PROFESORES DE ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA · INGLÉS · JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

TEMA

30

Direct and Reported Speech

El discurso directo y el discurso indirecto.

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Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

Índice

1. INTRODUCTION

2. DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. Direct speech
- 2.2. Indirect speech
- 2.3. Grammatical perspectives

3. FROM DIRECT TO INDIRECT SPEECH

- 3.1. The reporting clause and pronouns
- 3.2. Backshift
- 3.3. When tenses do not change
- 3.4. Modal verbs
- 3.5. Time and place expressions

4. TYPES OF UTTERANCE AND REPORTING VERBS

- 4.1. Statements and questions
- 4.2. Commands, requests and exclamations
- 4.3. Reporting verbs

5. BEYOND THE PAIR: FREE INDIRECT SPEECH

- 5.1. Free indirect speech
- 5.2. Leech and Short's scale

6. ENGLISH AND SPANISH: CONTRASTS AND TYPICAL ERRORS

7. PEDAGOGICAL AND DIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS

8. CONCLUSION

Fuentes

1. INTRODUCTION

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?" With this question, in the first chapter of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, published on 28 January 1813, a whole novel begins to talk. Notice what Austen does: she gives us the words as Mrs Bennet is supposed to have uttered them, between inverted commas and with a reporting clause. Had she preferred, she could have written that Mrs Bennet asked her husband whether he had heard that Netherfield Park had been let at last. The facts would be the same, but almost every word of the sentence would be different, and so would our sense of who is speaking. Welcome to Topic 30: Direct and Reported Speech.

In order to address it, I will divide this topic into six main sections. Firstly, I will define direct and reported speech and look at how grammarians describe them. Secondly, I will examine the changes that turn direct speech into reported speech: pronouns, tenses, modal verbs and expressions of time and place. Thirdly, I will study the reporting of the main types of utterance and the choice of reporting verbs. Fourthly, I will move beyond the traditional pair to free indirect speech and the scale used by stylisticians. Fifthly, I will compare English and Spanish and describe the typical errors of Spanish-speaking learners. Finally, I will reflect on the pedagogical and didactic implications of this content within our current educational framework.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted for the preparation of this topic. These include: Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik's A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language; Huddleston and Pullum's The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language, whose chapter 11 deals with content clauses and reported speech; Leech and Short's Style in Fiction; and Swan's Practical English Usage, as well as the online grammars of the Cambridge Dictionary and the British Council. I have also drawn on the LOMLOE (Organic Law 3/2020, of 29 December, which amends Organic Law 2/2006 on Education), Real Decreto 217/2022 and Real Decreto 243/2022, and Decreto 110/2022 and Decreto 109/2022 of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura.