

Ministry of Higher Education

University of Babylon

College of Education for Human Sciences

Department of English



Iraqi EFL learners use of direct and indirect speech

A paper

Submitted to the Council of Department of English, College of Education,
University of Babylon in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the
Degree of B.A in English Language and Linguistics

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April

2022 , A.D

Ramadan

1443 , A.H

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَأْتِينَا السَّاعَةُ^ط قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ عَالِمِ
الْغَيْبِ^ط لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَلَا أَصْغَرُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرُ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

صدق الله العظيم

سورة سبا (419)

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

*The Unbelievers say, "Never to us will come the Hour":
Say, "Nay! but most surely, by my Lord, it will come upon
you;- by Him Who knows the unseen,- from Whom is not
hidden the least little atom in the heavens or on earth:
Nor is there anything less than that, or greater, but is in
the Record Perspicuous.*

Allah spoke the truth

Ali (1987: 419)

To my family

*whose support and intimacy grant me the impetus to go on and
on*

Acknowledgements

Praise and sincere thanks are due to Allah the Lord of all that to be, and peace and blessings are upon the Messenger Mohammad and his blessed progeny.

My thanks are inexpressibly due to all my venerable professors for their valuable help and support .

Special thanks go to my supervisor *Asst. lect . Taif Hatem Shardaghly* for her support , advice, suggestions and recommendations.

Last but not least, words of love and gratitude go to all my family for their endless help and encouragement during my study.

Abstract

This study is an attempt to show the syntactic role to change direct into indirect speech in a declarative sentence .Accordingly, the study principally aims at (1.) Explaining what is meant by direct and indirect speech(2.) Do Iraqi EFL learners face difficulty in recognizing direct and indirect speech ? (3.) Do Iraqi EFL learners face difficulty in producing direct and indirect speech? In accordance with these aims, it is hypothesized that (1.) There are many strategies to change sentences from direct to indirect speech. (2.) Iraqi EFL Learners face difficulty in recognizing and producing sentences containing direct and indirect speech. Ultimately , the study comes up with various conclusions, the most, speech is one of the most important subjects in the English language: It is direct or indirect, and both are used in any instances during written and verbal communication .Moreover, Iraqi EFL learners face difficulty in changing sentences from direct to indirect.

Key Words : Direct Speech , Indirect Speech , Declarative Sentence.

List of Tables

Table (1) shows the performance of the students at the recognition level (20).

Table (2) shows the performance of the students at the production level (21).

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Problem

There are many occasions in which we need to describe an event or action that happened, and very often that includes repeating what someone said. Such occasions can include a social situation as well as in a work email or presentation. In order to describe what people said there are two different types of speech – direct speech and indirect speech (or reported speech).

In Sum , Direct speech is a sentence in which the exact words spoken are reproduced in speech marks (also known as quotation marks or inverted commas) . Indirect speech is the reporting of what someone said without using her / his exact words .

This study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is meant by direct and indirect speech?
2. What are the difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL Learners in using the syntactic roles of direct and indirect speech ?

1.2 Aims

This study aims at:

1. Explaining what is meant by direct and indirect speech .
- 2- Do Iraqi EFL learners face difficulty in recognizing direct and indirect speech ?
- 3- Do Iraqi EFL learners face difficulty in producing direct and indirect speech?

1.3 Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

1. There are many strategies to change sentences from direct to indirect speech.
2. Iraqi EFL Learners face a difficulty in recognizing and producing sentences containing direct and indirect speech.

1.4 Procedures

To answer the questions of the study, accomplish its aims, and test the validity of its hypotheses, the following procedures are adopted:

- 1- Presenting a theoretical background about direct and indirect speech .
- 2- Forming a test to be applied to a random sample of students.
- 3-Evaluating the students' performance in using syntactic roles of direct and indirect speech , conducting an analysis of the test.
- 4-Drawing some conclusions to estimate the validity of the hypotheses of the current work.

