REVUE INTERDISCIPLINAIRE FRANCOPHONE
RIFRA
https://rifra-unikin.cd/

eISSN : 2957-8574
pISSN : 2957-8566
Editeur: Faculté de lettres, UNIKIN

Vol. 6, No.1, , 2024
DOI: 10.68356/rifra.019.v06.i01.09

ARTICLE DE RECHERCHE

Une enquête sur l'utilisation du discours rapporté par les apprenants de l'EFL : le cas des étudiants de première année de la Faculté de Polytechnique, Université de Kinshasa

KATAJUNGA NZIGIRE Suzanne et KALALA MBUYI Christian[1*]

[1]République démocratique du Congo
[*]KATAJUNGA NZIGIRE Suzanne et KALALA MBUYI Christian

Corresponding author:
casikatajunga@gmail.com

Received:
Accepted:
Available online:

Résumé

Trentequatre étudiants ont participé dans l'enquête visant à découvrir la façon dont ils utilisent les discours directe et indirecte. Les résultats révèlent qu'ils sont faibles. La moyenne obtenue sur l'ensemble des scores du test leur soumis indique (7.21), le résultat en dessous de la moyenne (10/20).

Mots-clés : Discours, directe, indirecte, moyenne, test. 1 Chef des Travaux à l'Université Pédagogique Nationale de Kinshasa. 2 Assistant à l'Université de Kinshasa. 157

Abstract

Thirtyfour students participated in this investigation by filling out the survey questionnaire copies. Findings have revealed that they are not familiar with reported speech. The test submitted to them revealed the mean of (7.21), which is under the overage score (10/20).

Keywords: Reported speech, familiar, test, mean, overage.

Introduction

There are fundamentals of English Grammar that EFL learners ought to master. These fundamentals can be related to a sentence, which is a unit of grammar and other aspects related it (Nsimamboté 2022: 3). The reported speech makes parts of those fundamentals, and this compelled the researchers to survey on it. They observed a few students at the University of Kinshasa who did not report correctly the following sentences: - Herman said; " I am going to church" - Tom asked her; "where are you from?

While reporting the above two sentences, the observed students kept the simple present tense in the messages instead of the simple past tense. The researchers wanted to find out responses of the questions below: - How do the students of the first year in polytechnics use reported speech? - What are the different types of error they make while using reported speech?

The above two major questions were broken into minor ones used in the survey questionnaire, a technique of the quantitative method. To get the needed data, the researchers had recourse to random sampling technique by submitting forty copies of the survey questionnaire to the first-year students of polytechnics who were available the day of the distribution. They were given just two hours to fill out the questionnaire copies the same day. The analysis of the responses from those students was twofold: first, to disclose how familiar the students are with the use of reported speech and second, to identify the different types of error they make. This study is interesting as it provides light to prospective teachers of En-

Cite as: KATAJUNGA NZIGIRE Suzanne et KALALA MBUYI Christian(2024). Une enquête sur l'utilisation du discours rapporté par les apprenants de l'EFL : le cas des étudiants de première année de la Faculté de Polytechnique, Université de Kinshasa. UNIVERSITE DE KINSHASA, 6(1) (2024) . https://doi.org/10.68356/rifra.019.v06.i01.09

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

glish concerning the corrective measures to apply for the use reported speech.

1. On reported speech

A sentence in reported speech is made of two clauses. The first one is the introductory verb clause which consists of a subject + an introductory verb. The second one is the predicate clause which contains the message to be reported. In this section, aspects of the reported speech are presented by the scholars below. For the sake of restriction, the paper retained some scholars. Hewing, M (199) displays the predicates to be of the reported speech in the following way: Statements, questions, imperative, and diverse. For statements, the insertion of "that" in the indirect speech can alter the tense of the direct speech if only the introductory verb is in the simple past tense for example: Ann said; "I will meet them". As the predicate is a statement "that" is inserted and the tense is altered. Thus, the indirect speech becomes: Ann said that she would meet them whereby the simple future has become future in the past. To focus on the change of the statement predicates. The following table summarizes Hewing T." D view

Table n°1: Tenses change in indirect speech (statement)

