

## **Difficulties of teaching the reported speech in fifth and sixth forms and some techniques practical for correcting**

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### **Résumé**

*De nos jours, on constate que les élèves apprennent l'anglais mais sont incapables de parler en anglais. Les élèves de cinquième et sixième des humanités ne sont pas à écarter de cette réalité pédagogique. Ils ont beaucoup de difficultés pour utiliser les structures grammaticales dans leur parler. L'emploi du discours direct et indirect est l'une parmi tant d'autres où les élèves éprouvent des sérieux problèmes dans sa maîtrise et usage.*

*Dans cet article, nous avons essayé d'étudier les causes et proposer des solutions idoines afin d'aider non seulement les enseignants d'anglais à amener les élèves à être actifs dans l'usage de « reported speech » ou « indirect speech », mais aussi un outil que les inspecteurs du secondaire et stagiaires peuvent utiliser pour surmonter les problèmes que les élèves rencontrent dans l'emploi de cette structure.*

*Après avoir assisté aux leçons de grammaire sur le « reported speech » des enseignants à temps plein et les stagiaires en 5<sup>e</sup> et 6<sup>e</sup> dans quelques écoles de Kikwit, Kenge et Belemiese, nous avons découvert que les enseignants manquent des techniques pratiques pour enseigner cette notion. A cela, nous proposons des techniques telles que Conversation practice, Conversation drills et d'autres techniques appropriées pour améliorer cette situation.*

**Mots-clés : English, expression, conversation Abstract**

### **Abstract**

*Today, students are learning English but unable to speak English. The fifth and sixth graders of the humanities are not to deviate from this educational reality. They have great difficulty in using grammatical structures in their speech. The use of direct and indirect discourse is one of many where students have serious problems in their mastery and use.*

*In this article, we tried to study the causes and propose appropriate solutions to help not only English teachers to get students to be active in the use of "reported speech" or "indirect speech", but also a tool that secondary inspectors and trainees can use to overcome the problems that students encounter in the use of this structure.*

*After attending grammar lessons on the "reported speech" of full-time teachers and trainees in grades 5 and 6 in some schools in Kikwit, Kenge and Belemiese, we found that teachers lack practical techniques to teach this concept. To this we propose techniques such as Conversation Practice, Conversation drills and other appropriate techniques to improve this situation.*

**Keywords: English, expression, conversation**

## I. Introduction

When people meet, they communicate, that is they use grammatical structures in correct sentences in order to be well understood. We can also say that they apply rules that govern those structures.

Indeed, secondary school learners must have good mastery of grammatical structures, their rules and uses when they learn to communicate in English. It is from the correct use of those structures that they will be well understood. At this stage, Tshibanda (2010) sustains that language learning must be rule-governed and that the fairly small set of rules learnt generally enable the mind to cope with the potentially infinite range of experiences. From this idea, we can learn that the pupils refer to rules of grammatical structures to understand and be able to make correct sentences of their own.

Therefore, fifth and sixth form learners must be taught grammatical structures with great care. In so doing, they will use them in their communication. It is a failure if the learners who are taught the use of reported speech cannot use it correctly or dare not use it in their talk. We agree with Lazinzo (2012) when he says that the goal of a communicative language teaching is to have one's learner become competent communicatively. Raymond (2006) goes in the same direction when maintaining that the teaching of any grammar lesson should be to lead and train the learners to know and use the new structure they have acquired.

From what precedes, we can deduce that English teachers ought to do their best, through practical techniques, to make their learners apply orally or in written form the material they teach them. However, the reported speech is one of the grammatical structures and its use still poses problems to fifth and sixth form learners. This notion is very important in English. If the learners are not able to use direct and indirect speech, we assume that the teachers do not adapt practical techniques which can facilitate the learners to understand it.

