Title:

Error Analysis on Prepositions Used by the Learners of English as a Second Language in Writing

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ABSTRACT

This study examines omission errors, substitution errors and addition errors in the usage of prepositions by the learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) in writing tasks. The main purpose of the study is to investigate: whether the school children in lower grades tend to omit prepositions more often than in higher grades whereas in higher grades, they show more substitution and addition errors. A pool of 260 Sinhala speaking students from four grades (Grade 4, Grade 6, Grade 8 and Grade 10) participated in this study. A picture story writing task where prepositions needed to be abundantly used was administered, and errors in the use of prepositions were analysed. The main findings concluded; although more omission errors were found in the lower grades significantly, the increase in substitution errors towards higher grades is not very sharp. These findings can be used in the ESL classroom to facilitate teaching English prepositions.

Keywords: Omission errors, Substitution errors, Addition errors, ESL

1. Introduction

Most of the English prepositions are vague and confusing so that the Sinhala speaking learners find difficult to acquire them. According to Thilakaratne 1992, in English, prepositions are words, while in Sinhala they are represented as spatial postpositions or as suffixes (locative, ablative Case).

Prepositions are often polysemous, in other words, they have more than one meaning. For example, the preposition over has many meanings as follows:

(1) a The horse jumped over the wall (on -the- other- side- of).
   b The evaluator looked over her publications carefully (examined).
   c Collect your money over the counter (from).

The same prepositions in English can carry vastly different meanings in Sinhala. For example, in I met him at the bank, at the bank can be translated into Sinhala with various meanings if we again translate them to English. such as: near the bank, inside the bank and in the bank. Learners often become frustrated when they have to determine prepositional meanings and to use them appropriately (Koffi 2010).
Sjoholm 1995 has found that results in learning English phrasal verbs are related in part to their presence or absence in learners’ first language. Sinhala language does not have phrasal verbs, as a result the Sinhala speaking ESL learners find difficult to master the phrasal verbs in English. For example, an idiosyncratic phrasal verb such as *grinding out the same story*, where neither the verb nor the preposition contribute to the meaning of the phrasal verb; *continuing the same action*.

Because of these unavoidable causes due to the mother tongue Sinhala language and also the target language, many errors can be shown by the ESL learners in the acquisition of English prepositions. Therefore, in order to facilitate teaching prepositions in the ESL classroom, the error patterns of the Sinhala speaking ESL learners should be identified following a proper categorization of the prepositions.

The aim of the study is to examine the error patterns in the acquisition of English prepositions by Sinhala speaking learners of English with respect to the fine-grained categories of prepositions proposed by Littlefield (2006). Littlefield posited four categories within the prepositional domain using ± lexical and ± functional features: Adverbial prepositions [+Lexical, -Functional], Particles [-Lexical, -Functional], Semi-lexical prepositions [+Lexical, +Functional], and Functional prepositions [-Lexical, +Functional] as follows:

(2) a Adverbial prepositions: *The girl climbed up* [+Lexical, -Functional].
   b Particle: *The girl finished off the ice-cream* [-Lexical, -Functional].
   c Semi-lexical preposition: *The boy swam across the river*+[Lexical, + Functional].
   d Functional preposition: *Mala was proud of her son* [-Lexical, +Functional].

According to Littlefield (2009:19), lexical categories contain semantic content, and can assign theta roles to their compliments, whereas functional categories lack ‘heavy’ semantic content, and cannot assign theta role. In addition, free coining of new items is possible for lexical categories, but no coining is possible for functional categories.

2. Empirical and Theoretical Literature Review

2.1 Categorization of Prepositions

Littlefield 2009 provided evidence for the four different categories of prepositions by administering a longitudinal study. Littlefield claimed established patterns in several syntactic domains show that the lexical elements are acquired before functional elements. Therefore, Littlefield suggests that there are two possible predictions on the acquisition of the four categories of prepositions:

(3) a Predicted order of acquisition:
   First: -Functional (Adverbial prepositions and Particles)
   Last: +Functional (Semi-lexical prepositions and Functional prepositions)

Here prepositions with [-Functional] features out rank the prepositions with [+Functional] features.
b. Predicted order of acquisition:

First: + Lexical (Adverbial prepositions and Semi-lexical prepositions)
Last: -Lexical (Particles and Functional prepositions)

Here, prepositions with [+Lexical] features out rank the prepositions with [-Lexical] features.

It is of utmost important to note that the both the orders agree with two facts: (i) the pure lexical categories (Adverbial prepositions) are acquired before the pure functional categories (Functional prepositions) and (ii) the Particles and Semi-lexical prepositions will be acquired after Adverbial prepositions and before Functional prepositions.

Littlefield administered a longitudinal study in order to investigate which order (order 3a or 3b) is right. The database: Five children (aged 1;2 to 2;3) in the CHILDES data base (Mac Whinney & Snow 1985, 1990) were selected: Adam (2; 3.4 to 4;0.14) spanning 2 years; Naomi (1;2.29 to 4;9.3) for 3 1/2 years; Nina (1;11.16 to 3;3.21) for 1 1/2 years; Sarah (2;3.5 to 5;1.6) for 3 years; and Eve (1;6 to 2.3) for 9 months. Only Naomi’s data started from the first MLU Group, whereas all the other children were at higher MLU groups. Therefore, the particular stage shown in Naomi was not found in others. Therefore, another two children’s (Geraldine (1;5 to 2;00) spanning for over 6 months and Melisa (1;10.20 to 2;7.7) ) spanning for 9 months data from the CHILDES database was later added. These two children showed patterns similar to Naomi. Moreover, some selected files of each child’s were coded for their caregivers’ utterances, in order to determine whether there was an influence of input on children’s acquisition patterns.

Method: The CLAN data progressing programme (MacWhinney 1993) was used to calculate the Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) of all these children. This programme calculated the mean of morphemes per utterance and each child’s data was divided into 7 MLU groups. All possible contexts where a preposition had been used or should have used were identified: Contexts with adverbial prepositions, particles, semi-lexical prepositions and functional prepositions were coded. Any item homophonous with prepositions was also coded.

Errors which children made with prepositions were analyzed and grouped into two main types of errors: omissions and substitutions. If a child had mispronounced or used a novel form for a preposition, they were coded as ‘other errors’. Following conventional guidelines for utterance inclusion and exclusion (Brown 1973; Miller 1981), several utterances were omitted, example, utterances with homophonous words that were not used propositionally, imitations, repetitions, etc. After identifying the relevant contexts, the prepositions were coded for four categories of prepositions: Adverbial prepositions, Semi-lexical prepositions, Particles and Functional prepositions.

Results: The child data analysis showed that adverbial prepositions and particles were acquired early at Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) at 1.5-1.99 or 2.0-2.49 respectively, followed by semi-lexical prepositions (for most children with MLU of 2.5-2.99), with functional prepositions being acquired the last (for most children with MLU of 3.5-3.99). All five children followed same patterns of acquisition: adverbial prepositions/particles, then semi-lexical prepositions, and finally functional prepositions. However, no conclusion could be arrived at about the relative ordering of adverbial prepositions and particles as they showed similar growth
patterns. This could be attributed to the fact that child data began in 2.0 MLU or later, except in the case of Naomi. A closer look at Naomi’s earlier data showed a difference in the distribution of adverbials and particles. As none of the other four children’s data began this early on, Littlefield has taken a close look at Geraldine’s and Melisa’s early data, from MLU Group 1 to MLU Group 2. All these three children showed a delay in production of particles though they had 100% accuracy whenever they appeared.

The majority of errors were omissions (83%), substitutions and other errors were considerably lower, and omissions occurred in all categories of prepositions. The strongest support for the fine-grained approach came from the rate of errors: the most difficult category was functional prepositions, with an error rate of 19.6% followed by semi-lexical prepositions (8.3%) and finally least difficult categories were particles (1.5%) and adverbial prepositions (1.1%). Littlefield concluded that acquisition of the four categories of preposition had the following order:

Adverbial prepositions, Particles, Semi-lexical prepositions, Functional prepositions and these [-Functional] categories had an advantage over the [+Functional] categories.