Direct speech Indirect speech Simple present tense He said; " I am sick" Present progressive Mom replied; "She is cooking." Present perfect Jim said; "She has been there" Present perfect progressive Mary said; "I have been calling Simple past Dad said; "I saw Tom" The past progressive Hellen said; "I was looking for you"

Simple present tense He said that he was sick Present progressive

Mom replied that she was cooking

Jim said that she had been there

Mary said that she had been calling

Dad said that he had been seen Tom

Hellen said that she had been looking him/ her

Rebecca (2007) illustrates the change of pronouns and adjectives. Looking at her examples, the pronoun and adjectives change is co-referencing process. The sentences below exhibit the process: - Mary said to Tom; "I love you". - Mary said to Tom that she loved him

In the indirect speech, the personal pronoun (She) is a co-reference its antecedent is "Mary" which "you" has "Tom" as an antecedent, thus, it has changed to him. This co-referencing is also identified when the reporter is reporting his/ her own message for example - I said; "I am strong" - I said that I was strong.

It is interesting to notice that the personal pronoun "I" is kept in the predicate while it reported indirectly. Walker (2007) emphasizes the change of adverbs, mainly time adverbial when the predicates is reported with a verb in the simple past tense. His illustrative table runs as follows:

Table n°2: Change of adverbs

Direct speech Indirect speech Now Here Today Yesterday The day before yesterday Tomorrow The day after tomorrow

At that time There That day The previous day Two days before The following day In two days' time

To mention only two examples; - Ann asked John; "Can you come tomorrow?" - Ann asked John if he could come the following day - Bob said; "I am coming now" - Bob said he was coming at that time?

Murphy (2002) provides illustrations concerning the reported speech of nominal messages. Here are some examples: - He said; "Hi" - He greeted us. - She cried: "them now! - She was happy: - He said "congratulations" - He congratulated us. What is evident, nominal sentences as messages in the direct speech are reported indirectly following the meaning they express. For imperative massages, they are turned into infinitive clauses while they are reported indirectly. For example Jim asked them to keep quiet? - He asked them to keep quiet

The teacher warned pupils: "Do not forget to write your names on the sheets of your paper? The teacher warned them not to forget to write their names on the sheets of paper. Nsimamboté (2022) provides a synthesis concerning different changes that result in reporting a speech indirectly: He emphasizes the insertion of the conjunctions "if", "whether", that and "to" introducing an infinitive clause. His table is presented below:

Table n°3: Conjunctions and "to" insertion

N° Direct speech Indirect speech Statement predicates "That" is inserted YesNo question predicates "if" is inserted. "Whether" Whquestion predicate The whquestion is inserted "who, why, what, where". Infinitive predicate "To" is inserted introducing on infinitive clause.

For illustration: - He said. " I am a teacher" - He said that he was a teacher - Ann asks him; "Are you married?" - Ann asks him if he is married. - Bob asked her "what would you like to eat?" - Bob asked her what she would like to eat. - Tom ordered; "Go out" - Tom ordered to go out. Gracia (1984) stresses on the omission of the conjunction that and place of the two clauses. For her with statement predicates the conjunctions "that" is optional. It is deleted when the predicate precedes the introductory verb clause in the indirect speech. For examples: - He would meet them the following day, he said. - He said (that) he would meet them the following day. (That) is put into parentheses to show its optionality.

Eastwood, (1994) targets the definition of both direct speech and indirect one. He points that we use direct speech when we report someone's words by reporting them. For example, from story, "I will go and heat some milk", said Agnes. Here the message of the author reported textually. For the indirect speech, he points that in the indirect speech, we give the mean of our own words and from our own point of view. Keeping the same sentence of Agnes, in indirect speech, we yield, Agnes said she would go and heat some milk. From him, the change of some modal verbs was retained:

Table n°4: change of some modal verbs Direct speech Indirect speech Will Can May Would Could Might

For examples: - " you will wet" - I told them they would get wet - " I can drive" - I could drive - " It may snow" - They thought it might snow.