In fact, we have noticed that English teachers teach this grammatical structure in one or two lessons. In so doing, the learners will not at all understand and use it. The reported speech is vast. Fifth and sixth form learners cannot learn it in such a reduced number of lessons. This is obviously one of the crucial causes of the learners' incapacity. It must be taught at least in seven or eight lessons. In addition English teachers do not contextualize its teaching. *Programme national d'anglais* (1988) states that: « *L'enseignement des structures sera inductif. Ces dernières seront introduites d'une manière progressive : du simple au complexe, dans un contexte qui en rende la signification suffisamment claire – des exercices de conversation et reposés à des questions devront seules conduire à la contextualisation de ces structures et à une éventuelle formation des éléments les composants.* »

From this quotation, we can understand that English structures in general and reported speech in particular should be taught in contexts. In addition, the teacher has to go from simple (easy) to complex (difficult). We have also understood that teaching this structure in less than eight lessons would be unrealistic. They do not care of what the official book requires. As a result, their learners are unable to use it in their daily talk.

Therefore, the learners' incapacity has pushed us to seek for causes of this embarrassing situation before suggesting some practical techniques which English teachers may refer to in order to solve that learners difficulties.

## II. Methodological approach of study

### 2.1. Hypothesis of the Study

Fifth and sixth form learners do not use the reported speech in their communication. One of the causes is that the techniques used by the English teachers do not help them understand this linguistic category. Moreover, English teachers deal with this structure in a limited and insignificant number of lessons. They teach it with a present and past introductory verbs. They never teach the use of this structure in future, questions, with order, with conditional sentences and scarcely say a word on the changes of tenses, pronouns, adjective and adverbs. Teaching it in this way appears unrealistic. But our article gives not only some knowledge of its use or suggests some practical strategies but also provides teachers with some appropriate teaching guidelines which may bring some light that are considered as a therapy to the secondary learners" problem.

### 2.2. Population and sample

The population of our study was made of the learners of such secondary schools as lycéeMawete, Inst. Pungu, Inst. Ndobo, Massamba, Infra, Ngemba2, Kazama, IDAP/ISP-KIKWIT, LycéeSiama and Anuarite in Kikwit; Collège Saint Jean Bosco, LycéeN"tinu-Ngemba, N"tetembo, ComplexeScolaire Notre Dame de Visitation, Inst. Nto-Kiese, Inst. Tsindakwangu, Inst. CBCO Centre, CBCO SAS, Inst. Masikita, EDAP ISP-Kenge in Kenge; Inst. Belemiese, Inst. Tatu, Inst. Mukwanga, Inst. Mungenga, Inst. Kikwanga, Inst. Kingumba, Inst. Mupulu, Inst. Putu Bongo, Inst. Mukindji and Inst. Mudiambu in Belemiese.

We selected a simple random sample of 784 learners in thirty (30) piloted schools of Kikwit, Kenge and Belemiese. We must indicate that the analysis of the learners" answers has revealed serious difficulties they encounter in the use of the reported speech.

### 2.3. Method

From Hartmann and Stork (1972), we learn that a method is a way of approaching, observing, analyzing and explaining a particular phenomenon. For our case, the particular phenomenon is the learners" errors or misuse of the reported speech.

To achieve our study, we have first referred to library method. We have read books on reported speech, in order to have a clear understanding of this grammar unit. We have also used Descriptive Method. This has helped us observe and explain the learners" errors. The analysis approach has finally enabled us to identify and describe the learners" errors in the use of reported speech.

The technique we have used is fieldwork. To apply it, we made a series of exercises and gave them to fifth and sixth form learners of some schools of Kikwit, Kenge and Belemiese. We put the exercises on the chalkboard. Concretely, the task was to change the direct speech sentences into indirect speech. We collected the learners" sheets of papers and corrected them. Our focus was the learners" wrong answers which we analyzed and grouped in common answers. The exercises were given in thirty (30) secondary schools taking ten (10) of them per area.

Our data are made up of the learners" erroneous answers to the exercises, that is the incorrect use of tenses, pronouns, adjectives, questions, orders and adverbs in the reported speech.

### III. Use of reported speech

Nkwoy (2010) explains that the reported speech may be used with present introductory verb, past introductory verb, with questions, orders and requests. Let us now see how the reported speech is used with each of these elements in detail.

#### 3.1. Use of reported speech with present introductory verb

Mbitien (1986) writes that when the reported speech is used with a present introductory verb there is no change in the words and sentences reported. The possible changes are only those of pronouns, adjectives and adverbs. Michael Swan (1995) indicates that in reported questions the subject normally comes before the verb. He carries on saying that a change of speaker may mean a change of pronoun as in:

e.g.-Anicet says, “Grégoire and Richard are my best friends.”  
 - Anicet says that Grégoire and Richard *are his* best friends.

