***DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH***

We may report the words of a speaker in two ways:-

(i) We may quote his actual words. This is called Direct Speech.

(ii) We may report what he said without quoting his exact words. This is called Indirect (or Reported) Speech.

Direct. -- Ahmad said. “I am very busy now.”

Indirect. -- Ahmad said that he was very busy then.

It will be noticed that in Direct Speech, we use inverted commas to mark off the exact words of the speaker. In Indirect Speech we do not. It will be further noticed that in changing the above Direct Speech into Indirect certain changes have been made. Thus:

(i) We have used the conjunction that before the Indirect statement.(The that is often

omitted especially in spoken English)

(ii) The pronoun I is changed to he. (The Pronoun is changed in Person.)

(iii) The verb am is changed to was. (Present Tense is changed to Past.)

(iv) The adverb now is changed to then.

***Rules for changing Direct Speech into Indirect***

When the reporting or principal verb is in the Past Tense, all Present tenses of the

Direct are changed into the corresponding Past Tenses. Thus:-

(a) A simple present becomes a simple past.

Direct. -- He said, “I am unwell.”

Indirect. -- He said (that) he was unwell.

(b) A present continuous becomes a past continuous.

Direct. -- He said, “My master is writing letters.”

Indirect. -- He said (that) his master was writing letters.

(c) A present perfect becomes a past perfect.

Direct. -- He said, “I have passed the examination.”

Indirect. -- He said (that) he had passed the examination.

Note:- The shall of the Future Tense is changed into should. The will of the Future Tense is changed into would or should. As a rule, the simple past in the Direct becomes the past

perfect in the Indirect.

Direct. -- He said, “The horse died in the night.”

Indirect. -- He said that the horse had died in the night.

The tenses may not change if the statement is still relevant or if it is a universal

truth. We can often choose whether to keep the original tenses or change them.

Direct. – “I know her address,” said Gopi.

Indirect. -- Gopi said he knows/knew her address.

Direct. -- The teacher said, “The earth goes round the sun.”

Indirect. -- The teacher said the earth goes/went round the sun.

Direct. – “German is easy to learn”, she said.

Indirect. -- She said German is/was easy to learn.

The past tense is often used when it is uncertain if the statement is true or when we are reporting objectively. If the reporting verb is in the Present Tense, the tenses of the Direct Speech do not change. For example, we may rewrite the above examples, putting the reporting verb in the Present Tense, thus:

He says he is unwell.

He has just said his master is writing letters.

He says he has passed the examination.

He says the horse died in the night.

The pronouns of the Direct Speech are changed, where necessary, so that their relations with the reporter and his hearer, rather than with the original speaker, are indicated. Observe the following examples :-

Direct. -- He said to me, “I don't believe you.”

Indirect. -- He said he didn't believe me.

Direct. -- She said to him, “I don't believe you.”

Indirect. -- She said she didn't believe him.

Direct. -- I said to him, “I don’t believe you.”

Indirect. -- I said I didn't believe him.

Direct. -- I said to you, “I don't believe you.”

Indirect. -- I said I didn't believe you.

Words expressing nearness in time or place are generally changed into words

expressing distance. Thus :-

now -- becomes -- then

here -- becomes -- there

ago -- becomes -- before

thus -- becomes -- so

today -- becomes -- that day

tomorrow -- becomes -- the next day

yesterday -- becomes -- the day before

last night -- becomes -- the night before

Direct. -- He says, “I am glad to be here this evening.”

Indirect. -- He says that he was glad to be there that evening.

The changes do not occur if the speech is reported during the same period or at the same place ; e.g.,

Direct. -- He said, “I am glad to be here this evening.”

Indirect. -- He said that he was glad to be there that evening.

Similarly, this and these are changed to that and those unless the thing pointed out is

near at hand at the time of reporting the speech.

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**Questions**

In reporting questions the Indirect Speech is introduced by some such verbs as asked, inquired, etc.

When the question is not introduced by an interrogative word, the reporting verb is followed by whether or if.

Direct. -- He said to me, “What are you doing ?”

Indirect. -- He asked me what I was doing.

Direct. -- “Where do you live?” asked the stranger.

Indirect. -- The stranger enquired where I lived.

Direct. -- The policeman said to us, “Where are you going ?”

Indirect. -- The policeman enquired where we were going.

Direct. -- He said, “Will you listen to such a man?”

Indirect. -- He asked them whether they would listen to such a man.

[Or] Would they, he asked, listen to such a man ?

Direct. – “Do you suppose you know better than your own father?”

Jeered his angry mother.

Indirect. -- His angry mother jeered and asked whether he supposed that he knew better

than his own father.

**Commands and Requests**

In reporting commands and requests, the Indirect Speech is introduced by some verb expressing command or request, and the imperative mood is changed into the Infinitive.

Direct. -- Rama said to Arjun, “Go away.”

Indirect. -- Rama ordered Arjun to go away.

Direct. -- He said to him, “Please wait here till I return.”

Indirect. -- He requested him to wait there till he returned.

Direct. -- “Call the first witness,” said the judge.

Indirect. -- The judge commanded them to call the first witness.

Direct. -- He shouted, “Let me go.”

Indirect. -- He shouted to them to let him go.

Direct. -- He said, “Be quiet and listen to my words.”

Indirect. -- He urged them to be quiet and listen to his words.

**Exclamations and Wishes**

In reporting exclamations and wishes the Indirect Speech is introduced by some verb expressing exclamation or wish.

Direct. -- He said, “Alas! I am undone.”

Indirect. -- He exclaimed sadly that he was undone.

Direct. -- Alice said, “How clever I am!”

Indirect. -- Alice exclaimed that she was very clever.

Direct. -- He said, “Bravo! You have done well.”

Indirect. -- He applauded him, saying that he had done well.

Direct. -- “So help me, Heaven!” he cried, “I will never steal again.”

Indirect. -- He called upon Heaven to witness his resolve never to steal again.