FOLIA 246

Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis

Studia Anglica 8 (2018)
ISSN 2299-2111
DOI 10.24917/22992111.8.5

Marija Stevkovska[1]
International Balkan University, Republic of Macedonia

The role of Comprehensible Input in acquiring English as an L2 by young learners and pedagogical implications

Abstract

The article focuses on the significance of comprehensible and meaningful input in teaching English to young learners (TEYL). The term input is discussed from the point of view of three theories: Behaviorism, Stephen Krashen's Monitor Theory and the Input and Interaction Hypothesis. A longitudinal study with eight Macedonian children, aged 6-8, was carried out in order to examine the role of input in TEYL. Pedagogical implications resulting from theories related to TEYL and the longitudinal study refer to teachers' realistic expectations from their students and the way to facilitate L2 acquisition. This involves adjusting, not necessarily simplifying, the input as well as using whole sentences, which enables young learners to generalize rules since they acquire a language through the process of constructing grammar rules.

Keywords: comprehensible input, second language (L2), second language acquisition, young learners, pedagogical implications

Introduction

The concept of comprehensible input was coined by Stephen Krashen and it refers to language input containing language that is slightly above the current level of a learner's already acquired language. The article begins with a brief elaboration on the role of comprehensible input in L2 acquisition according to several language theories, which is followed by a description of a longitudinal study with eight children and resulting pedagogical implications. Finally, an appropriate conclusion is provided.

Language theories on the role of input in L2 acquisition

This article outlays three theories on the role of input in L2 acquisition, listed in chronological order: Behaviourism; Stephen Krashen's Monitor Theory; and the Input and Interaction Hypothesis along with the Output Hypothesis. According to behaviorists exposure to L2 input is necessary for second language acquisition (SLA) to occur, i.e. environment is considered to be a crucial factor for all types of

[1] Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Marija Stevkovska, International Balkan University: m.stevkovska@ibu.edu.mk

learning by imitating the behavior model it provides. However, in today's terms the language used by teachers in the 1950s cannot be considered input as it was solely used as a language model rather than as a way of conveying meaning. "Although behavioristic attitudes have long been abandoned, factors such as practicing and input frequency are still taken into account" (Ellis, N.C cited in VanPatten & Williams, 2008, p. 90).

According to one of the five hypotheses of Stephen Krashen's Monitor Theory – the Input Hypothesis- a student moves along a development continuum by receiving comprehensible input, i.e. by understanding messages in L2. The term comprehensible input is one of Krashen's historic concepts, which refers to language input containing language that is slightly above the current level of a learner's already acquired language. In this context Krashen introduces two new concepts: *'i'* which denotes a learner's current competence and *'i+1',* which is the level slightly above the current level of a learner's acquired language. Due to the imprecision of the definition (how can one determine level *i* and consequently level *i+1*)this hypothesis has often been criticized. Another drawback of his insistence on comprehensible input as being the sole factor for effective SLA is his claim that production is a mere result of acquisition.

The Input and Interaction Hypothesis derives from Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which he has revised several times (Krashen, 1985). This hypothesis claims that comprehensible input is the only necessary condition for language acquisition to occur; provided the learner meets the requirement of paying attention (this refers to the related Affective filter hypothesis by Krashen). Two hypotheses derived from the Input and Interaction Hypothesis: 1) Interaction Hypothesis; and 2) Output Hypothesis.

At the beginning of the 1980s Michael Long was the first to claim that in order to gain deeper insight into the nature of input and its benefits in the process of SLA more attention ought to be paid to the interaction in which learners themselves are involved (Long, 1983). Interaction should be taken as a two-way process of negotiating for meaning while changing input quality, paraphrasing and processing it so as to increase comprehension. This attitude is called Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1983, 1996). Research done in the 1970s and 1980s showed that language used by native speakers when addressing L2 speakers is mostly grammatically correct but it is simplified in a linguistic sense as compared to language between two native speakers: shorter utterances are used as well as less complicated grammar and a limited range of vocabulary (Long, 1983).