1.5 Limits

This study is limited to the investigation of 33 students in the fourth stage in Department of English/ College of Education for Human Sciences/ University of Babylon in their recognition and production of direct and indirect speech of the declarative sentence because it is the most common type of sentences in the English language.

1.6 Value

The current study will be of value to those interested in linguistics and grammar. The findings will help the students to enhance their academic performance.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Background

2.1 Speech

Generally speaking, speech is a system of communication that uses spoken words. It is a form of communication in spoken language, made by a speaker before an audience for a given purpose such as a speaker must wish to engage his or her audience with a central idea or proposition. So a speech is a dynamic relationship between a speaker and the addressee . Speech can be either direct or indirect(Web Source 1).

2.2 Direct Speech Act

Direct speech is defined as the reporting of what someone has said by quoting his / her words, as in " what is it " she asked and "There's a wasp on your back ", She said quietly(Trask, 1993" 93).

For (Altman, 1990) it is also a sentence in which the exact words spoken are reproduced in speech marks (also known as quotation marks or inverted commas).For example :

"You'll never guess what I've just seen!" said Sam, excitedly.
"What's that?" asked Louise

It refers to what the person actually says . In Sum we quote speaker's actual words. So it is also called quoted speech .As in **Darshil said "I am a very clever boy."**(Web Source 10)

2.3 Indirect Speech Act

Indirect speech is defined as the reporting of what someone said without using her / his exact words as in **Lisa said she would come**. If this statement is expressed in an indirect speech, the result would be **Lisa said" I'll come "** (Trask, 1993" 93).

Indirect speech will still share the same information – but instead of expressing someone's comments or speech by directly repeating them, it involves reporting or describing what was said. As in this example: **She said to me that she would come home by 10pm.** (Norrick,1978:76).

2.4 Types of Sentences

2.4.1 Declarative Sentences

According to(Leech, 1983: 108) declarative sentence is one of the four sentence types in the English language, along with interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative sentences. Each one serves a unique function. The function of declarative sentence, is to communicate information directly.

A declarative sentence is a sentence that makes a statement. For example: I like Freedom .Also it does not ask a question ("Do you like cheese?"), give an order (e.g., "Pass the cheese."), or express strong emotion (e.g. "I hate cheese!"). A declarative sentence always ends with a full stop (Web Source 2).

Furthermore it is simply statement that relay information. It is the most common type of sentences in the English language. A declarative sentence states the facts or an opinion observation, or explanation in a plain manner(Web Source 3) .

Every declarative sentence needs at least one independent clause, which must contain a subject and a predicate. However, declarative sentences can also have more than one independent clause, or an independent clause combined with something called a subordinate clause (sometimes called a dependent clause) Yule (1996:3).

There are four different types of declarative sentences, depending on the clauses. A simple sentence is a sentence with one independent clause and nothing more. As in (The sky looks blue) (Ibid:6). A compound sentence is a sentence that connects two independent clauses, typically with a coordinating conjunction like and. As in , The sky looks blue, and the clouds look gray. A complex sentence consists of one independent clause and any number of subordinate clauses (If I wear my glasses, the sky looks blue) . Finally, a compound complex sentence includes at least two independent classes and one more dependent clauses . As in this example :Though Mitchell prefers watching romantic films,he rented the latest spy thriller, and he enjoyed it very much.

Ultimately, declarative sentences can be either positive (affirmative) or negative. Declarative sentences that have a positive meaning are called affirmative sentences and declarative sentences that have a negative meaning are called negative sentences. Negative sentences tell us what something doesn't (does not) have, can't (cannot) do, or isn't (is not) as in: The balloon **is not** blue. (Web Source 4).

2.4.2 Imperative sentence

Quirk et al. (1985) list imperatives within the four major sentence types in English (other types being declarative, interrogatives, and exclamatory). “Imperatives are sentences which normally have no overt grammatical subject, and whose verb has the base form (Quirk et al., 1985: 803).