**Adult data:** Interestingly, all adults showed a nearly identical distribution for all the four categories of prepositions. They used more semi-lexical prepositions (62%) than any other category, followed by adverbial prepositions (22%), then by functional prepositions (11%), and last were particles (4%).

The results of Littlefield (2009) study showed that the acquisition order of children cannot be attributed to input frequency. Mothers used the highest number of semi-lexical prepositions and very few particles and adverbial prepositions, but children used more adverbial prepositions and particles than semi-lexical prepositions. To sum up, a specific order of the acquisition of four categories of prepositions, and the matching error patterns of the four categories of prepositions (the category easiest to acquire has the least errors) confirmed the existence of the four categories of prepositions, in other words, empirically supported the fine-grained approach.

Littlefield (2009) found evidence for the existence of these categories and she showed that the children acquire the prepositions in a particular order:

(4) a Adverbial prepositions: *The girl climbed up* [+Lexical, -Functional].
b Particles: *The girl finished off the ice-cream* [-Lexical, -Functional].
c Semi-lexical prepositions: *The boy swam across the river* [+Lexical, +Functional].
d Functional prepositions: *Mala was proud of her son* [-Lexical, +Functional].

### 2.2 The Littlefield categorization and processing

Thomann’s (2013) study examined the four categories of prepositions which were processed by adults differently, with the intention of validating Littlefield’s categorization. If the adults processed these four categories of prepositions similarly, then it would disprove Littlefield’s (2009) approach.
35 Northeastern University undergraduate students (Female = 21; Male = 14), native speakers of English, participated in the study. The range of their age was between 19 to 23 years. Firstly, the participants were presented with a picture to trigger the meaning of a preposition. Then the preposition or a filler word was presented and they were asked to answer whether that word was related to the picture provided. The reaction times and responses were analyzed to see whether there was a pattern for the four categories of prepositions.

The results showed that adults processed the four categories of prepositions significantly different. The reaction time data showed that [-Functional] categories (adverbial prepositions, and particles) were processed more quickly than [+Functional] categories (semi-lexical prepositions and functional prepositions). The response results showed that [+Lexical] categories (adverbial prepositions, semi-lexical prepositions) were rated more related to the given picture than the [-Lexical] categories (particles and functional prepositions). Therefore Thomann 2013 study validated Littlefield (2009) fine-grained approach in prepositions in adult processing.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine Sinhala speaking ESL learners’ error patterns in the usage of the four categories of prepositions; adverbial prepositions, semi-lexical prepositions, particles and functional prepositions in which the existence was found by Littelfield 2009.

2.3 Error Analysis

In order to study on learner language properly, it is very important to understand the differences between mistakes and errors. According to Brown (1994), human learning is basically a process which involves in making mistakes. A mistake is a random guess or a “slip”. Both native speakers of English as well as second language learners of English make such mistakes and these mistakes do not show lack of competence in their L1 or L2 respectively. Also, Brown (1994) points out that the errors are noticeable deviations from the adult grammar of a native speaker and they show the interlanguage competence of the L2 learner.

There are two major causes of error, coined by the Error Analysis approach. One is the interlingual error which is made by the Learner’s Linguistic background and native language interference. The other cause is the intralingual error which is committed by the learners when they misuse some target language rules.

The teachers of English, highly benefit from analyzing their students’ errors in their diverse tasks on their four skills: speaking, writing, reading and listening. Corder 1973 shows that errors provide a feedback on the effectiveness of his teaching materials, teaching methodology, and also the areas that the learners have inadequately learned, and therefore to be more focused by the teacher. Also Corder 1971 provides a model which says that there are two types of errors in sentence form: “overt errors” which are unquestionably ungrammatical sentences and the other, “covert errors” that are grammatically well-formed sentences, but are not interpretable within the context of communication. For example, “I went to a party” as a response to the question, “How old are you?” is a covert error.
Where overt errors in sentences are concerned they can be classified into 4 categories using Corder’s taxonomy (1973) as:

(5) a Omission errors (omission of some required element)  
b Addition errors (addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element)  
c Substitution (selection of an incorrect element)  
d Permutation (misordering of elements)

3. Design and Hypotheses of the Study

In this study, we tested two types of errors: substitution errors and omission errors in the use of four categories of prepositions: adverbial prepositions, semi-lexical prepositions, particles and functional prepositions of the Sinhala speaking ESL learners on a picture story writing task.

