

It tastes *horsey*, *bready*, and *fruity*:
Analyzing aspects of beer talk



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**1. Some Facts on
Beer**



**2. Corpus and
Analysis**



3. Conclusion

1. Short History Of Beer

- Origin: Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt, maybe even older
- Greeting in Egypt: “Bread and Beer”
- Brewing was done by women
- Very popular since then, often because cleaner than water

(Olsson 2003:171ff.)

- First known home brewing 719 A.D.
→ Lex Alemannorum

(Olsson 2003:175)

1. Social Status Of Beer

- Consumption is structured by and structures social hierarchies

(Thurnell-Read 2018:540)

- Drinking pattern associated with specific class, beer once exclusively drink of working class

(Järvinen et al. 2014:384; Thurnell-Read 2018:540)

→ Historically grown: Wine for higher social class, because it is expensive, beer for lower social class, because essential part of food supply and social environment (Olsson 2003:188)

1. Change In Social Status

- Huge changes in recent years
 - “embourgeoisement” of beer consumption
(Thurnell-Read 2018)
- Possible reasons: no need for beer as essential food anymore, but consumption with other food?
 - (cf. Olsson 2003:188; Elzinga et al. 2015:248)
 - Very important, because consumption influences the way we talk about beer!

2. Important Concepts

- *Oinoglossia*, wine talk, as foundation
→ Similar structure in beer talk?

(Silverstein 2003:222; 2006)

- *Community of Practice*

→ “Collection of people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavor”

(Eckert 2006:682)

2. Corpus

- Website craftbeer.com, subcategories “Beer” and “Beer styles”
- 32 types of beer and their descriptions
- 11 super categories of beer
 - For this presentation only the beer types
 - Two examples on handout

BEER

BREWERIES

FOOD

NEWS



What is Craft Beer?