Best. W (2008), Houssament et al (2003), Gold (2018), Palmer F (1975) and Quirk, K (1973) are interested in the change of the personal pronouns. They point that if the personal pronoun (I) is used in the predicate, it refers to the person mentioned in the introductory verb clause. For example: - John said; (I am hungry). - Helen said; (I will call).

The indirect speech of the above two clauses will be: - John said he was hungry. - Helen said she would call.

They draw the attention that personal pronoun (I) does not change in the predicate if the same person is reporting his/ her message: I said I wanted. Their view is corroborated by Rebecca (2007).

2. On the investigation

2.1. Analysis

As mentioned in the introduction, forty students of the department of communication received the questionnaire copies, but thirty-four of them returned the filled out copies that were analyzed and interpreted. There are 28 males and 6 females who belong to different age groups as illustrated in the following cross tabulation:

Table n°5: Gender and age of the respondents
Gender Age Total 18 to 21 22 to 23
Male Female Total
The above table clarifies that 25 males are 18 to 21 years old while the other three are 22 to 23 years old. The females participated less as 5 of them are 18 to 21 and one of them is in the age group ranging from 22 to 23. The results on their interest in the lesson of the reported speech, having difficulties in putting a direct speech into indirect one and the way they recognize, mainly direct speech are tabulated separately as follows: Table n°6: Interest in the lesson of the reported speech
Valid Frequency Percent Valid Percent Cumulative Percent yes 94,1 94,1 94,1 no 5,9 5,9 100,0 Total 100,0 100,0
It is shown that the students are interested in the lesson. Nearly all of them (94.1%) answered positively.
Table n°7 : Having difficulties in putting direct speech into indirect one
Valid Frequency Percent Valid Percent Cumulative Percent yes 58,8 58,8 58,8 no 41,2 41,2 100,0 Total 100,0 100,0
Evidently, a considerable number of students need to learn how to put a direct speech into indirect one. Those accepted to do it well would certainly succeed in the test concerning direct and indirect speech.
Table n°8: The way the students recognize the direct speech
Valid Frequency Percent Valid Percent Cumulative Percent No answers 44,1 44,1 44,1 i do not know 11,8 11,8 55,9 with inverted commas 44,1 44,1 100,0 Total 100,0 100,0
Observing the above table, many students do not know how to recognize the direct speech. Those who tried to answer mentioned only the presence of inverted commas. The test on the reported speech was based on two questions. The first one concerned putting into indirect speech and the second one was a reverse question where the students were asked to turn the indirect speech into direct one. It was graded out of twenty (/20). The table of the scores secured by the thirtyfour students runs as follows: Table n°9: Scores secured by the respondents on the test of reported speech. Valid Frequency Percent Valid Percent Cumulative Percent 8,8 8,8 8,8 8,8 8,8 17,6 5,9 5,9 23,5 5,9 5,9 29,4 5,9 5,9 35,3 8,8 8,8 44,1 8,8 8,8 52,9 11,8 11,8 64,7 8,8 8,8 73,5 5,9 5,9 79,4 11,8 11,8 91,2 2,9 2,9 94,1 5,9 5,9 100,0 Total 100,0 100,0
Observing the above table, only twelve students succeeded in, the remaining scored less than (10). There are even three students who secured (1/20). The two students who secured the most scores got (14/20).

2.2. Findings

With the light of the analysis, it has been found that the students concerned are not familiar with reported speech. The scores secured have clearly displayed more failure than success. The mean and standard deviation indicate respectively (7.21) and (4.044) as illustrated below.
Table n°10: Mean and standard deviation
Mean N Std. Deviation 7,21 4,044
The mean of (7.21) indicates that the average scores secured by every student is less than 10. The standard deviation is very significant as scores deviate more significantly from the mean as illustrated in the following figure: Figure: n°1: Mean plotting
These scores deviation from the mean which is less than (10/20) shows the poor level of the students on the use reported speech. Among the students who secured poor scores, 10 of them have difficulties in inserting (if / that / wh – word). One of them provided as the answer of the question number (5): The teacher asked that where did we learn English. It can be observed that he inserted both (that/where) in indirect speech and kept the question as (did) was used. Ten other students kept (did). On the difficulties related to tense changing, students did not respect the tense sequence, mainly when the introductory verb is in the past. To mention only a case, a student who provided answer to question (2). He wrote: (He asked her if she loves her). The reported speech would be correct if he wrote: (He asked her) if she loved her as the introductory verb is in the simple past tense. None of the students responded correctly with the question containing nominal sentence. With the question (3), all of them provided as answers: He said thank you instead of (He thanked me). This shows that they have difficulties reporting nominal sentences, mainly into indirect speech.