Long made a study* with two groups of 16 pairs of speakers of English as an L1 and L2. He noticed that pairs consisting of a native speaker and a non-native speaker of English employed more conversation tactics such as repetition, confirmation and comprehension check or clarifying requests. Of course, native speakers used these techniques to solve a communication problem and not to teach their interlocutors about grammar (Long, 1983). According to the Interaction Hypothesis this should be useful for language acquisition as well. Both interlocutors cooperate so that the non-native speaker of English gains i+1 input (according to Krashen) and not i+3 or i+0.

In 1996 Long gave his last revised version of the Interaction Hypothesis:

> …the environment facilitates acquisition through selective attention and a learner's developmental capacity for L2 processing and that these sources unite, although not always, while negotiating for meaning. Negative feedback can enhance L2 development, at least in terms of vocabulary, morphology and syntax typical of L2, and it is necessary for learning certain contrasts between L1 and L2 (p. 414).

The new version of the hypothesis emphasizes the effort to clarify processes by which the input turns into intake by introducing the term 'selective attention'. These concepts appear in discussions related to output and the extent to which it can contribute to language development, which is not the subject matter of this article.

Criticism concerning studies on interaction is directed towards insufficient attention paid to the process of internal processing of language stimulus. Therefore, interactionists have recently become interested in modeling internal linguistic and psycholinguistic factors. Two such models were developed in order to resolve this issue: (1) VanPatten's input processing theory and (2) Suzanne Carroll's input processing theory.

(1) The input processing theory was developed by VanPatten (1996, 2002). The theory offers an explanation of how L2 input from the environment turns into intake, in particular" how learners extract the form from the input and how they analyze sentences while Pica et al. (1987) made similar research in order to study the connection between interaction modification and greater understanding. They proved that learners who were allowed to negotiate for the meaning of the unmodified scenario completed the task more successfully in comparison with those who merely listened to the simplified version of the scenario.

Their primary attention is focused on meaning (VanPatten, 2002, p. 757). The term intake refers to input language data that has been processed and stored in working memory for further processing. This theory does not offer a complete model which could explain these processes but only a group of principles that account for failure in complete processing of language forms from L2 input. According to the input processing theory, learners prefer processing semantics to morphology, i.e. they first draw semantic information from lexis (they consider yesterday to be an indicator of past tense) and not from grammatical forms (e.g. the past tense ending -ed), which is in accordance with the Output hypothesis. Unfortunately, rather than providing a complete model of normal or successful input processing the input processing theory offers a model concerning drawbacks along with a small number of processing strategies.

(2) Suzanne Carroll (2001) offers a more complete model, called the input processing theory. According to Carroll, in order to get a fuller understanding of the L2 acquisition process it is necessary to have the following:

- an appropriate theory on how language is represented in the brain (a property theory);
- an appropriate theory on how language is processed, both receptively and productively; and

– a theory on how our mental language representations can change once we have realized that our inter-language representation does not seem appropriate for processing language we have encountered in the environment (i.e. a transition theory). Carroll agrees that mental language representation contains separate modules which have limited inter-connections. However, according to Carroll, SLA occurs as an inductive learning (i-learning), which is activated when we fail to decode language stimuli by using existing mental representations and analysis procedures. Carroll's response to criticisms that inductive learning does not explain why students never produce so called 'wild grammars' is that i-learning in the theory of autonomous induction differs from other such theories because i-learning is limited by already existing mental representations of language which are change-resistant (Carroll, 2001).

In conclusion, we can say that despite research limitations due to the fact that only West-European languages, mainly English, have been studied, research done by interactionists has several outcomes:

(1) it has proved that native and non-native speakers of the same language can actively work in order to understand each other; this kind of negotiations includes both language and interaction modifications which provide constant opportunities for noticing some aspects of L2 form; and

(2) it has showed that L2 learners who participate in negotiations for meaning can notice and use language elements used by their interlocutors who are native speakers.

Study on the role of comprehensible input in teaching English to young learners

Pedagogical implications in this article result from a study on the sequence and way in which Macedonian native speakers at an early age acquire the two English present tenses. The study was conducted over an eight-month period, in a classroom setting. Three factors were controlled: age, language exposure and the context for selecting data. Eight Macedonian native speakers were included, four boys and four girls, aged 6–8. They all attended English classes at a private language school in Skopje, Macedonia. The course books used during the study were Fairyland 1 and Fairyland 2 by Dooley and Evans (2006, 2007).

Data were collected and analyzed with a qualitative-quantitative method. The following instruments for collecting date were used: direct observation, interviews, consecutive translation of 40 sentences, recorded with a camera; transcription of filmed material; and keeping a diary on the part of the researcher. Students were filmed three times: at the onset of the research, four months later and at the end of the eight month. At each filming session students were asked to do the same: describe pictures in their course book (see Appendix I), tell a story based on pictures in their course book (see Appendix II) and translate 40 sentences into English (see Appendix III).

The results from this study are limited as (1) the study includes a small number of participants and (2) they all have Macedonian as their L1, which means that one cannot generalize and draw general conclusions.

Pedagogical implications

Implications drawn from the longitudinal study and the abovementioned theories shall be discussed in the TEYL context (TEYL – Teaching English to Young Learners). This category of learners is differently defined by various authors. According to Phillips (1993) young learners are children who go to school, aged five to ten. As a compromise between various definitions on young learners in this article the term is used for first, second and third graders, aged 6, 7 and 8, respectively. According to the Macedonian school system, children start elementary school at the age of 6 and they do not start learning the Latin alphabet before the age of eight.

The pedagogical implications resulting from theories related to the importance of comprehensible input in SLA and the longitudinal study provide answers to the following questions:

1. What can and should be expected from young learners in terms of SLA?
2. How can teachers deal with SLA related difficulties?

Concerning expectations and young learners' language skills, one ought to consider the fact that six-year-old children are at the end of the second pre-operational stage according to Piaget's theory of cognitive development (Pijazhe, 1988), whereas eight-year olds are in the third or so called concrete operational stage. This means that children can use and represent objects through pictures, drawings and of course words. They are not, however, ready for abstract explanations that include grammatical terms and they still struggle with deductive reasoning. This implies that L2 classes should mirror real-life situations in which L1 is acquired.

According to previous research done by the author of this article (Stevkovska, 2012) conducted with school children aged 6–8 there are two types of learning:

a) learning words, formulae, formulaic utterances and memorized chunks: Are you Ronny sleeping? Are you he sleeping?; and
b) systematic learning or so called learning systematic rules (Ellis, 1997), which refers to generalization or simplification of certain rules, such as using **don't** for all persons: The cow don't have hooves. (For more examples of utterances see appendix at the end of this article).

Teachers should take into consideration both ways of learning and use strategies to promote the two. How this can be accomplished shall be explained further down.

Teaching young learners has often been underestimated. A common belief still prevails that it only takes basic knowledge of English for a teacher to be able to teach YLE. However, it is teachers themselves who should take teaching English to young learners seriously and study child psychology as well as gain sufficient theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of both L1 and L2 language acquisition.

Firstly, the behaviorist approach should be abandoned as it is clear that children do not acquire language through imitation and the process of stimulus-reaction. Saying the word *sing* when a child is shown a picture of a singer holding a microphone will not prompt the child to describe his/her favorite singer. On the contrary, according to Krashen's theory on comprehensible input, teachers ought to use complete sentences and provide children with appropriate context (a picture of his/her favorite singer or video of the singer's performance) in which there is a real

need for conversation about the children's favorite singers. In this way children will be able to explore the language and try to produce their own utterances to describe the singer. It is important that children produce output so that there is real interaction between children and teachers as well as between children themselves.

Furthermore, it is extremely important that teachers understand the role of input in the process of language acquisition. They should expose students to comprehensible and meaningful input, in this particular case in the school environment (Aleksova et al., 2011, pp. 17–19). This involves modifying the input by using simplified syntax, commonly used vocabulary and avoiding phrases and idioms so that the input is adapted to students' language knowledge but it also conveys certain meaning that students at this age can identify themselves with. This would include discussions on interesting and relevant topics, such as cartoons and cartoon characters, animated movies, toys, birthdays, family, friends and the like.

In Jerome Brunner's constructivism (1966) there are three ways of language presentation a teacher should be able to combine: one way is based on action, another one on pictures and the third one is a symbolic way, which is based on language itself. Although this is contrary to Piaget's theory on the four stages of children's cognitive development (Pijazhe, 1998), both Brunner and Bloom, in his well-known taxonomy, propose a certain progression in the cognitive development, during which teachers should be able to determine when a child can push the boundaries of their abilities with the help of a teacher and establish a dialogue in order to build their knowledge foundations instead of doing it by simply being taught. Children should be given an opportunity to explore and discover language and its regularities (Poposki, 1997).

Lev Vygotsky uses the term Zone of Proximal development (original name *Zona blizhaishego razvitija*), and according to him, children aged 6–8 are in this zone. Vygotsky emphasizes social mediation, unlike Piaget, who does not mention the importance of class interactivity. It is a very important segment which is frequently neglected. Children should be given the opportunity to talk to each other in L2 so that they can find themselves in a realistic situation because language is primarily of a communicative nature, which "does not necessarily mean negating so called inner speech" (Vigotski, 1988, p. 45).

Regarding grammar acquisition, for example the acquisition of verb forms, teachers should always use complete sentences with complete verb forms, because children do not use mere basic forms, i.e. only a verb in infinitive, but they add the -s ending when producing sentences in Present Simple or the -ing ending for the Present Continuous (see Appendix I, II and III). Children also use auxiliaries such as do/does/don't/doesn't/isn't/aren't. Teachers should always use correct verb forms despite the fact that children may use different forms, some of which might be ones they have never heard from their teachers (e.g. The dog it's have paws*).* Forms like these prove that children do not acquire language through imitation, as believed by behaviorists. On the contrary, children try to find regularities in the language, i.e. rules for forming both present tenses in English. They will, eventually, succeed in that and then teachers will know that this was not a result of explicit rule explanation, but of constant L2 input and children's L2 output. Therefore, the importance of L2

use in class ought to be highlighted. L2 usage should be much greater than the use of L1. Teachers should avoid using single words in English, with children songs and rhymes being the only cases of using complete sentences. If children acquire language through a process of constructing grammar rules (Fromkin et al., 2003) they should be given the opportunity to do so. This involves addressing students with complete sentences in L2, particularly for class routines, i.e. giving classroom instructions. In this way children will be able to generalize rules, which will help them construct their own sentences. Children do not learn through imitation. They produce their own utterances, ones they have never heard from adults as a result of their ability to construct grammar rules and generalize them.

An overview of grammar syllabi of English course books for young and adult learners shows that grammar structures are very limited, as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Overview of grammar content in English course books for children and adults

Fairyland 1	**Fairyland 2**	**Welcome starter a**	**English File beginner**	**SpeakOut starter**
***CEFR: A1 level**	**CEFR: A1 level**	**CEFR: A1 level**	**CEFR: A1 level**	**CEFR: A1 level**
Targeted at: young learners, aged 6–7	Targeted at: young learners, aged 7–8	Targeted at: young learners, aged 6–7	Targeted at: young adults and adults	Targeted at: young adults and adults
No grammar syllabus, since the first level book is A1 level according to the CEFR	No grammar syllabus, since the first level book is A1 level according to the CEFR	No grammar syllabus, since the first level book is A1 level according to the CEFR	Grammar syllabus is the same for both books: • to be • possessive adjectives • this/ that/ these/ those • possessive's • present simple • adverbs of frequency • there is/ are • a/an, some, a lot of, not any • past simple • can/ can't • be going to • object pronouns	

* Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Council of Europe. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved on 10.01.2018 https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

As it can be seen, only the affirmative form of the Present Simple is included, except for the modal *can*-which is taught in all three forms (positive, interrogative and negative), whereas other verb forms are taught at a recognition level or learned as memorized chunks and only for first and second person singular. This means there is great discrepancy in grammar content in course books for adult learners and children. In fact, the same grammar units taught in classes with adult students for six months take several years to teach in classes with young learners. Nevertheless, even during early stages of acquiring English, L2 children can cope with much more input than it is widely believed. "Children employ various learning processes, implicit, and not explicit ones, like adults do, and it is precisely this difference that should be taken into consideration in EFL methodology" (Lazarova-Nikovska, 2004,

p. 213). Consequently, children should not be exposed to syntax input which has been as simplified as possible simply because they cannot comprehend explicit explanations. They do actually manage to adopt language rules implicitly.