Similarly, Biber et al. (1999) argue that imperative sentences are formally characterized by the lack of the subject, use of the base form of the verb and the absence of modals as well as tense and aspect markers. For example:
(1) Give me my bag

Takahashi (2012:31) contends that the imperative sentence is characterized by three features: hypotheticality, non- past and second person. Hypothetically means that “an imperative involves its speaker presenting a possible situation to the addressee(s)”.

Non-past indicates that the act performed by an imperative is either realized in the present or future. An imperative cannot refer to a situation in the past time. Finally, as the imperative is used with no overt subject, the second person (usually the addressee) is implicitly understood to be the subject of the imperative sentence.

To illustrate these three features, consider the following example:

(2) Make me a sandwich.

When uttering this utterance, the state of affairs it refers to (sandwich making) has not been materialized yet in the outer world (i.e., the action is still hypothetical). In addition, the action of making a sandwich is implemented in either the present or the future time. It has not been realized in the past; otherwise, the speaker would not utter the imperative. Thirdly, the speaker directs the utterance to somebody else other than herself.

As for (Leech, 1983:70) an imperative sentence gives a command or makes a request. It usually ends with a period but can, under certain circumstances, end with an exclamation point as in “Please sit down.” And “I need you to sit down now.”

Imperative sentences fall into two main categories: positive imperatives and negative imperative sentences.

1. **Positive imperative sentences:** These sentences use affirmative verbs to address the subject. Such as , “Pick up some bread from the store.”
2. **Negative imperative sentences:** These sentences tell the subject to not do something. They usually begin with the verb "don't" or the negative form of a verb. As in , “Don’t forget your luggage (Web Source 5).”

2.4.3 Interrogative sentence

An interrogative sentence asks a question. This type of sentence often begins with who, what, where, when, why, how, or do, and it ends with a question mark as in “When are you going to turn in your writing assignment?”(Austin, 1962: 108) .

Interrogative sentences can be direct or indirect, begin with or without pronouns, and feature yes/no interrogatives, alternative questions, or tag questions. Interrogative sentences often start with interrogative pronouns and end with a question mark. Interrogative pronouns, typically “wh” words, include “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” “why,” “which,” “whose,” and “whom.(Web Source 6) .

Simultaneously (Quirk ,et al. 1985:803) define interrogative sentence as a sentence which is formally marked in one of two ways : either yes –no interrogative in which the operator is placed in front of the subject as in **Did Pauline give tom a digital watch for his birthday** . Or wh – interrogative in which the wh element is positioned initially as in **what did Pauline give Tom for his birthday?**.

Finally, interrogative sentences can be in positive or negative form .For example “Why haven't we left yet?”(Web Source 7).

2.4.4 Exclamatory sentence

According to(Murcia & Larsen-Freeman;1999:12)the exclamatory sentence emphasizes a statement (either declarative or imperative) with an exclamation point as in the following example ***That sounds fantastic!***. In addition , it is that type of sentence that expresses great emotion such as excitement, surprise, happiness and anger as in (It is too dangerous to climb that mountain!) Cutting (2002: 16)

For (Quirk ,et al. 1985:803) exclamative sentence is a sentence which has an initial phrase introduced by what or how , usually with subject verb order as in (What a fine watch he received for his birth day .

The usual function of an exclamative sentence is to help the speaker express a strong (often extreme) opinion about a situation—an "exclamatory statement" . It expresses our personal and magnified assessment of the situation .As in this sentence **What a handsome man he is!** . The speaker believes that **He is an extremely handsome man** (Web Source 8) .

