Composition- 2nd year- 2nd semester

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8th lecture

Book: Understanding and Using English Grammar- third edition

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Chapter 12: Noun Clauses (2)

Direct speech

Direct speech is a representation of the actual words someone said. A direct speech report usually has a reporting verb in the past simple. The most common reporting verb is *said*. The reporting clause may come first or second.

reporting clause first	reported clause	reporting clause second
Jimmy said,	*'Let me have a look.'*	
Then the child asked,	*'Are there any toys?'*	
	'Hand it over at once!'	*he demanded.*
	'I believe that too,'	*she added.*

The reporting clause may sometimes come in the middle of the reported clause, especially in literary styles:

"No," she said, "I've never seen it before."

'Was it,' he asked, 'the first time you had spoken to Mrs Dalton?'

We can use adverbs with the reporting verb to describe the way someone said something. This is more common when the reporting clause comes second:

"I will not accept it!" he said angrily.

'Can I speak to the doctor?' she asked rather nervously.

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Direct speech: inversion of subject and reporting verb

In narratives, especially novels and short stories, when the reporting clause comes second, we often invert the subject (s) and reporting verb (v):

*"Things have always been the same in this village," [V]**said** [S]**the old man**.*

*'Hold on! I'm coming!' [V]**cried** [S]**Maurice**.*

Indirect speech

Indirect speech focuses more on the content of what someone said rather than their exact words. In indirect speech, the structure of the reported clause depends on whether the speaker is reporting a statement, a question or a command.

	Direct	indirect	reported clause
statement	*'I'm tired,' I said.*	*I told them (**that**) **I was tired**.*	*that*-clause
question	*'Are you ready?' the nurse asked Joel.* *'Who are you?' she asked.*	*The nurse asked Joel **if/whether he was ready**.* *She asked me **who I was**.*	*if*-clause/*whether-*clause *wh*-clause
command	*'Leave at once!' they ordered.*	*They ordered us **to leave at once**.*	*to*-infinitive clause

Indirect reports of *yes-no* questions and questions with *or* consist of a reporting clause and a reported clause introduced by *if* or *whether*. *If* is more common than *whether*. The reported clause is in statement form (subject + verb), not question form:

*She asked **if** I was Scottish. (original yes-no question: 'Are you Scottish?')*

*The waiter asked **whether** [S]we [V]wanted a table near the window. (original yes-no question: 'Do you want a table near the window?)*

*He asked me **if** I had come by train or by bus. (original alternative question: 'Did you come by train or by bus?')*

Indirect reports of *wh*-questions consist of a reporting clause, and a reported clause beginning with a *wh*-word (*who, what, when, where, why, how*). We don't use a question mark:

*He asked me **what** I wanted.*

Not: ~~He asked me what I wanted?~~

The reported clause is in statement form (subject + verb), not question form:

*She wanted to know who [S]**we** [V]**had** invited to the party.*

Not: … ~~who had we invited~~ …

Indirect reports of commands consist of a reporting clause, and a reported clause beginning with a *to*-infinitive:

*The General ordered the troops **to advance**. (original command: 'Advance!')*

*The chairperson told him **to sit down** and **to stop interrupting**. (original command: 'Sit down and stop interrupting!')*

We also use a *to*-infinitive clause in indirect reports with other verbs that mean wanting or getting people to do something, for example, *advise, encourage, warn*:

*They advised me **to wait** till the following day. (original statement: 'You should wait till the following day.')*

*The guard warned us **not to enter** the area. (original statement: 'You must not enter the area.')*

We can use the reporting verb in the present simple in indirect speech if the original words are still true or relevant at the time of reporting, or if the report is of something someone often says or repeats:

*Sheila **says** they're closing the motorway tomorrow for repairs.*

*Henry **tells** me he's thinking of getting married next year.*

*Rupert **says** dogs shouldn't be allowed on the beach. (Rupert probably often repeats this statement.)*

Backshift

'Backshift' refers to the changes we make to the original verbs in indirect speech because time has passed between the moment of speaking and the time of the report.

Compare

direct speech	indirect speech
*I said, 'I**'m not** very happy at work.'*	*I told her I **was not** very happy at work.*
*They said: 'We**'re going** home.'*	*They told us they **were going** home.*
*He said, 'Jane **will** be late.'*	*He said that Jane **would** be late.*
*'I**'ve been working**,' she said.*	*She said she **had been working**.*
*'What **happened** to make her so angry?' he asked.*	*He asked what **had happened** to make her so angry.*

In these examples, the present (*am*) has become the past (*was*), the future (*will*) has become the future-in-the-past (*would*) and the past (*happened*) has become the past perfect (*had happened*). The tenses have 'shifted' or 'moved back' in time.

Backshift changes

Direct	Indirect
present simple	→ past simple
present continuous	→ past continuous
present perfect simple	→ past perfect simple
present perfect continuous	→ past perfect continuous

Direct	Indirect
past simple	→ past perfect simple
past continuous	→ past perfect continuous
future (will)	→ future-in-the-past (would)
past perfect	↔ past perfect (no change)

The past perfect does not shift back; it stays the same:

Direct speech Indirect speech

*He asked: '**Had** the girls already **left**?' He asked if the girls **had already left.***

Modal verbs

Some, but not all, modal verbs 'shift back' in time and change in indirect speech.

	direct speech	indirect speech	change
will	*'We **will** be there,' he promised.*	*He promised they **would** be there.*	*will* becomes *would*
shall	*She said, 'I **shall** need more money.'* *'**Shall** I open it?' she asked.*	*She said she **would** need more money.* *She asked if she **should** open it.*	*shall* usually becomes *would* in reported questions, *shall* becomes *should*
can	*'I **can** see you at 2.30,' he added.*	*He added that he **could** see me at 2.30.*	*can* becomes *could*

	direct speech	indirect speech	change
may	*'I **may** be back later,' she said.* *'You **may** wait in the hallway,' he said.*	*She said she **might** be back later.* *He said we **could** wait in the hallway.*	*may* (possibility) becomes *might* *may* (permission) becomes *could*
must	*She said, 'You **must** pay by 30th April.'* *'It **must** be awful to live in such a noisy place,' she said.*	*She said we **had to** pay by 30th April.* *She said it **must** be awful to live in such a noisy place.*	*must* (obligation) usually becomes *had to* *must* (speculation) does not change
could	*'We **could** sell it for about 2,000 dollars,' he said.*	*He said they **could** sell it for about 2,000 dollars.*	no change
should	*'You **should** go there immediately,' she said.*	*She said I **should** go there immediately.*	no change
would	*'I **would** buy it if I had the money,' he said.*	*He said he **would** buy it if he had the money.*	no change
might	*'It **might** snow tonight,' he warned.*	*He warned that it **might** snow that night.*	no change
need	*'You **needn't** come till six o'clock,' he said.*	*He said we **needn't** come till six o'clock.*	no change

<u>Using the subjunctive in noun clauses</u>

A subjunctive verb uses the simple form of a verb.

The subjunctive mood is used to explore conditions that are contrary to fact:

If I were President, I wouldn't put up with it.

It's used to express wishes:

I wish I were there to have a drink with you and dish.

It's used to express commands or demands:

She demanded that he leave the hospital premises.

It's used to express suggestions:

I suggest that he implement a budget cut in March.

It's used to make statements of necessity:

It's essential that they be heard.