 2014) is also reflected in TFL course books. The conducted analysis proves that in TFL textbooks we deal with a diverse approach to alcohol – from complete omitting and tabooing, through reducing and minimizing drinks, to an affirmative attitude. It is noteworthy to mention that even though the alcohol-related lexis might occur without any context, their positive value is proven just by its appearance, especially in textbooks at the A1 level of teaching. However, it seems the higher the frequency of alcohol in the materials, the gentler and more leniently the textbook treats alcoholic issues. The most investigated TFL materials are marked by a significant presence of alcohol-related vocabulary, though it means that those textbooks are inconsistent with the guidelines of PARSNIP referred to writing and publishing materials for TFL. On the other edge of the spectrum, the complete omission of alcohol can be recognized by learners as artificial and cause communication deficiencies.

Although detailed conclusions on alcohol in particular textbooks should be interpreted with care as they might arise from different reasons, the occurrence of alcoholic beverages, and particularly their high rank in the textbooks, proves the acceptance of drinking attitudes in most of the investigated materials. In some passages alcohol is treated with considerable sensitivity – for example in contexts discouraging its consumption.

Nevertheless, alcohol in textbooks is primarily used to build a cultural context according to Western norms and values. It functions as a vehicle for imposing western capitalist values and beliefs, and as such carries with it imperialistic influences. It is associated with the aspect of socialising, entertainment, celebrating, leisure time, tourism, tradition, but also within the frame of food and health. Indulging in alcoholic beverages is highlighted as an element of life modelled by prominent Western citizens.

The common features of all investigated textbooks are different approaches towards wine, beer and vodka – it seems that the first two drinks are treated much more gently by the authors. There might be several reasons for that. The view of alcohol in textbooks reflects the undoubted position of beer as a most important drink, and the significant role of wine in Europe (Grigg, 2004, pp. 100–101), but the study also

proves that only spirits are perceived as “real” or harmful alcohol which is associated with alcohol abuse.

The investigation also confirmed that the TFL materials reflect division into Western wine countries (Spain) and beer countries (the United Kingdom) versus Eastern, former spirit countries (Poland, Russia). In general Polish and Russian FL course books are more prone to include alcoholic beverages, which might be caused by deeply rooted Polish and Russian culture patterns perceiving alcohol abuse only as heavy drinking, especially among lower class and blue-collar employees. Consuming beer and wine, or frequent drinking of small quantities, has become prevalent, especially among students and university-educated people in urban centers (Moskalewicz, Zieliński, 1995, pp. 224–236, Sidorov, 1995, pp. 237–253). Therefore, in Slavic textbooks only alcohol abuse might be recognized as a controversial or improper topic, which is obviously extremely rare or absent in textbooks.

Nevertheless, the socio-cultural explanation for introducing beer and wine into textbooks might be insufficient. An additional reason why beer and wine are more often introduced in textbooks than vodka, which also raises the total score for alcohol references in Slavic textbooks, might arise from grammatical reasons. In Polish and Russian materials beer (pl. *piwo*, ros. пиво) and wine (pl. *wino*, ros. вино) seem to be placed in order to exemplify grammatical terms. As the roots of these two nouns do not alternate in declining, they might be perceived as plain words to exemplify a neutral gender of nouns. Thus, both beer and wine can be found in tables presenting grammatical terms (PL-K, p. 100, PL-C, pp. 62, 65, 101), and in grammatical exercises as key elements of grammatical and lexical operation (PL-H, p. 26; PL-K, pp. 28, 48, PL-C, pp. 62, 194). Besides, in Russian TFL materials, the lexemes wine and beer are examples for phonetic and cadence issues (RU-P, pp. 12, 18; RU-PN, pp. 31, 32).

In conclusion, we hope that this study will help textbook authors create didactically appropriate FL materials as well as enable FL teachers to be cautious while critically assessing textbooks for the presence (or absence) of alcohol. It seems that neither complete tabooing of alcohol nor the overly positive encouraging of its consumption fosters the didactic process.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Acknowledgments

The project is financed through the grant received from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education under the Regional Initiative of Excellence programme for the years 2019–2022, project number 009/RID/2018/19, the amount of funding 8 791 222,00 PLN.

