Teaching semantic fields: beef

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Abstract
Teaching English for Special Purposes (ESP) in an agricultural university or faculty is challenging because of the large number of specialty terms undergraduates need to acquire. One way to do it easily and properly is to learn about the entire semantic field of a term. Learning about beef, for instance, also means learning about all the nouns (compounds, derivatives), adjectives, and verbs belonging to the semantic field of beef: animals (beefalo, steer; bones (itchbone); breeds (Aberdeen, Brangus, Devon); cuts (baron, beefsteak, bottom round); dishes (beef bourguignon, beef Stroganoff, beef Wellington) etc. Learning about the etymology of all of these terms broadens the cultural horizon of the undergraduates, opening a new perspective over globalization.

Keywords: English for Special Purposes, semantic field, beef

Introduction
Teaching English for Special Purposes in an agricultural university - particularly in a university where they teach not only about livestock, but also about food processing or about food services - is challenging because of the large number of specialty terms undergraduates need to learn. One way to assist students with vocabulary acquisition easily and properly is to learn about the entire semantic field of a term (‘a range or system of referents that have some aspect of meaning in common’, Chalker & Weiner 1994: 150). In this paper, we present the semantic field of the term beef (‘a full-grown steer, bull, ox, or cow, especially one intended for use as meat; the flesh of a slaughtered full-grown steer, bull, ox, or cow’).

Material and Methods
We have inventoried all the terms related to the term beef in Soukhanov’s The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2000). We then grouped them according to their semantic sub-fields such: animal husbandry, food processing, food service, etc., thus making up inventories of beef-related terms specific to different subjects (animal husbandry, food processing technologies, tourism services, etc.) that undergraduates should learn as basic English vocabulary of their field specialization.

Results and Discussion
The most frequently used synonym for beef ‘a full-grown steer, bull, ox, or cow, especially one intended for use as meat; the flesh of a slaughtered full-grown steer, bull, ox, or cow’ [< ME < OF buef < L bos, bov-] is red meat ‘meat, especially beef, that is dark-coloured before being cooked’.
There is a single noun derived from beef - beefiness ‘beef quality’ and a compound with beef used informally - beefcake ‘minimally attired men with muscular physiques, as in photographs or motion pictures’ [BEEF + (CHEESE) CAKE].
Such adjectives as beefed-up ‘having been made greater or stronger’ and beefy ‘muscular in build, brawny, substantial, filling; filled with beef’ are the only adjectives derived from beef. A verb most frequently used in relation to beef is to corn ‘to preserve (beef, for example) in brine’.

The terms making up the semantic field of the term beef can be grouped into the following semantic sub-
fields (presented here in alphabetical order):

**Anatomy:** aitchbone ‘the rump bone, especially of cattle’.

Animal husbandry:

animals: beefalo (pl. beefalo or beefalo(e)s) or cattalo ‘a hybrid that results from a cross between the American buffalo, or bison, and beef cattle and is typically 8 buffalo and 8 bovine. Beefalo yields leaner beef than conventional breeds of cattle’ [BEF + (BUFF)ALO], steer ‘a young ox, especially one castrated before sexual maturity and raised for beef’ [< ME steer < OE stéor],

**breeds:**

Aberdeen / Black Angus ‘a breed of black, hornless beef cattle that originated in Scotland’ [After Aberdeen and Angus, former counties of Scotland],

Devon ‘any of a breed of reddish cattle originally developed in the English county of Devon and raised primarily for beef’,

Durham / shorthorn ‘any of a breed of beef or dairy cattle that originated in northern England, having short, curved horns or no horns and usually red, white, or roan in colour’, Hereford ‘any of a breed of beef cattle developed in England and having a reddish coat with white markings’ [< Hereford],

Santa Gertrudis ‘any of a breed of large beef cattle that are highly resistant to heat and insects, developed in the United States by crossing Brahmins and shorthorns’ [< the Santa Gertrudis section of the King Ranch in Kingsville, Texas];

cattle feed: monensin ‘a broad-spectrum antibiotic, C_{36}H_{62}O_{11}, obtained from the actinomycete Streptomyces cinnamonensis and used chiefly as an additive to beef cattle feed’ [< NL (cinna)monēns(is), species name].

Dishes:

beef Stroganoff ‘thinly sliced beef fillet sautéed and mixed with onions, mushrooms, sour cream, and herbs, often served on a bed of noodles or rice’ [< Count Paul Stroganoff, 19th-century Russian diplomat],

beef Wellington ‘a fillet of beef covered with pate de foie gras, encased in pastry, and baked’ [< Wellington?],

burger ‘a sandwich consisting of a bun, a cooked beef patty, and often other ingredients such as cheese, onion slices, lettuce, or condiments; a sandwich with a nonbeef filling’ [Short for HAMBURGER],

carpaccio ‘very thinly sliced raw beef or tuna garnished with a sauce’ [< It carpaccio < Vittore Carpaccio, who favoured red pigments],

fil(l)let ‘a boneless strip of meat rolled and tied, as for roasting’,

goulash ‘a stew of beef or veal and vegetables, seasoned mainly with paprika. [< Hung gulyas (hus) ‘herdsman’s (meat), goulash’ < Hung gulya ‘herdsman’],

hamburg(er) ‘ground meat, usually beef, or patty of such meat; sandwich made with a patty of ground meat usually in a roll or bun’ [Short for Hamburger steak < Hamburg],

meat loaf / meatloaf ‘a moulded or moulded dish, usually baked, of ground beef or a combination of various meats and other ingredients’,

mortadella ‘an Italian sausage made of pork, beef, and cubes of pork fat, flavoured with wine and spices and smoked, steamed, or baked’ [< It mortadella, feminine diminutive of murtato ‘seasoned with myrtle berries’],

moussaka ‘a Greek dish consisting of layers of ground lamb or beef and sliced eggplant topped with a cheese sauce and baked’ (Croatian musaka),

pepperoni (pl. pepperonis) ‘highly spiced pork and beef sausage; a slice of this type of sausage’ [< It peperoni, pl. of peperone ‘pimento, red pepper’, augmentative of pepe ‘pepper’ < L piper],