Eventually , exclamatory sentence can be either positive or negative. As in this example : **Wow! That parrot is not beautiful!**(Web Source 9)

2-5 Direct and indirect Statements:

To change a statement from the direct speech into indirect speech, the following changes are followed:

A) Remove the Commas:

- He said, " Ann might ring today ".
- He said that Ann might ring (that day)

(Thomson and Martinet, 1986: 272)

B) Change the pronoun from the first person or 2nd person to the 3rd person except when the speaker is reporting his own words as shown in the following example :

- I bring my book every day ; the book on the desk is mine (direct).
- He said that he brought his book every day ; the book on the desk was his. (indirect).
- She said that she brought her book every day ; the book on the desk was hers (indirect).

- We bring out books every day ; books on the desk are ours (direct).
- They said that they brought their books every day ; the books on the desk were theirs (indirect) (Eckersley, 1960: 362).

C) Changes in Verbs:

Present Simple → Past Simple as in the following example :

- He said: " New york is bigger than London ".
- He said that New York was bigger than London (Murphy, 1985: 96).

Present Continuous → Past Continuous as in :

- " I am learning English ".
- He said that he was learning English (Eckersley, 1960: 362).

Present perfect → Past Perfect .

- Professor Baker said, " I have lost my watch ".
- Professor Baker said that he had lost his watch(Praninsksa,1957:95).

Past Simple → Past Perfect .

- " The exhibition finished last week ", explained.
- Ann explained that exhibition had finished the preceding week(Quirk et al., 1973: 384).

Future Tense → Future in the Past .

- " I shall see her in London ".
- He said that he would see her in London(Eckersley, 1960: 364).

- " We may go there late "
- She said they might go there later. (Parrott, 2000: 222)

Conditional Perfect Conditional

- " If had my pen, I could write the answers "
- He said that if he had his pen, he could have written the answers(Eckersley, 1960: 362)

Future Continuous Conditional

- " I will be speaking English in the interview ".
- He said that he would be speaking English in the interview (Khraisat, 2013: 213).

D) Use of " that " as a conjunction. This conjunction may be dropped. (Al- Bayati, 2011: 195) The conjunction that is often dropped, especially after common reporting verbs (e.g. say, think) in informal speech.

- She said (that) she'd had enough.
- I think (that) you're probably right.

That cannot be dropped after certain verbs (e.g. reply, telegraph, shout) and it is not usually dropped after nouns.

- I replied that I did not intend to stand for election.
- She shouted that she was busy(Swan, 1996: 502).

E- Use tell when you say who you are talking to:

- Kelly told me that you were sick. (not Kelly said me) tell somebody.

Use say when you can say something to somebody.

Ann said goodbye to me and left (not Ann said me good – bye).
(Murphy and Smalzer, 2002:90)

- if there is a change in time – reference, a modal auxiliary is back shifted from present tense forms to past tense forms even if there do not normally indicate past time in direct speech.

- " You may be able to answer this question " ; he told her.

- He told her that she might be able to answer that question.

If modal auxiliary in direct speech is already in the past tense form, then the same form remains in the indirect speech:

- " you shouldn't smoke in the bedroom " he told them

- He told them that they shouldn't smoke in the bedroom.

Most of the modal auxiliaries, in the direct speech, are already in the past tense form, then the same form remains in indirect speech:

- You must be hungry ; he said.

- He said that they must be hungry.

In its obligational sense, however, the past of "must" may be replaced by had to in indirect speech:

- " You must be in ten tonight " his parents told him.

- His parents told him that he { must }

{ had to } be in ten that night.

(Greenbaum and Quirk, 1999: 301)

F) The demonstrative pronouns are usually changed to " the "

- He said, " I brought his diamond ring for my wife ".

- He told me he had brought the diamond ring for his wife.

- She heard the noise of breaking glass, so she went into the living room. She returned with two large rocks and said, " I found these on the floor under the window ".

- She told me she had found the rocks on the floor under the window.