Conclusion

The three language theories that refer to the term input emphasize its importance in SLA. According to behaviorism, input is used only as a language model which is to be imitated without conveying any meaning, whereas Krashen and representatives of the input and interaction theory consider input to be meaningful and comprehensible, which can be modified and adjusted to students' language proficiency, but not oversimplified.

Teachers ought to realize how important the role of input in language acquisition is and expose students to comprehensible and meaningful input, in our case in institutional and formal contexts (Aleksova et al. 2011, pp. 17–19). This means the teacher should modify input in order to adjust it to students' language level and try to make it meaningful to students so that they can identify themselves with it. Regarding verb forms, teachers' input should contain complete and various verb forms. This kind of input has to turn into intake so that we can claim that language has been acquired. Intake becomes available to students only through meaningful and communicative activities; it is the most direct and with young learners the only way in which the classroom can foster language acquisition. At the beginning of these processes teachers should expect the use of memorized chunks and formulaic utterances, particularly with six-year old children. In due time, children will replace them with creative construction of verb forms.

References

Aleksova et al. (2011). *Прирачник за наставата по нематчин јазик за наставниците во основното, средното и високото образование [Guidebook for foreign language teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary education].* Skopje: Britanski Sovet.

Brunner, J.S. (1966). *Toward a Theory of Instruction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Carroll, S. (2001). *Input and evidence: The raw material of second language acquisition*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Dooley, J. & Evans, V. (2006). *Fairyland 1*. Newbury: Express Publishing.

Dooley, J. & Evans, V. (2007). *Fairyland 2*. Newbury: Express Publishing.

Ellis, R. (1997). *Second Language Acquisition. Oxford Introductions to Language Study*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fromkin, et al. (2003). *An Introduction to Language*, 7th edn. Boston, Mass: Heile.

Krashen, S.D. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. New York: Longman.

Lazarova-Nikovska, A. (2004). *Age and Transfer Effects in the Initial Stages of Second Language Acquisition of English*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Cambridge Research Centre For English and Applied Linguistics: Trinity Hall.

Long, M.H. (1983). Native speaker/non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input. *Applied Linguistics* 4, 2, 126–41. Reprinted in Candlin, C.N., & Macnamara, T. (2001). *A reader in applied linguistics*. London: Routledge.

Long, M. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In R. William & B. Tej, *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 413–468). San Diego: Academic Press.

Phillips, S. (1993). *Young learners*. Oxford: OUP.

Pica, T., Young, R., & Doughty, C. (1987). The impact of interaction on comprehension. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21, 737–758.

Pijazhe, Z. (1998) *Развој на интелигенцијата [Development of Intelligence].* Skopje: Prosvetno Delo.

Poposki, K. (1997) *Психолошки основи на современата настава [Psychological foundations of modern teaching].* Skopje: Prosvetno Delo.

Stevkovska, M. (2012). *Acquisition of verb forms in the English interlangauge of Macedonian native speakers at an early age*. (Master thesis). St Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philology, Department of English Language and literature, Skopje.

VanPatten, B. (1996). *Input processing and grammar instruction: Theory and research*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

VanPatten, B. (2002). Processing instruction: An update. *Language Learning*, 52, 755–803.

VanPatten, B. and Williams, J. (2008). *Theories in Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Routledge.

Vigotski, L. (1988). *Govor i mislenje [Speech and Thought]*. Skopje: Prosvetno Delo.