In keeping with research in child language that children tend to omit functional words and substitute lexical words with other forms, we hypothesized that:

(i) Grade 4 and Grade 6 learners will tend to omit prepositions more often than Grade 8 and Grade 10 learners, and the latter will show more substitution errors (*Hypothesis 1*).

(ii) Also, omissions are expected to be more in [+Functional] prepositions than in [+Lexical] prepositions (*Hypothesis 2*).

Since children perceive prepositional categories to be different according to Littlefield 2009, we hypothesized that:

(iii) Categorial features will be preserved in substitutions i.e. a semi-lexical preposition will be substituted with a semi-lexical preposition and a functional preposition with a functional preposition (*Hypothesis 3*).

4. Methodology of the Study

4.1 Subjects

A pool of 316 Sinhala speaking students (Male = 156 and Female =160) from Sirimavo Bandaranaike Vidyalaya, a girls’ school and from Ananda College, a boys’ school in Colombo, participated in the study. A picture story writing task was administered for these students. Scripts of 160 students (40 each from Grades 4, 6, 8 and 10) were randomly selected from this pool. Learners were mostly from the middle class though some of them were from the lower income families.

4.2 Profile of the participating schools

The participating grades in two schools were Sinhala medium, where all subjects except English and Tamil were taught in Sinhala. The learners who were examined in this study were bilingual with Sinhala as their first language and English as their second language. In addition, some of them had a moderate knowledge in Tamil as a third language. English is learnt as a compulsory second language in Sri Lanka from Grade 3. Although English is considered as a second language, the learners’ exposure to English outside the classroom is limited.
4.3  Picture story writing task

A picture story writing task designed by David Stringer (2005, called The Monkey Story) was used. There were 27 pictures which illustrated the story of a monkey about to eat a banana, a parrot flying away with the banana, the monkey chasing the parrot through different spatial environments like down the hill, under the bridge, into the cave, and across the river among others, finally finding the banana, and tracing the same route back to his house (see Figure: 01 & 02 for some pictures in the Monkey Story Task).

No time limit was set for this task. Each student was provided with a copy of The Monkey Story and an answer sheet with space for them to write. The relevant instructions were given to the students both in Sinhala and English. All pictures were in black and white. The first sentence of the story was given in both languages: One day monkey got a banana. Given below is a quick sample of the use of prepositional categories for some of the pictures in the story:

(6)  a. The parrot flew away / The banana fell down. (adverb)
    b. The monkey ran under the bridge. (semi-lexical)
    c. The monkey looked at the parrot. (particles)
    d. The monkey went to the top of the mountain. (functional)

4.4  Administration

The picture story-writing task was administered in the respective classrooms along with the English teachers in both the schools. Multimedia rooms were not used for this test, as the space was not enough to keep 2 scripts etc. on tables for each student. Learners were asked to complete the story first in their mother tongue, and then in English: this was done to ensure that they get the form of the story right. Oral and written instructions for the task were given in Sinhala and English. According to the instructions, learners were asked to describe the pictures in such a way that the story is made. No time limit was set for the tasks, however, learners completed the task within 1.5-2 hours.