G) Further Important Word Changes (Web Source 11)

Word Direct Speech	in	Word Indirect Speech	in	Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
This		That		He says, "I want to buy this book."	He says that he wants to buy that book.
These		Those		He says, "I want to buy these books."	He says that he wants to buy those books.
Here		There		She says, "Everybody was here."	She says that everybody was there.
Now		Then		They say, "It's ten o'clock now."	They say that it's ten o'clock then.
Sir		Respectfully		They said, "Sir, the time is over."	They said respectfully that the time was over.
Madam		Respectfully		They said, "Madam, the time is over."	They said respectfully that the time was over.
Today		That Day		She said, "I am going to London today."	She said that she was going to London that day.
Yesterday		The Previous Day		She said, "I visited Oxford University yesterday."	She said that she had visited Oxford University the previous day.
Tomorrow		Following Day or Next Day		She said, "I am going to London tomorrow."	She said that she was going to London the next day.
Tonight		That Night		She said, "I am going to see him tonight."	She said that she was going to see him that night.

Chapter Three

Data Collection and Analysis

3.1 Definition of Test

According to Skehan (1999: 203), a language test is a systematic method and a means of checking the students' performance through the elicitation of a certain behavior to make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual. For Aljuboury (1999:1) a test is any means of checking what students can do with the language. Also, it is as a systematic procedure for observing and describing one or more characteristics of a person with the aid of either a numerical or category system(Nitko and Brookhart, 2007:6).

3.2 Features of a Good Test

Aljuboury(1999: 24) states that a good test should contain the following features :

3.2.1 Validity

According to **Al-Juboury (1999:84)**, validity is the degree to which a test measures what is supposed to measure or can be used successfully for the intended purpose. " In fact, there are four kinds of validity but here the researcher is going to shed light on two of them; content validity and face validity .

3.2.1.1 Content Validity

The term content validity refers to how well a survey or test measures the construct that it sets out to measure. A valid test must be used upon careful analysis of the subject or skill we are testing. (ibid :25)

3.2.1.2 Face Validity

The term face validity refers to the extent to which a test appears to measure what it claims to measure based on face value. For example, a researcher may create a questionnaire that aims to measure depression levels in individuals. A colleague may then look over the questions and deem the questionnaire to be valid purely on face value. (Ibid: 26).

3.2.2 Reliability

Reliability means the constancy of test scoring. If a test is applied twice to the same student, it will give the same result(ibid: 26).

3.2.3 Practicality

It is also known as usability. A test that is valid and reliable but difficult to administer or score or which is expensive may fail to gain acceptance (ibid :27) .

3.3 Test Design

The test consists of two questions the first measures the recognition level and the second measures the production level. Each question consists of ten items. The students are given sentences and they are required to respond according to their background knowledge concerning direct and indirect speech .

3.4 The Sample

A random sample of students is selected from fourth stage in English department , College of Education for Human Sciences , University of Babylon during the academic year (2022-2021). This sample consists of thirty-three students (males and females). They are non - native speakers of English .

3.5 Test Material

The items of the tests are taken from textbooks (Verbs Essential of Grammar ,for ESL Learners) and the internet.

3.6 Data analysis

The test consists of two questions the first measures the recognition level, and the second measures the production level. Each question consists of ten items. The students answer sentences and are required to respond according to their background knowledge concerning direct and indirect speech. After that, The researcher collects the correct/ incorrect responses and provides the percentage of each correct/incorrect response by using the following formula: the number of the total answer (correct/incorrect) mutilated by100 and divided by the total student number that is 33 students.

Table (1) shows the performance of the students at the recognition level. (Question 1)

Items	No. of correct responses	Percentage	No. of incorrect responses	Percentage
1	11	33,3%	22	66,7%
2	19	57,6%	14	42,4%
3	8	24,2%	25	75,8%
4	17	51,5%	16	48,5%
5	24	72,7%	9	27,3%
6	7	21,2%	26	78,8%
7	8	24,2%	25	75,8%
8	19	57,6%	14	42,4%
9	11	33,3%	22	66,7%
10	8	24,2%	25	75,8%
Total	132		198	

In the table above, Some of the students are unable to distinguish between the correct and incorrect sentences concerning direct and indirect speech. Item five scores the highest percentage (72.7%) in correct answers . And, Item six scores the lowest rate of correct answers (27.3%).In item six, students are unable to identify whether the sentence is true or false.

