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 mention in your text.

a. Jane is okay, isn’t she?  d. Where is the dog?
   Why aren’t you happy?  Is there a dog in the garden?
   Can you tell me what the answer is?  Are you hungry?

b. You want eat cookie?  e. What does he want?
   Daddy go bye-bye?  Why aren’t you happy?

   Why you are not happy?  What's that?
   Do I can have a cookie?

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

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

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
Can you tell me what the date is?
Does he know what the answer is?

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).