4.5  Analysis

For all sentences in the learner scripts, grammatical and ungrammatical, MLU (mean length utterance) was counted using Miller & Leadholm 1992. The sentences were counted for presence and absence of prepositions. Sentences without prepositions were categorized into sentences that do not require prepositions, and sentences where a preposition is required but has been omitted. Sentences with prepositions were categorized into adverbial, semi-lexical, particle, and functional uses of prepositions. For each category, correct use and incorrect uses were counted. Incorrect use was defined as semantic inappropriate use with respect to the picture described. For incorrect use, all substitutions and additions were counted. Each sentence with scores for each of the above-mentioned categories were entered on the excel sheet.
Table 4.1 provides a story-writing sample from Grade 6, and a detailed analysis on its data is as follows:

(a) Mean length of utterance (morpheme) = 5.79 (SD = 1.86)
(b) Non prepositional context (prepositions are not obligatory), note that errors of additions are also included here) = 14 sentences
(c) Sentences with omitted preposition: 1 sentence
   a. Semi lexical: The monkey gone [into ] a hollow trunk (Sentence 16).
(d) Sentences with additional prepositions: 2 sentences
   a. Semi-lexical: But he want to his banana (Sentence 22).
   b. Functional: He jumped for caught the parrot (Sentence 27).
(e) Sentences with substitutions: 4 sentences
   a and monkey ran down the bridge (Sentence 9).
   b Monkey jumped up the rock (Sentence 13).
   c The parrot flew up the hollow trunk (Sentence 15)
   d The monkey jumped to water (Sentence 19)
(f) Correct prepositions: 19
   (g) Errors (omissions + substitutions + additions) = 7
      Omissions = 1 (Sentence 16)
      Substitutions = 4 (Sentence 9, 13, 15, 19)
      Additions = 2 (Sentence 22 & 27)

4.5.1 Examples of correct and incorrect use

With respect to the following series of pictures in the Monkey Story (Stringer, 2005) the following answers were observed, and were marked as follows:

1) The monkey went through the log. “√” [The series of 3 pictures (Figure 1) clearly shows the monkey went through the log].
2) The monkey went in the log and came out. √ (The traversal preposition through needs to fulfill both these actions: in and out. In addition, went in the log is accepted according to Stringer, 2005.
3) The monkey went in the log + The monkey went out the log. √ (If the sentence No. 2 was presented by two separate sentences as No. 3, they were both accepted.)
4) The monkey went into the log and came out of the log. √ (In sentence No.2, the prepositions in and out can be replaced by into and out of respectively).
5) The monkey went in /into the log is provided, but the monkey came out /out of was marked as wrong – ‘X’ (The traversal preposition through requires both actions: in/into and out/out of actions.
6) The monkey went log- X (The preposition through is omitted).
7) The monkey in through the log (Here through is correct, the usage of in is wrong and considered an addition error).
In addition, they both went into the tree trunk was considered wrong with regard to the following pictures as only the monkey went through the trunk, but not the parrot.

The sentences that made no sense were rejected, for example, the sentence, the den is in the lion on the picture (Figure 2) was rejected.

4. Results

In the picture story narration task, 40 learners from each of the four grades wrote a story on the basis of 27 pictures and the written stories were analyzed for the text length (in words), the MLU count, use of different categories of prepositions, correct use of prepositions and types of errors (omissions, substitutions, and additions) category-wise. The mean length of utterance and the length of the story showed a consistent increase from Grade 4 to Grade 10, though the difference between Grade 4 and Grade 6 was not significant in the MLU count. The MLU count was used in the study only to highlight the proficiency differences of learners, and served no other purpose.

All learners made more errors with semi-lexical prepositions than any other category (87-91%). This was understandable since the frequency of use in semi-lexical prepositions far outweighed other categories in all the grades. Particles were used in 0.3-4% cases across grades and the error rate was less than 5%. Adverbs which were used 15-26% across the four grades had errors less than 4% whereas functional prepositions which were used 3-10% had considerably more errors (4-9%). Therefore, looking at errors without taking into consideration the proportion of use would be problematic. From this analysis, it looks like [-Functional] prepositions (i.e. adverbs and particles) showed fewer errors than [+Functional] prepositions (semi-lexical and functional prepositions), which is what Littlefield (2006) only found.