#### 3.2. Use of reported speech with past introductory verb

For Nkwoy (2010) the reported speech is naturally used with past introductory verb because the reported speech generally deals with what has been said in the past. He also emphasizes that when the introductory verb is in the past, all the words and sentences are possibly put in the past. The changes of pronouns, possessive adjectives and adverbs find then place in the reported speech as seen in:

e.g. – Mukarsaid, “I am tired.”  
 □ Mukarsaid that she was tired.  
 □ The teacher said, “I shall not come tomorrow.”  
 □ The teacher said that he should not come the following day.

From the above sentences; we notice that the introductory verbs are in the past. And the subjects *I* changes into *she* and *he*, the *am* and *shall not come* have changed in *was* and *should not come* and the adverb *tomorrow* has change into *the following day* in the reported speech.

#### 3.2. Use of reported speech in questions

Mbitien (1986) explains that the reported speech of questions needs necessarily the introduction of the conditional if for questions beginning by auxiliary verbs, and the change of question into an affirmative form. The interrogative form and the question mark are dropped. Nkwoy (2010:44) maintains that if the direct question begins by a question word: when, where, who, how, why, the question word is repeated in the indirect question.

e.g. 1. Is Anicet an English teacher?” asked Grégoire.  
 2. *Where* is Richard?” asked Anicet. Answers:

1. Grégoire asked *if* Anicet *was* an English teacher.
2. Anicet asked *where* Richard *was*.

### 3.3. Use of Reported Speech in Orders and Requests

When we read Biepele (2001), we can argue that orders and requests are introduced by verbs like order, command, request, say + to – infinitive. Mbitien (1988) abounds in the same way when saying that the reported speech of orders and requests is made by introducing *to* before the imperative verbs. He continues to explain that for negative reported speech, *not* precedes the to-infinitive. Nkwoy (2010) adds that direct commands and requests are usually expressed by a verb of command / request + object + infinitive construction. Apart from the above verbs, he suggests *advise, ask, beg, command, encourage, entreat, implore, invite, order, recommend, remind, request, tell, urge and warn* as verbs used in orders and requests“ introductory verbs.

e.g. 1. The teacher ordered, “shut up.”

- The teacher ordered *to shut up*.

2. “Don’t take a big calabash,” the widow warned Ayo.

- The widow warned Ayo *not to take* a big calabash.

### 3.4. Some changes occurring in the reported speech

From Maclin (2001:294) we learn that as the reported speech or indirect speech tells what a person says without writing the speaker’s exact words, a lot of changes when shifting from direct to indirect speech. Nkwoy (2010:42) writes that several changes are usually made in converting direct to indirect speech. Maclin (2001:295-297) maintains that the possible changes from direct to indirect speech concern tenses, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and other words. The following chart clearly summarize all the changes in reported speech:

Change of	Direct speech	Reported speech
	simple present tense	simple past tense
	simple past tense	past perfect tense
	present perfect tense	past perfect tense
Tenses of verbs	Future	conditional past
	present continuous	continuous tense
	present perfect continuous	past perfect continuous tense
	past continuous tense	past perfect continuous tense
	future continuous	past perfect continuous tense
	I	he/she
	Me	him/her
	you (subject)	they them
	you (object)	they them
	we	his/her
	Us	theirs theirs
	mine	
Pronouns and adjectives	ours	
	yours	
	this	that
	these	those
	myself/yourself	himself/herself
	ourselves / yourselves	themselves
	my	his/her
	our	their
	your	their
	now ago today	then/immediately
	yesterday last	before that day the day before
	year/last day	the previous day the year
Adverbs and other words or expressions	tomorrow next week	before/ the day before the next day /the following day the following week
	here	there
	this time	that time

e.g.1. Mukar said, “*My father is a teacher.*” (Simple present)

Mukar said that *his* father *was* a teacher (Simple past tense verb)

2.Mukar said, “*Dad went to ISP.*” (Simple past tense verb)

Mukar said that Dad *had gone* to ISP. (Past perfect)

3. Anicet said “*I’m reading Zamenga and James Brown*” Anicet said that he *was reading*Zamenga and James Brown.

4. Mukar said, “*MrGrégoirewill quiz us tomorrow.*”

Mukar said that Mr. Grégoire*would quiz them* the following day.

