Linguistic Codes: Food as a Class Indicator

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Abstract : This linguistic case study is based on an interaction between the social position and foodways. In every culture there is a social hierarchical system in which there can be means to express and to identify the social status of a person. Food serves as a class indicator. The British being a verbal nation use the words as a preferred medium for signalling and recognising the social status. The linguistic analysis reflects a symbolic hierarchy determined by social groups in the UK. The linguistic class indicators of a British hierarchical system are detectable directly – in speech acts. They are articulated in every aspect of a national identity's life from preferences of the food and the choice to call it to the names of the meals. The linguistic class indicators can as well be detected indirectly – through symbolic meaning or via the choice of the mealtime, its class (e.g the classes of tea or marmalade), the place to buy food (the class of the supermarket) and consume it (the places for eating out and the frequency of such practices). Under analysis of this study are not only food items and their names but also such categories as cutlery as a class indicator and the act of eating together as a practice of social significance and a class indicator. Current social changes and economic developments are considered and their influence on the class indicators appearance and transformation.

Keywords : linguistic, class, social indicator, English, food class
Conference Title : ICALTFL 2016 : International Conference on Applied Linguistics and Teaching Foreign Languages
Conference Location : Venice, Italy
Conference Dates : August 08-09, 2016