Omission errors showed a clear decrease from Grade 4 to Grade 10 (30% to 7%). Meanwhile substitution errors increased from Grade 4 to Grade 10 (51% -65%). However, the increase was not as sharp as expected. Therefore, this data provided partial proof for Hypothesis 1. Omissions were more frequent for semi-lexical prepositions (28-6%) with compared to other categories which shows (0-5%). Here the functional prepositions showed (0-3%) omission errors. Therefore, our hypothesis that [+Functional] prepositions (semi-lexical and functional prepositions) are mostly omitted than [+Lexical] prepositions (adverbs and semi-lexicals): Hypothesis 2 stands questioned in the picture story task.

Only semi-lexical prepositions and functional prepositions showed noticeable substitution errors. Learners generally respected the category rule in their substitutions: semi-lexicals were substituted by semi-lexicals, supporting Hypothesis 3. A few functional prepositions were substituted by semi-lexical prepositions, and vice versa.
5. Implications for Teaching English as a Second Language

Teachers of English as a second language, should be well aware that the students of Grade 4 and 6 tend to omit more prepositions than Grade 8 and 10 students where as in Grade 8 and 10, the students substitute more prepositions than in Grade 4 and 6 in writing, but the increase of substitution errors is not very sharp. This knowledge should be used to facilitate teaching English prepositions as well as in the process of testing and evaluating on English prepositions. For example, Grade 4 and Grade 6 students can be tested on their omissions of prepositions by giving questions as follows:

(i) Provide them a picture showing a horse jumping over a fence, and ask the students what the horse is doing. The students who omit the preposition over should be first explained why it is wrong, and then let them practice the accurate sentence. The teachers also should focus on the substitution errors of Grade 8 and 10 students, by clearly explaining why their answers are wrong, and exposing them to the accurate use.

(ii) Teachers of English should also be properly aware that the students of Grade 4 to Grade 10 have more tendency to substitute semi-lexical prepositions mostly from inaccurate semi-lexical prepositions itself than the other categories of prepositions (adverbial prepositions, particles and functional prepositions). So these kind of substitutions must be more focused in teaching, and also in testing the English prepositions, and correct them. For example, a tricky multiple question, provided with a picture of a mango tree bearing many mangoes, can be used:

There are mangoes ………the tree.
1. in
2. on
3. at
4. near

This is a space related scene, and all the given answers are semi-lexical prepositions. The non- semi-lexical prepositions, for example, of (a functional preposition) should not be given as an answer as the students mostly tend to substitute semi-lexical prepositions by semi-lexical prepositions itself, and as a result they would not select non-semi-lexical prepositions. Thereby, the question would be too easy for them, and it would not serve the purpose.

6. References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Prep. Context</th>
<th>MLU count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Parrot is near the monkey</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) and parrot got a banana.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Monkey was very angry</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) and monkey jumped out</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Parrot was flew away</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Monkey ran followed the parrot.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Then the parrot flew up the bridge</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) The monkey saw it</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) and monkey ran down the bridge.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Monkey ran again for his banana.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) It was ran away and</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) the parrot flew up a rock.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) Monkey jumped up the rock and</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14) it saw the parrot flew far.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15) The parrot flew up the hollow trunk</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16) The monkey gone [ ] a hollow trunk.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17) but he can’t got his banana.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18) After that the parrot flew across the river.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19) The monkey jumped to water and</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20) swam across the river.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21) The monkey was very cold.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(22) But he want to his banana.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(23) Monkey saw the parrot was on the hill.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(24) Monkey went uphill</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25) but the bird was flew away.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(26) The monkey was very angry.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(27) He jumped for caught the parrot.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(28) Monkey fall down the hill.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29) And started to ran away.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(30) The parrot was flew to cave</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(31) and Monkey was followed the parrot.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(32) The cave was very dark.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(33) The lion was in the cave.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(34) The lion roared and the monkey and parrot was very afraid -</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(35) and ran out.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(36) The parrot was very afraid</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(37) and ran out.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(38) The parrot was falled the banana to monkey’s hand</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(39) and they ran away.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepositions are italicized

Table 4:1: A story-writing sample from Grade 6 and the analysis
Figure 1. A series of pictures

(Taken from ‘Monkey Story’, Stringer 2005)

Figure 2. A sample picture

(Taken from ‘Monkey Story’, Stringer 2005)