5. Mukar told me, “*Our father Richardcame yesterday.*”

Mukar told me that *their* father Richard*had come the day before.*

## IV. Enquiry in Secondary Schools

Under this section we want to explore, describe and analyze the learners' errors in the use of the reported speech. We are going to base it on presentation and analysis data that we collected from Kikwit, Kenge and Belemiese secondary schools.

### 4.1. Presentation and analysis of data

Our research has been done in thirty 30 secondary schools with a sample of 784 learners of fifth and sixth forms. We shall present the exercises and errors made by the learners in each on reported speech sentences. Then, we will make a general comment of all the sentences. We must indicate that the task, in those exercises was to change the direct speech sentences into the reported speech. The sign – (dash) means that the answer is correct, while the \* (asterisk) shows an incorrect answer.

#### 4.1.1. Peter says, "My sister is sick."

- Peter says that his sister is sick. (140 good answers out of 784 what represents 18% of success) \* Peter says that their sister is sick.
  - \* Peter says that my sister is sick.
  - \* Peter said that her sister is sick.
  - \* Peter said that her sister was sick. \* Peter said that my sister was sick.

#### 4.1.2. "I have eaten fufu this morning" said Richard.

- Richard said that he had eaten fufu that morning. (130/784 or 17% of success)
  - \* Richard said that he had eaten fufu this morning.
  - \* Richards said that he has eaten fufu that morning. \* Richard said that he ate fufu this morning \* Richard said that he had atefufu this morning.

#### 4.1.3. "We are waiting for you," Grégoire told Anicet.

- Grégoire told Anicet that they were waiting for him. (82/784 or 10% of success)
  - \* Grégoire told Anicet that they were waiting for me.
  - \* Grégoire told Anicet that they were waiting for you.
  - \* Grégoire told Anicet that they waited for me.
  - \* Grégoire told Anicet that we are waiting for you.
  - \* Grégoire told Anicet that they have waited for him.

#### 4.1.4. Anicet said, "We finished the work yesterday."

- Anicet said that they had finished the work the previous day. (84/784 or 11% of success)
  - \* Anicet said that they have finished the work yesterday.
  - \* Anicet said that they had finished the work yesterday.
  - \* Anicet said that we had finished the work the day before.
  - \* Anicet said that they had finished the work ...
  - \* Anicet said that we have finished the work the day before.

#### 4.1.5. The boy said, "Our father was working in this company." The boy said that their father had been working in that company.

(78/784 or 10% of success)

- \* The boy said that their father had worked in that company
- \* The boy said that their father were working in this company

- \* The boy said that their father was working in this company
- \* The boy said that their father was working in that company \* The boy said that their father had been working in the company

**4.1.6.** “I shall give you a quiz next week,” said the teacher.

- The teacher said that he should give them/us a quiz the following week. (80/784 or 10% of success)
  - \* The teacher said that he shall give us a quiz the following week.
  - \* The teacher said that he should give us a quiz next week.
  - \* The teacher said that he will give us a quiz next week.
  - \* The teacher said that he shall give them a quiz the following week. \* The teacher said that he I would give you a quiz next week.

**4.1.7.** “We will not do the quiz next week,” objected the pupils.

- The pupils objected that they would not do the quiz the following week. (68/784 or 9% of success)
  - \* The pupils objected that they will not do the quiz the following week.
  - \* The pupils objected that they will not do the quiz next week.
  - \* The pupils objected that we will not do the quiz next week.
  - \* The pupils objected that we would not do the quiz next week. \* The pupils objected that they did the quiz next week.

**4.1.8.** The Headmaster ordered, “Close the door and the windows.”

- The Headmaster ordered to close the door and the windows. (78/784 or 10% of success)
  - \* The Headmaster ordered that close the door and the windows.
  - \* The Headmaster ordered close the door and the windows.
  - \* The Headmaster said that close the door and the windows.
  - \* Close the door and the windows ordered the Headmaster.
  - \* The Headmaster orders to close the door and the windows.