Beer Styles

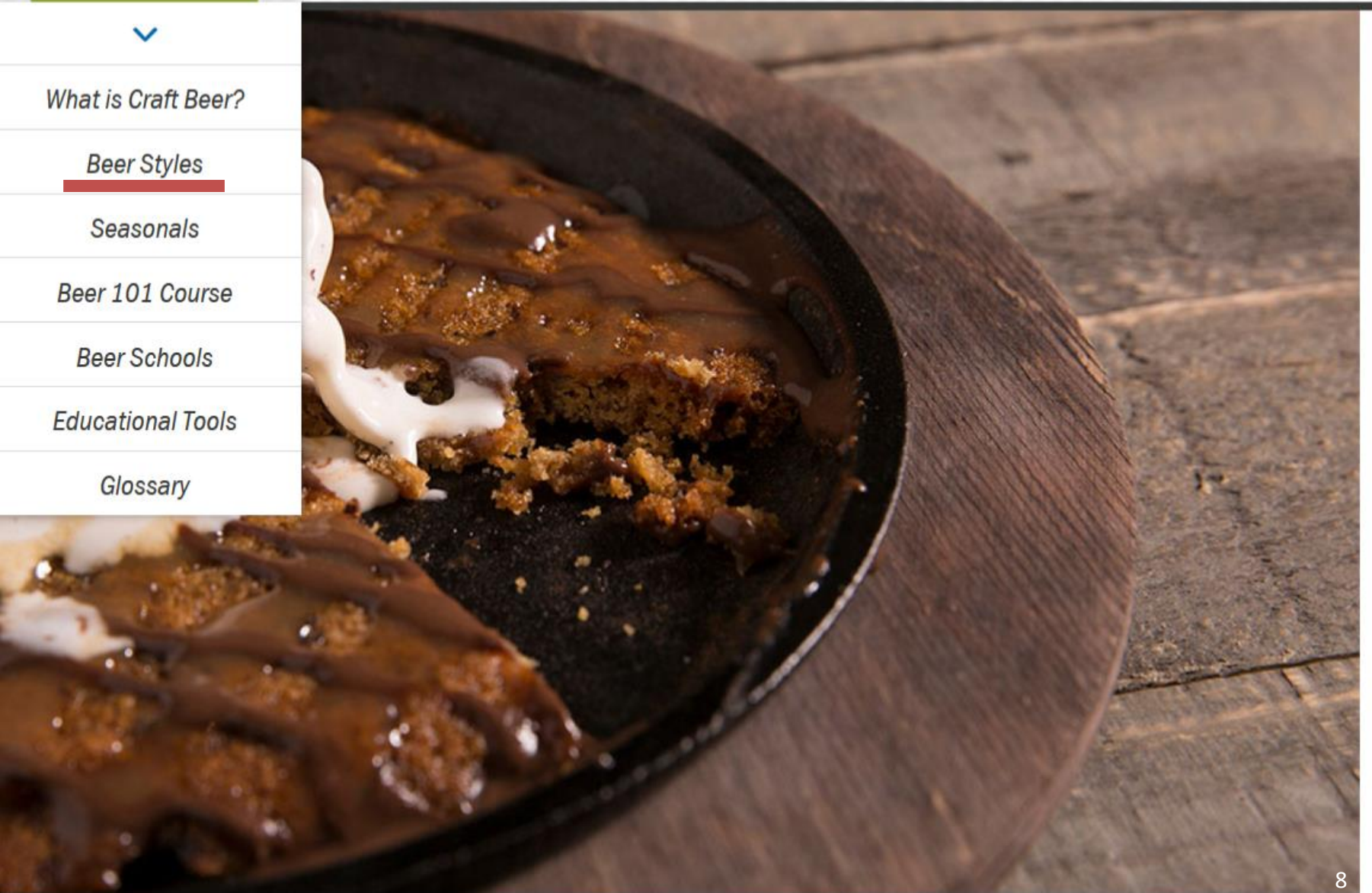
Seasonals

Beer 101 Course

Beer Schools

Educational Tools

Glossary



FEAT
Fee
Bre



2. General Structure Of Beer Talk

- What does it mean, when a beer has:

Character, style, body, profile, and is strong and sturdy?

→ “Anthropomorphizing metaphorical (figurative) usages of a characterological nature“

(Silverstein 2003:225)

→ “Brand positioning strategy“

(Puzakova & Kwak 2017:99)

2. General Structure Of Beer Talk

- Several categories are mentioned:
 - Color
 - Aroma
 - Flavor
 - Texture
 - Production
 - Extras
- No clear order, not all have to appear, except flavor, which is always mentioned!

2. Category: Flavor

- Nouns: *caramel, toffee, chocolate, white bread, graham cracker, honey, candy, licorice, etc.*
 - Mostly food, but also: sulfur
- Adjectives: *fruity, citrus, piney, floral, herbal, bready, spicy, horsey, goaty, leathery, etc.*
 - food, smell
- Specific for beer: flavor of ingredients and production, such as *malted grains, hops, yeast* etc. very important for taste

(cf. Alworth 2015:9)

2. Category: Color

- Nouns: *amber, copper(-garnet), straw, gold*
 - Materials with striking color
- Adjectives: *black, pale, dark, red, brown, dark brown, white, schwarz, light*
 - Color adjectives are used most often;
specific for beer: *pale* and *dark* as ends of color scale
- Interesting: corresponds with flavor!

2. Category: Texture

- Viewing:

Adjectives/Adverbs: *haze, clear, cloudy, clean, crisp*

→ The fewer particles, the brighter the beer

- Tasting:

Adjectives/Adverbs: *solid, clean, crisp, creamy, oily, rich*

- Beer is often variously filtered; texture therefore used as part of performance

(cf. Alworth 2015:63)

3. Conclusions

- Used by community of practice → *beer talk* = independent register!

→ Structure

→ Vocabulary

(adapted from Silverstein 2003:223)

Visual	Olfactory	Gustatory	Internal Olfaction	Vaporization
Brilliance and color	Smell, scent, nose and bouquet	Body, harshness and acidity	Volatility and aftertaste	Finish
[I]	[II]	[III]	[IV]	[V]

3. Conclusions

- Part of performance

(Silverstein 2003:226)

- But what is performed? *Distinction* as defined by Bourdieu

(Bourdieu 1984; Turner & Edmunds 2002:221)

- “taste of liberty”

(Bourdieu 1984:4ff.)

- Even though similar to *oinoglossia* in structure, very distinct elements

→ Counterculture to wine drinking

3. Why Is This Important?

- Community of practice uses beer talk → change of social branding → Thesis of omnivorousness

(Peterson & Simkus 1992)

- This is an important sign of social change and prosperity → “not only the *what* of consumption [...] but also the *how* of consumption” is important → beer talk

(Järvinen et al. 2014:388)

3. As Plutarch Said...

“Among drinks, beer is the most useful, among food it is the most agreeable, and among medicines it is the best tasting.”

(Plutarch, cited in Hornsey 2003:699)

**Please find my references here:
<https://t1p.de/AspectsBeerTalk>**

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