REFERENCES

1. AKBARI, R., *Transforming lives: introducing critical pedagogy into ELT classrooms*. "English Language Teaching Journal", 2008, 62 (3), p. 273-283, <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccn025>.
2. BURNHAM, J., *Bad habits: Drinking, smoking, taking drugs, gambling, sexual misbehaviour, and swearing in American history*. New York: New York University Press, 1993.
3. BYRAM, M., *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1989.
4. CUNNINGSWORTH, A., *Choosing your coursebook*. Oxford: Hainemann, 1995.
5. DĄBROWSKA, A., & PASIEKA, M., *O czym ma milczeć cudzoziemiec. Tematy i słownictwo nieobecne w podręcznikach języka polskiego jako obcego* [in:] *Język a Kultura*, 2009, 21, pp. 241-257.
6. GARNCAREK, P., *Świat języka polskiego oczami cudzoziemców*. Warszawa: DiG, 1997.
7. GATELY, I., *Drink: A cultural history of alcohol*. New York: Gotham Books, 2008.
8. GOBERT, M., *Avoiding cultural confrontation in the classroom: An analysis of four mainstream integrated ESL textbooks* [In:] S. Zafar (Ed.), *Culture, context, and communication in English language teaching: Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Teacher-to-Teacher Conference*, Abu Dhabi: Military Language Institute, 2003, pp. 220-233.
9. GRIGG, D., *Wine, spirits and beer: World patterns of Consumption*, "Geography", 2004, 89 (2), pp. 99-110.
10. KAJAK, P., *Tematy tabu w nauczaniu języka polskiego jako obcego*, „Acta Universitatis Lodziensis: Kształcenie Polonistyczne Cudzoziemców”, 2011, 18, pp. 193-199.
11. KARLSSON, T., & SIMPURA, J., *Changes in living conditions and their links to alcohol consumption and drinking patterns in 16 European countries, 1950 to 2000*, "Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs", 2001, 18 (1), pp. 82-99, <https://doi.org/10.1177/145507250101801S03>.
12. KRAMSCH, C., *Foreign language textbooks' construction of foreign reality*, "Canadian Modern Language Review", 1987, 44(1), pp. 95-119.
13. MELLITI, M., *Global Content in Global Coursebooks: The Way Issues of Inappropriacy, Inclusivity, and Connectedness Are Treated in Headway Intermediate*, "SAGE Open", 2013, pp. 1-12, DOI: 10.1177/2158244013507265.
14. MOSKALEWICZ, J., & ZIELIŃSKI, A., *Poland* [In:] D.B. Heath (Ed.), *International handbook on alcohol and culture*, Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995, pp. 224-236).
15. PHILLIPS, R., *Alcohol: a history*, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2014.
16. SÁNDOROVÁ, Z., *Content analysis as a research method in investigating the cultural components in foreign language textbooks*, "Journal of Language and Cultural Education", 2014, 2 (1), pp. 95-128.
17. SIDOROV, P., *Russia*, [In:] D.B. Heath (Ed.), *International handbook on alcohol and culture* Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995, pp. 224-236.
18. SKOPINSKAJA, L., *The Role of Culture in Language Teaching Materials: An Evaluation from an Intercultural Perspective*, [In:] I. Lázár (Ed.) *Incorporating Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teacher Education*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing Graz, 2003, pp. 39-68.
19. WARDHAUGH, R., *An introduction to sociolinguistics (5th ed.)*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

20. WEBER, R.P., *Content Analysis. Basic Content Analysis*. London: Sage Publications, 1990.
21. ZHANG, Y., & WILDEMUTH, B. M., *Qualitative analysis of content*. [In:] B. Wildemuth (Ed.), *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*, London: Libraries Unlimited, 2009, pp. 308-319.

The list of analyzed textbooks and their abbreviations:

English:

- EN-EL: Hutchinson T. (2007). *English for life. Beginner. Student's book*. Oxford University Press.
- EN-SO: Eales F., & Oakes S. (2012). *Speak out. Starter student's book*. Pearson Education.
- EN-NE: Oxeden C., Latham-Koenig Ch., & Seligson P. (2004). *New English File. Elementary Student's Book*. Oxford University Press.

Spanish:

- ES-NV: Castro F., Martín F., Morales R., & Soledad R. (2011). *Nuevo ven 1. Libro del alumno*. Edelsa Grupo Didascalía.
- ES-EM: Castro Vidúez F., Díaz Ballesteros P., Rodero Díez I., & Sardinero Franco C. (2005). *Español en marcha. Curso español como lengua extranjera. Libro del alumno*. Sgel Sociedad General Española.
- ES-AI: Corpas J., García E., Garmendia A., & Soriano C. (2005). *Aula internacional 1. Curso de español*. Difusion.

Polish:

- PL-H: Małolepsza M., & Szymkiewicz A. (2006). *Hurra!!! Po Polsku 1. Podręcznik studenta*. Prolog.
- PL-KK: Stempek I., Stelmach A., Dawidek S., & Szymkiewicz A. (2011). *Polski krok po kroku. Poziom A1*. Glossa.
- PL-C: Porębska M., & Piotrowska-Rola E. (2013). *Polski jest Cool*. Studio Temat.

Russian:

- RU-PN: Аксёнова М. (2000). *Русский язык по-новому, Часть 1*. Zlatoust.
- RU-P: Чернышов С. (2009). *Поехали! Русский язык для взрослых*. Zlatoust.
- RU-DR: Антонова В.Е., Нахабина М. М., Сафронова М. В., & Толстых А.А. (2010). *Дорога в Россию. Учебник русского языка*. Zlatoust.

**Approaches to alcohol in textbooks
for teaching foreign languages for beginners.
An investigation of English, Spanish, Russian and Polish textbooks**

Summary: This study discusses different approaches to alcohol in textbooks for teaching foreign languages (English, Spanish, Russian, Polish) on a beginner level (A1). In a broader context, the article deals with the cultural content and evaluation of foreign language course books.

At the outset, the materials for foreign language teaching have been investigated with a frame of content analysis, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative analysis reveals that alcohol occurs in varying levels in the textbooks – from complete absence in some to 118 references in one textbook. Alcohol appears in Polish and Russian textbooks to a greater extent than in English and Spanish. Moreover, the paper suggests that the common feature of the books is a higher tolerance towards beer and wine than to spirits.

In the second part of the study, based on the qualitative descriptions, three approaches towards presenting alcohol in the course books are discussed: tabooing, cautionary treatment and an affirmative approach. Additionally, this study discusses that in Slavic course books alcohol might also be introduced because of linguistic reasons (grammatical and phonetic).

Keywords: textbooks, foreign language textbooks, teaching foreign languages; alcohol, cultural content of textbooks

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34864/heteroglossia.issn.2084-1302.nr11.art17>