**4.1.9.** My boss ordered, “Do not let the watch dog free.”

- My boss ordered not to let the watch dog free. (82/784 or 10% of success)
  - \* My boss ordered that do not let the watch dog free.
  - \* My boss ordered that we let not the watch dog free.
  - \* My boss ordered do not let the watch dog free.
  - \* My boss said that do not let the watchdog free.

**4.1.10.** MrAnicet asked, “What is your name?”

- MrAnicet asked what my name was. (120/784 or 15% of success) \* MrAnicet asked that what was my name?
  - \* MrAnicet asked what was my name?
  - \* MrAnicet asked what was your name.
  - \* MrAnicet asked what is your name? \* MrAnicet asked if my name were.

In general, we obtained only 942 good answers out of 7840 possible ones representing 12 percent of success which is extremely low.

#### 4.2. General comments

As said in the methodology and enquiry of this article, we have presented and analyzed the pupils' common errors in the use of the reported speech. Here, we want to make a comment about all the sentences and errors made by fifth and sixth form learners.

To observe the way the learner's answered our questions, it is obvious that they encountered a lot of difficulties in using reported speech. In the first sentence, the majority of the learners failed to change the possessive adjective *my* in to *his*. And the other gave a wrong introductory verb *said* abusively.

In the second sentence, the learners did not succeed to change the verb *have eaten* in the present perfect tense into *had eaten* in the past perfect tense. They had also failed to change the personal pronoun *I* into *he* and the expression *this morning* into *that morning*.

In the third sentence the learners did not change the verb *are waiting*, the personal pronoun *we* and *you* in *were waiting*, *they* and *them* or *us*. In the fourth sentence, they did not know that the verb *finished* was in the simple past tense and in the indirect speech they had to conjugate it in the past perfect tense: *had finished*. In addition, the pronoun *we* would change in *they*. The adverb of time *yesterday* would change into *the previous day* or the day before.

In the fifth sentence, all the pupils were wrong to conjugate the verb *was working* in another tense than the past perfect continuous tense: *had been working*. They were also unable to change *our* possessive adjective into *they* and the demonstrative adjective *this* in *that*.

In the sixth sentence, some learners failed to change *shall give* into *should/would give*, *I* into *he* and the time indicator *next week* into *the following week*.

The learners in our enquiry has shown a serious weakness to change *will not do* in *would not do*, *we* in *they* and *next week* in the *following week* in the seventh sentence.

The majority of answers to the eighth and ninth sentences has been incorrect because the learners got problem to use reported speech of this order. They did not put the *to* before the verb *close*. Some other pupils used the *that-clause* in the reported speech with orders abusively. In the ninth sentence, they failed to put the *not+to* before the verb *do*.

The answers of the tenth exercise were wrong because the learners did not change *is* into *was*, *your* into *my*. In addition, they kept the form of the interrogative wrongly. Moreover, some of them did not invert the subject *your name* with the auxiliary verb *was*.

The answers to our exercises have clearly confirmed the hypothesis of this work. The learner's incapacity in using the reported speech compels us to wonder what can be at the basis of this failure. In other words, we want to look at possible causes of this mobility before suggesting practical remedy to this chaotic situation hindering communication.

#### V. Causes of the Learners' incapacity

The causes of the learners' errors derive from various sources. The common and most influential causes are bad teaching, ignorance of grammar rules and few practice time. Let us now see in particular how each major cause impedes the mastery of the reported speech.

### 5.1. Bad teaching and poor learning

If the learners in the schools of our enquiry still make errors in the use of the reported speech, the first guilty person is the teachers. Some of them do not teach the reported speech correctly and others never teach it at all. This can be justified in that the majority of the English teachers we met for the first time be it in Kikwit, in Kenge or Belemiese were not ready to receive us, because they had not taught this lesson yet. To see the number of faulty answers given by the learners, it is obvious to deduce that those teachers teach the reported speech inadequately. They teach this material in one or two lessons. This could not help the learners use it easily. Some other English teachers had incomplete knowledge on the reported speech. They only teach it with a present introductory verb. It is clear to say that bad teaching is a basis of the learners' incapacity. At this stage, Broughten et all (1980) write that: Bad teaching and poor learning is on the culprit of teachers and that there are very often circumstances beyond the teachers' control. Of these circumstances mention can be made of the syllabus which is not usually within the control of most ordinary teachers. Yet, some courses follow a linear progression from one teaching to the next. What is realized, however, is that most teachers scarcely leave a retrospective look at material previously taught, so that there is no connection between what preceded and what followed.