With regards to incorrect answers. Item six scores the highest percentage of incorrect answers (78.8%) .and item five scores the lowest percentage of incorrect answers (27.3%).

This near percentage of correct to incorrect could be due to the fact that students could have based their responses on guessing.

Table (2) shows the performance of the students at the production level. (Question 2)

Items	No. of correct responses	Percentage	No. of incorrect responses	Percentage
1	18	54,5%	15	45,5%
2	20	60,6%	13	39,4%
3	23	69,7%	10	30,3%
4	21	63.6%	12	36,4%
5	23	69,7%	10	30,3%
6	18	54,5%	15	45,5%
7	20	60,6%	13	39,4%
8	20	60,6%	13	39,4%
9	21	63.6%	12	36,4%
10	18	54,5%	15	45,5%
Total	202		128	

At the production level, Items five and three score the highest percentage (69.7%) in correct answers. And, Items one, six, and ten score the lowest rate of correct answers (54.5%).

Items one and ten score the highest percentage of wrong answers (45.5%). Item three scores the lowest ratio of incorrect answers (30.3%). Students mistake in changing either pronouns or tenses.

Ultimately, Iraqi EFL Learners find difficulty in changing sentences from direct and indirect speech.

Chapter Four

Conclusions

Speech is one of the most important subjects in the English language: It is direct or indirect, both of them are used in any instances during written and verbal communication. Direct speech is a sentence in which the exact words spoken are reproduced in speech. Indirect speech is a grammatical mechanism for reporting the content of another utterance without directly quoting .In addition ,There are certain rules to change direct into indirect.

It is necessary to mention that Iraqi EFL learners face difficulty in recognizing and stating whether the sentences in the test are correct or not. Also, Iraqi EFL learners face difficulty in changing sentences from direct to indirect.

Finally, The result verifies the hypotheses set in the introduction since it indicates that Iraqi EFL university students face difficulty in using indirect speech in English.

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(Web Source 1)

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Appendix

Q1/ State whether these sentences are (True) or (False)

1. She said that she would see me later.
2. Mickel said she liked apples
3. She said that she watched T.V. every day.
4. He said that he was cutting the tree .
5. You said you'd had a headache the day before yesterday
6. She said that she would be using the car next Friday.
7. He said he can speak perfect Spanish
8. I said he is driving a car.
9. They said that they can communicate smoothly.
10. He said that man is mortal.

Q2/ Change the following sentences into indirect speech.

- 1- "I will leave for New York tomorrow" . She said .
- 2- "She wears a coat" . She said .
- 3- " I'm looking for my keys" . Layla said.
- 4- " My parents are very well" . Alex said .
- 5- " I'm living in Texas now" . Ali said .
- 6- " I will go to the Gym ." Ahmed said .

7. "I work in a bank ," Daniel said .
- 8- "The children are playing outside now ." Zeki said .
- 9-“ My friend gave me a bar of chocolate .” Suha said .
- 10- "I have finished my homework.” Nan said.

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The Answers of the Test

Q1/

- 1.True
- 2.True
3. True
- 4.True
- 5.True
- 6.True
- 7.False
8. False
- 9.False
- 10.true

Q2/

- 1.She said that she would leave for new York the next day .
- 2.She said that she wore a-coat
- 3.Layla said that she was looking for her keys.
- 4.Alex said that her parents were very well.
- 5.Ali said that he was living in Texas then .
- 6.Ahmed said that he would go to the Gym.

7.Daniel said that she was worked in a bank

8.Zeki said that the children were playing outside then.

9.Suha said that her friend had given her a bar of chocolate.

10.Nan said that she had finished her homework.