Address:
Marija Stevkovska
International Balkan University
Makedonsko-kosovska brigada str.
1000 Skopje
Republic of Macedonia

Appendix I

Description of pictures (coursebook *Fairyland* 2, page 13 by Dooley & Evans, 2007)

Student 1 (S1) (6 years old), Teacher (T)
S1: Hello, my name is Petar.
T: How old are you?
S1: I'm six years old.
T: OK. Now, let's look at the pictures. Where's Ronny's mummy? (pointing to the first picture)?
S1: In the living room. It's looking a book.
T: OK. Where is Ronny's mummy (pointing to the second picture)?
S1: In the kitchen. It's doing some…
T: OK. Picture two.
S1: Wow, wow. (pointing to the previous picture)
T: What is she doing? Is she cooking?
S1: Yes. It's some cooking.
T: OK. Where's Ronny's brother? (pointing to the third picture)
S1: It's in the bedroom. It's sleeping.
T: And here?
S1: Mmm
T: Is it…
S1: Is it in the living room. It's dancing.
T: Right. Where's Ronny's daddy? Is he sleeping in the garden?
S1: No.
T: What is he doing?
S1: It's working.
T: Where's Ronny's daddy?
S1: It's sleeping.
T: And here? Where's she?
S1: In the toilet. It's…
T: Is she washing her face?
S1: Yes, it's washing its face.
T: Are you sure?
S1: No. What is it doing? Its teeth. In the toilet. Brushing.

Student 2 (6 years old) She cooks. Sleep. Outside. She's brush your teeth. Rony's daddy sleep.

Student 3 (6 years old) Ronny's mother is in the living room. She is reading a book. Ronny's mother is in the kitchen. He is cooking. Ronny's father is in the… He is picking out carrots. Ronny's father is in the bedroom. He is sleeping. He is asleep in the bedroom. Ronny's brother is in the living room. He is singing. Ronny's sister is in the garden and she is… Ronny's sister is in the bathroom. She is brushing her teeth.

Student 4 (6 years old) Ronny's mother is in the living room and she is reading a book. Ronny's mother is in the kitchen. She is cooking a soup of carrots. Ronny's

father is in the garden. He is planting some carrots. Ronny's father is in the bedroom. He is sleeping. Ronny's brother is in the bedroom. He is sleeping. Ronny's brother is in the living room. He is dancing. Ronny's sister is in the garden and she is… Ronny's sister is in the bathroom. She is brushing her teeth.

Student 5 (8 years old) Ronny's mother is in the living room and she is reading a book. Ronny's mother is in the kitchen. She is cooking a soup of carrots. Ronny's father is in the garden. He is planting some carrots. Ronny's father is in the bedroom. He is sleeping. Ronny's brother is in the bedroom. He is sleeping. Ronny's brother is in the living room. He is dancing. Ronny's sister is in the garden and she is… Ronny's sister is in the bathroom. She is brushing her teeth.

Student 6 (8 years old) Ronny's mother is in the living room and in the kitchen. He cooks and reading a book. Ronny's dad is in the garden and in the bedroom. He sleeps and planting his carrots. Ronny's brother is in the living room and in the kid's room. He's sleeping and dancing. Ronny's sister is in the bathroom and in the garden. She is playing and er… and brushing her teeth.

Student 7 (8 years old) Mother's Ronny is in the living room. She read a book. She is in a kitchen and make a salad. The father's Ronny is in the garden and there… He is in the bedroom and sleeping. The brother's Ronny is in the bedroom and sleeping. The brother's Ronny is in the living room and dance. The sister's Ronny is in the garden and… Ronny's sister is in the bathroom and…

Student 8 (8 years old) The Ronny's mother is in the living room and she reads a book. The Ronny's mother is in the kitchen and she is cooking. The Ronny's father is in the garden and… The Ronny's father is in the bedroom and he sleeping. The Ronny's brother is in the bedroom and he is sleeping. Ronny's brother is in the living room and dance. The Ronny's sister is in the garden and… Ronny's sister is in the bathroom and she brush her teeth.

Appendix II

Narrating a text (coursebook *Fairyland* 2, pages 20–21 by Dooley & Evans, 2007)

Student 1 (6 years old) It's Frosty and Woody it's birthday. Erlina it's coming to say Woody: Happy birthday Woody! The tree it's giving to Frosty a present. It's a clock. Alvin it's giving a robot. And the robot something is not good. And the robot is falling and the cake is falling on Alvin. Accident!