Reuben ‘a hot sandwich consisting of corned beef, Swiss cheese, and sauerkraut usually served on rye bread’ [< Reuben],

runza ‘Nebraska. A pastry consisting of cabbage and usually beef and pork encased in yeast dough’ [Originated in Russia during the 1800s (pirog like; bierock) and was sent to Germany before being served to the US]

Salisbury steak ‘a patty of ground beef mixed with eggs, milk, onions, and various seasonings and broiled, fried, or baked’ [< James Henry Salisbury (1823-1905), American physician],

steak tartar or tartar steak ‘raw ground beef mixed with onion, seasoning, and raw egg, eaten as an appetizer’ [< E steak + F tartare ‘Tartar’]
surf and turf ‘seafood and beefsteak served as the main course of a meal, as in a restaurant’
wienerwurst ‘a smoked pork or beef sausage similar to a frankfurter’ [<G Wiener + Wurst ‘Viennese sausage’]
Yorkshire pudding ‘a popover-like quick bread served with roast beef, made by baking a batter of eggs, flour, and milk in the drippings of the beef’ [<Yorkshire].

Food processing (cuts):
aitchbone ‘the cut of beef containing the rump bone’,
baron ‘a cut of beef consisting of a double sirloin’ [<ME <OF <G?]
beefsteak ‘a slice of beef, such as one taken from the loin or the hindquarters, suitable for broiling or frying
bottom round ‘a cut of meat, such as steak, taken from the outer section of a round of beef’, eye ‘a choice centre cut of meat, as of beef’
fil(l)let ‘a strip or compact piece of boneless meat or fish, especially the beef tenderloin’
flanken ‘a cut of meat taken from the short ribs of beef’ [<Yiddish flanken <G Flanken, pl. of Flanke ‘flank, side’ <F flanc]
fil(l)let ‘a strip or compact piece of boneless meat or fish, especially the beef tenderloin’
hindquarter ‘the posterior portion of a side of beef, lamb, veal, or mutton, including a hind leg and one or two ribs’
plate ‘a thin cut of beef from the brisket’
porterhouse (steak) ‘a cut of beef taken from the thick end of the short loin, having a T-bone and a sizable piece of tenderloin’, pot roast ‘a cut of beef that is browned and then cooked until tender, often with vegetables, in a covered pot’, rib roast ‘a cut of red meat, such as beef or venison, containing the sizable piece located along the outside of the rib’, rump ‘a cut of beef or veal from the rump’ [<ME rumpe <Scandinavian origin].

Food service:
steak house / steakhouse ‘a restaurant that specializes in beefsteak dishes’.

Others: beefeater ‘a yeoman of the British monarch’s royal guard’.

Terms related only informally to beef
Australian pine or beefwood or casuarina ‘any of various Australian evergreen trees or shrubs of the genus Casuarina, having jointed stems, scale-like whorled leaves, and small fruits grouped in woody, cone-like structures; the wood of any of these plants, often used in construction’ and
beefsteak fungus ‘an edible fungus (Fistulina hepatica).

The terms beefeater and hamburger are a good opportunity to “teach” undergraduates British and American culture by supplying information concerning their etymology and development. Thus, the following two texts can be used as a starting point for different approaches (grammar, translation, etc.):
“Tourists in England who have seen the warders of the Tower of London and the Yeomen of the Guard know that these men dressed in 15th century uniforms are called beefeaters. Not all tourists are aware, however, that the original use of the term (recorded in 1610) was pejorative, referring to a well-fed servant. In a work published before 1628 the word was also said to have been used contemptuously by the French for an Englishman or an English soldier. The word beefeater has thus risen in the world, for the well-fed, well-muscled beefeaters of today (this use was first recorded in 1671) are considered by many to be a national treasure.” (for beefeater) and “After having eaten countless hamburgers, one may perhaps be interested in knowing more about the origins of the name. By the middle of the 19th century people in Hamburg, Germany, the busiest port in West Germany today, enjoyed pounded beefsteak in some form. Perhaps brought to America by the large numbers of Germans who migrated around that time, this sort of dish with the name Hamburg steak may have appeared on a menu as early as 1836. The first recorded use of Hamburg steak is found in 1884 in the Boston Journal, with hamburger steak being first recorded in a Walla Walla, Washington, newspaper in 1889.

In our opinion, one of the definitions for tea contains a mistake: tea ‘Any of various beverages, made as by steeping the leaves of certain plants or by extracting an infusion especially from beef.’
Conclusions
The largest semantic sub-fields are dishes (46), processing (23), and animal husbandry (9). They should be the basis for the learning of a minimum of specialised terms in our faculties of animal husbandry, food processing technologies, and tourism services. The rest of the terms more or less related to beef should be taught for their anecdotic aspect or to make undergraduates aware of the fact that they should be avoided because of lack of relevance.

References

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