

English culture acquisition through humour

English humour as well as English traditions is an integral part of the country's culture and its understanding and adequate interpretation is important for good communication. Pragmatics of humour serves the functions of social interaction, psychological relaxation, etc. The ability to appreciate humour, to accept it, and to react on humorous situations properly, to our mind, should be taught in the course of studying English and English culture.

Englishmen are said to use humour practically in all spheres of life. They tell jokes, write anecdotes and funny stories; they make comedic films and create humorous signs and notices. They make fun of everything they see, hear, taste or feel and everything that may be smiled or laughed at. Sense of humour may be called a national feature of English character, and so is their reaction to the humouristic situations with perfect calm. The themes of the jokes are various, from family life to the social structure of society, famous people and events, features of character and the fails in behavior. Particularly silly jokes are called the Elephant or banana-skin jokes. Humour is the reaction of a person to some social situation, strength, embarrassment or ridicule, or may be just an expression of a good mood.

There are various ways for Englishmen to achieve humoristic effect. These may be a funny event or situation, a word-play, slapstick, even smut and some innuendo, irony, parody on stereotypes, bullying and sarcasm, ambiguity, absurd and nonsense implied in numerous genres. The thing is that English humour is not always expected, as it is supposed to be, for example, when listening to a fresh joke or watching a sitcom on TV. It may be quite unexpected, when the situation seems to be far from being comic. Nevertheless, Englishmen can make fun of it, and the person studying English culture should be aware of this.