Indirect Speech: Change in Pronouns, Adverbs and Tenses

Pronouns

A change of speaker may mean a change of pronoun.

Study the following sentences:

Alice (on Sunday evening): I don’t like this party. I want to go home now.
Peter (on Monday morning reports what Alice said on Sunday): Alice said that she didn’t like the party, and she wanted to go home.

In the examples given above, Alice says I to refer to herself. Peter, when reporting what Alice said, naturally uses she to refer to her.

Adverbs of place

A change of time and place may mean a change in adverbs like here, there, today, now etc.

Study the following example:

Jane (on Sunday): I will wait here.
Susie (on Monday reports what Jane said on Sunday): Jane said that she would wait there.

Susie, when reporting what Jane said, does not use the word here, because she is no longer at that place. Instead, she uses the word there.

Tenses

A change of time may mean a change of tense. After past reporting verbs, the verbs of the original speech are made more past by using past perfect tenses.

Study the following examples.
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Direct speech: Alice said, ‘Will you marry me?’
Indirect speech: Alice asked if I would marry her.
Direct speech: I said, ‘Will you help me?’
Indirect speech: I asked her if she would help me.
Direct speech: He said, ‘I can’t swim.’
Indirect speech: He said that he couldn’t swim.
Direct speech: She said, ‘I have forgotten your name.’
Indirect speech: She said that she had forgotten my name.
Direct speech: Dad said, ‘John phoned.’
Indirect speech: Dad said that John had phoned.