Conclusion

This current study focused on a survey on the use of reported speech by EFL learners: The case of the first year students of polytechnics. Forty students received the questionnaire copies, but only thirtyfour of them returned the filled out copies that were analysed and interpreted. All of the thirtyfour participated in the survey questionnaire among there are 28 respondents who were males and 6 were females. The objectives of this study were targeted as follows: - To disclose how familiar the students concerned are with the use of reported speech. - To identify the different types of error they make.
Considering the results yielded in this study, it is clearly shown that the majority of students are not familiar with reported speech. The mean of (7.21) indicates that the overage scores secured by every students is less than 10 out of twenty. These scores deviation from the mean, which is less than (10/20), shows poor level of the students in the use of reported speech. The students who secured poor scores, 10 of them have difficulties in inserting (if / that / wh – word). One of them provided as the answer of the question number (5): The teacher asked that where did we learn English. It can be observed that he inserted both (that/where) in indirect speech and kept the question as (did) was used. Ten other students kept (did). Difficulties with the tense changing is visible. Students did not respect the tense sequence, mainly when the introductory verb is in the past. To mention only, a student who provided answer to question (2). He wrote: He asked her if she loves her. The reported speech would be correct if he wrote: He asked her if she loved her as the introductory verb is in the simple past tense. None of the students responded correctly with the question containing nominal sentence. With the question (3), all of them provided as answers: He said thank you instead of (He thanked me). The following pertinent suggestions which are the corrective measures can improve on the situation. To EFL teachers; - To teach the lesson of reported speech progressively by dividing into different predicate. - To provide a lot of exercises both spoken and written ones.
To the EFL learners. - To practice more drills on reported speech. - To read different books, mainly the lesson of reported speech

References

- Best, W. D (2008), The student's companion, Longman: London - Brock Haussamen et al (2003). Grammar. Alive. IIIinois: National Council of Teachers of English. - Eastwood. J. (1994). Oxford Guide to English Grammar. Oxford: Oxford University Press. - Elaine. Walker (2007). Grammar Practice For upper Intermediate students. Cambridge: CUP. - Gold Brown (2O18). The Grammar of English Grammar. Many books. Net. - Gracia. R (1984). States Reported speech indirect in statements. Magta: Stroniska (ed). - Palmer, F

(1975) Grammar, Penguin Middlessex. England: Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, - Quirk, R S. Greenbaum (1973). A University Grammar of English London: London Group Ltd. - Martin Hewing (1999). Advanced Grammar in use. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. - Nsimambote. R. (2022). Fundamentals of English Grammar for EFL Learners. DRC: Terabytes. - Rebecca. C. (2007). Introduction to Reporting talk in interaction. Cambridge: CUP.

APPENDIX : A SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Your gender

1. Male

2. female

2. Your age group

a. 1. 820 21- 22 23+

3. Are you interested in the lesson of the reported speech?

1. Yes

2. No

4. Do you have difficulties concerning putting a sentence from the direct

speech into indirect speech? 1. Yes
2. No

5. How do you recognize a direct speech?

……
……
……
……

6. Put the following sentences into indirect speech

1. Mom says; ‘ I am tired’

……
……

2. She asked her; ‘Do you love me’?

……
……

3. He said; ‘Thank you’?

……
……

4. Bob answered; ‘ I’ll be there tomorrow ‘

……
……

5. Where did you learn English? the teacher asked.

……
……

7. Turn the sentences below into direct speech

1. He asked where they had bought the table.

2. He asked us to read carefully

3. Helen said that she did not love him.

4. Dad said he saw them the previsions day.

5. He says mom loves apples.

……
……
……
……
……
……

By KATAJUNGA NZIGIRE Suzanne and KALALA MBUYI Christian