From the above quotation, we can notice how the teachers of English are culprit of the learners' errors. There is no link in the teaching of materials. During our enquiry, a sixth form teacher told us that he had already taught that lesson in the fifth form, and he had not to teach it again in the sixth form. But when correcting his learners' sheets, they all failed. Put simply, it was not the learners who failed but the teacher. The learners' errors derive from the teacher's bad teaching. In short the teachers' inappropriate and incomplete knowledge did not enable the learners to use the reported speech conveniently.

### 5.2. Ignorance of Grammar Rules

If the advanced learners in these large cities or towns did not use the reported speech correctly, the other side of the coin is the fact that they ignored some rules in the use of the reported speech: the change from one tense to another, from a pronoun, and adjective, an adverb to another. Each language has its rules which learners should apply correctly to make oral or written sentences. On this point, Tshibanda (2010) writes that language learning must be rule-governed and that a fairly small set of rules enables the mind to cope with potentially infinite range of experiences.

From this point of view we understand that learning, consists not essentially forming habits but of acquiring rules. That is, learners refer to rules to understand and produce new sentences of their own.

### 5.3. Short Practice Time

Our learners have not enough time for practice. They do not sufficiently exercise their learners in the classroom. Once at home, they do not practice English any more. The teacher must use his talent to give a lot of opportunities in the classroom to let the learners practice to speak fluently in English at recall, fixation and practice steps.

Because of this insufficient practice, sixth form learners tend to become lazy. They are keen on collecting and contributing money for teachers to work English exam at their place.

## VI. Practical teaching techniques

Our scientific and pedagogical contribution in writing this article is to suggest some practical teaching guidelines and techniques to help teachers overcome difficulties in the teaching and learning of this complex grammatical structure. We are convinced that our suggestions will provide the English teachers with opportunities to play their roles as helper, guide, facilitator and monitor to lead the learners not only to know the reported speech but also practice it orally and in written form.

### 6.1. Teaching Guidelines

By teaching guidelines we mean the advice, directives or instructions which the English teachers can follow to help their learners use reported speech in their daily communication. We think of the following:

- The English teacher must be informed whether his fifth form learners had learned reported speech in the fourth form. He may ask them to bring in the classroom their 4<sup>th</sup> form English copy.
- The English teacher must verify whether his learners have the knowledge of pronouns, possessive adjectives, adverbs of time and place. He can check through a test on them.
- The English teacher to be confident may take the fourth form English teacher's last preview sheet or the learners' fourth form copy books and see whether his fifth and sixth form learners have some prerequisite on the reported speech. Or, on the other hand, he sees if his learners have knowledge on the previous lessons he will need in the teaching of the reported speech in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> forms.
- The English teacher must motivate his learners to take interest in learning and speaking English in their life.
- The English teacher must adapt practical techniques which may help the learners use this unit successfully.
- The English teacher must give as many exercises as possible when he teaches the reported speech to reinforce learners' understanding.

### 6.2. Conversation practice

This technique requires that the teacher has to proceed by question-and-answer to handle the practice on the reported speech. He asks them the questions to the class, or to a pupil and the pupil asks them to another who in turn has to ask the same questions to a third pupil, and so on.

Another possibility is to divide the class into small groups and ask each other questions. Dealing with this technique, Tregidgo (1979) argues that, some indications of how to hand the various conversation practice exercises are given in the instructions for each. In some case the teacher asks questions and individuals are called on to answer. In others, pupil 1 questions pupil 2, pupil 2 then questions pupil 3, and so on around the class. In some cases, the class is divided into two or more teams, and the exercise is presented as a competition. Once again, however, it is the teacher's responsibility and privilege to organize the work in the best way he can: no single way is necessarily the best way, and even if it were, such a way could only become the best way in the hands of a skillful and imaginative teacher.

