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HOW TO TEACH EFFECTIVELY REPORTED SPEECH

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Abstract. This article discusses effective approaches to teaching reported speech in English language instruction. Reported speech is an essential grammatical structure that enables learners to report information, conversations, and ideas indirectly. However, many English language learners face difficulties when transforming direct speech into indirect speech because of tense changes, pronoun shifts, and modifications of time expressions. Learners often produce grammatical errors such as incorrect tense agreement or misuse of reporting verbs, which negatively affects communicative accuracy. The article examines the linguistic features of reported speech and identifies common learning difficulties related to grammar transfer, memorization, and lack of contextual understanding. Furthermore, it presents several pedagogical strategies including contextual teaching, communicative activities, role-play, visual support, and task-based learning. The study emphasizes that effective grammar teaching should combine clear explanation with meaningful communicative practice in order to improve learners' fluency and grammatical competence.

Keywords: reported speech, direct speech, indirect speech, English grammar teaching, communicative language teaching, task-based learning, ESL methodology

INTRODUCTION. Grammar is one of the most important components of language learning because it supports effective communication. Among various grammatical structures in English, reported speech is considered one of the most challenging topics for second language learners. Reported speech, also called indirect speech, is used to express another person's words without quoting them exactly. Unlike direct speech, indirect speech usually requires changes in verb tense, pronouns, adverbs of time, and sentence structure.

For example, the direct sentence "She said, 'I am happy'" changes into "She said that she was happy." In this transformation, learners must understand tense backshifting and pronoun agreement. Although the rules seem simple, students often make mistakes because they memorize formulas mechanically without understanding their communicative function.

The complexity of reported speech can be explained through both linguistic and pedagogical perspectives. Linguistically, learners are required to apply several grammatical transformations simultaneously. Present tense forms frequently change into past tense forms, pronouns depend on the speaker and listener, and time expressions such as "today," "tomorrow," and "yesterday" may also change. As a result, students commonly produce incorrect sentences such as "He said he is busy" instead of "He said he was busy."

One of the most effective teaching approaches is contextual learning, where grammar is introduced through meaningful situations and authentic communication. When students encounter examples such as "Tom said, 'I will visit London tomorrow'" and transform them into "Tom said that he would visit London the next day," they better understand how grammar functions in real communication.





Another effective method is contrastive analysis, which involves comparing direct and indirect speech forms through tables, dialogues, and examples. Such visual comparison helps learners identify patterns and reduce confusion. Teachers can also use charts to explain tense changes and reporting verbs more clearly.

Visual aids, videos, and real-life scenarios play a significant role in enhancing comprehension. For example, students can watch short conversations and later report them using indirect speech. This activity strengthens both listening and grammar skills simultaneously.

In addition, communicative activities such as pair work, role-plays, interviews, and storytelling tasks encourage learners to use reported speech naturally rather than mechanically.

Task-based learning is also highly effective because it engages students in meaningful communication. Learners may summarize news reports, retell conversations, or report classmates' opinions. Through these tasks, students internalize grammatical structures more naturally and improve both fluency and accuracy.

Finally, corrective feedback is essential in teaching reported speech. Teachers should provide immediate explanations of errors related to tense consistency, reporting verbs, and sentence structure. Effective feedback helps learners understand not only grammatical form but also communicative meaning.

CONCLUSION. In conclusion, reported speech is a challenging but necessary aspect of English grammar for second language learners. The primary difficulty lies in understanding and applying tense changes, pronoun shifts, and modifications of time expressions correctly. Effective teaching requires a combination of contextual instruction, communicative practice, visual support, contrastive analysis, and task-based learning activities.

Teachers should create interactive classroom environments where students can practice reported speech through meaningful communication rather than memorization alone. By combining explicit grammatical explanation with practical activities, educators can significantly improve learners' grammatical accuracy, fluency, and communicative competence in English.

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