

## Question sequences

Discuss the developmental sequences for ESL questions in terms of the given examples. Justify your answer by describing the various stages in terms of such considerations as those mentioned in class.

- |    |  |    |   |
|----|--|----|---|
| a. | Jane is okay, isn't she?<br>Why aren't you happy?<br>Can you tell me what the answer is? | d. | Where is the dog?<br>Is there a dog in the garden?<br>Are you hungry? |
| b. | You want eat cookie?<br>Daddy go bye-bye?  | e. | What does he want?<br>Why aren't you happy?                           |
| c. | Is Daddy want cookie?<br>Why you are not happy?<br>Do I can have a cookie?               | f. | Milk? Baby toy?<br>What's that?                                       |

Modified from various texts:

### Stage 1

*Single words or fragments (with intonation)*

- A spot on the dog?
- A ball or a shoe?

### Stage 2

*Subject-verb-object with rising intonation*

- A body throw the ball?
- Two children ride a bicycle?

Stage 3 (Notice that the fronting occurs but Subject-Verb inversion (=Subject-Aux inversion) does not.

Fronting:

*Do-fronting*

- Do the boy is beside the bus?
- Do you have three astronaut?
- Does in this picture there is four astronauts?

*Other fronting*

- Is the picture has two planets on top?

*Wh- fronting*

- What the boy is throwing?
- Where the children are standing?
- Where the kids are playing?

### Stage 4

Wh- with copula BE

Where is the ball?  
Where is the dog?  
Where is the shoe?  
Where is the space ship?  
Where is the sun?

*Yes/no questions with AUX inversion*

Is the boy beside the garbage can?  
Is there a dog on the bus?  
Is there a fish in the water?

Stage 5 This stage involves *both* fronting and Subject-Verb inversion (only when the sentence should have both, of course)

*Wh- with AUX second*

What is the boy throwing?  
What is the boy doing?  
How do you say *lancer*?  
How do you say *tâches* in English?  
How do you say *extra-terrestre*?

Stage 6

So-called 'embedded' questions

I don't know who he is.  
She finally realized who Bill was shooting at.  
Can you tell me what the date is?  
Does he know what the answer is?

Not

\*I don't know who is he.  
\*She finally realized who was Bill shooting at.  
\*Can you tell me what is the date?  
\*Does he know what is the answer?

Figure 1. Developmental stages in English questions (adapted from Lightbown 1998:182 in Doughty and Williams (1998), which was in turn adapted from Pienmann, Johnson, and Brindley, 1988)).