From this idea, we understand the benefit of this technique. What is important, here, is to help learners use the reported speech by talking. To apply this technique, the teacher may proceed as follows:

### **Exercise 1**

T. What is Hyena?

P1. Hyena is an animal, Sir.

T. (Asking another pupil): What does he say? P2. He says that Hyena is an animal.

P2. (Asking pupil 3) What do I say?

P3. You say that Hyena is an animal.

### **Exercise 2**

T. Where were you yesterday? P1. I was at home yesterday.

T. (To a pupil 3) what did he say?

P. He said that he had been at home the day before. P2. What did I say?

P3. You said that you had been at home the previous day.

### **6.3. Conversation drills**

From Bulangunga and al (2014) we learn that conversation drill is the movement or the change of the statement from a form to another from a tense to another in accordance with the rules that govern it. This technique consists of asking learners to converse or transform direct speech sentences into the reported speech. The task aims at checking the correct use of the rules as seen in:

#### **Exercise**

Put the following direct speech sentences into the reported speech.

1. The pupils say, “We have English class at ten.”
2. Grégoire says, “My father teaches at ISP.”
3. Anicet said, “I’m reading Broughton these days.”
4. Richard told me, “I shall send you money tomorrow.”
5. Tuned asked Ayo, “Where have you found this calabash?”
6. “Do not get a big calabash,” The witch told Tunde.

#### **Answers**

1. The pupils say that they have English class at ten.
2. Grégoire says that his father teaches at ISP.
3. Anicet said that he was reading Broughton those days.
4. Richard told me that he should/would send me money the following day.
5. Tuned asked Ayo where she had found that calabash.
6. The witch told Tunde not to get a big calabash.

#### **6.4. Intensive and regular exercises and homework**

One of the best strategies that the English teacher has to use to reinforce the learners' learning process is giving regular exercises and homework. Lakung (2003) explains that to ensure continuity and to give more necessary practice, appropriate homework or a task per day should be given at the end of each lesson; depending on the amount of time the pupils are able or prepared to give up to home study. She carries on explaining that all homework should be corrected by the teacher, either in the classroom or outside the classroom hours. A delay in the correction of homework or exercises may have a perverse action on learning.

From this point of view, we think that it is necessary to give homework and exercises at the end of each lesson. With the reported speech, the teacher has to give reinforcement homework and exercises at the end of each section of this structure. This is very important to help the learners who did not understand the lesson to catch up with the lesson which was not well taught.

#### **6.5. In service training**

It has been explained in the preceding lines that the failure of the learners implies the failure of the teacher. The causes of the learners' failure in using grammatical structures in general and reported speech in particular derive from the teachers' burnout. So, one of the efficient solution to overcome the teachers' burnout is inservice training. The latter consist in training qualified full-time English teachers in service to adapt their teaching to the world around them. And the most important component of this technique is self-reading, attending conferences and scientific symposium on ELT teaching methods and techniques, seminars, etc.

But what we have observed so far is that English teachers are too bookish and their work has become a routine. They have stopped reading and they do not participate in-service training. Bulangunga et al (2014) advice that the teachers must be trained during their time of work. Weak teachers should grow pedagogically in English teaching unit. The school authorities must organize lesson demonstrations debates, conferences and seminars, educational meetings on new teaching methods and techniques.

From the above ideas, we can understand the possibility of retraining teachers inservice training technique. From our enquiry in Kikwit, Kenge and Belemiese we have noticed that lots of teachers completed their studies many years ago. They still teach what they learned in their graduate or under graduate years. They do not make any effort to look for other sources. As a result, they teach only what they know and sometimes teach it badly. Their learners are not able to use some grammatical structures correctly.

## VII. Conclusion

The objective of writing this article is to help English teachers of secondary school get practical techniques in the teaching of the reported speech considered as a tough grammatical structure. Our inquiry and experience as English teachers have clearly shown that some English teachers and trainees teach the reported speech badly or even do not teach it at all. Moreover, they do not care about the errors made by the learners in learning this grammar unit. However, using such practical teaching techniques and guidelines as conversation practice, conversion drills, intensive and regular exercises and homework and in-service training have obviously proved to be among vey efficient and fruitful ways in the teaching of the reported speech. They are good panacea to the learners' difficulties in the use of direct and indirect speech.

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