Student 2 (6 years old) Frosty and Woody have birthday. Erlina ask Woody: How old are you today? And Woody says: I'm seven. And Frosty says: I.m seven! The tree give Frosty a clock. And Alvin give Woody a robot. Woody say: Thank you Alvin! The robot don't know to carry cake. I fall on Alvin. Alvin don't like it.

Student 3 (6 years old) He said Happy birthday. The tree give Frosty a clock. Alvin gives a robot. Then the robot take the cake and the cake fall on Alvin's head.

Student 4 (6 years old) Woody and Frosty it's birthday. How old are you Woody? I'm seven. Tree is giving Frosty clock. Frosty is happy. Alvin is giving robot. Cake it's on Alvin. It's funny.

Student 5 (8 years old) One day Woody and Frosty have a birthday. To the birthday come Erlina, the tree and Alvin. They say: Happy birthday! Erlina ask Woody how old is he. Woody says" Look, I'm seven today! Then Erlina ask Frosty and Frosty said too: I'm seven today too. Then the tree give clock to Frosty for present. There's a bird in it. And he says: Thank you. Alvin give Woody one robot and says: This robot is for you Woody! Woody says: Thank you! Then the robot is clumsy, the cake fall on .No. And the robot is clumsy and Alvin says: No stop! And the cake fall on Alvin's face. And Alvin was so mad. So Woody and Frosty said: Oh, Alvin you're so sweet now.

Student 6 (8 years old) One day Woody and Frosty have a birthday. At the birthday comes the tree, Erlina and Alvin. Erlina ask Woody how old is he. And Woody says to her: Look I'm seven today! And then comes to Frosty and Frosty says: I'm seven today too! Then the tree gives Frosty a clock and Frosty so much love that clock. And says: Thank you! This … And Alvin gives a robot to Woody. And Woody says: Thank you! And the robot is being clumsy and Alvin says: No stop! Then the cake fall on Alvin's face. And then Woody and Alvin says: Oh Alvin, you're so sweet now!

Student 7 (8 years old) The Woody and the Frosty is birthday. The birthday is the tree, Erlina. Frosty says thank you. This robot is for you Woody. Woody says: Thank you! The clumsy robot kako e jafrla (throws) the cake on the Alvin. The Frosty and the Woody kako e mu rekle (told him): Oh Alvin, you're so sweet now!

Student 8 (8 years old) Frosty and Woody has birthday and Erlina asks Woody how old is he and he says Look I'm seven today. And Frosty is seven too. And tree is give Frosty a clock and Alvin gives Woody a robot. And Robot is clumsy and and Alvin says Robot stop! And robot throws a cake on Alvin, And Woody and Frosty says: Oh Alvin, you're so sweet now!

Appendix III

Table 2. Translation of Macedonian sentences into English

Student 1 (6 years old)	Student 2 (6 years old)	Student 3 (8 years old)	Student 4 (6 years old)
It's not sleeping.	She don't sleep.	She's not sleeping.	He doesn't sleep.
My daddy it's working.	My dad	My dad is working.	My daddy... office.
My mummy it's no working a car.	My mum don't drive a car.	My mother doesn't drive a car.	My mummy don't ride a car.
I home.	/	I don't live in Skopje.	I Skopje.
I know swimming.	I know to swim.	I know how to swim.	I know to swim.
Where it's working my mummy?	Where your mum?	Where my mother's working?	Where mother work?
Where I home?	/	Where you live?	/
I don't know swimming.	I don't know to swim.		I don't know to swim.
Do you know swimming?	/	Are you know how to swim?	You can swim?
I know to play.	I know to dance.	I know to play.	I can play.
I can play on the computer? (rising intonation)	/	Can I play on computer?	I can play on the computer? (rising intonation)
I no can play on the computer.	/	I don't suppose to play on the computer.	I can't play on the computer.
Where are you home?	Where you?	Where you live?	/
Where are you?	Where are you now?	Where are you now?	Where are you now?
I'm home.	You are home.	I am home.	You're home.
He is home.	/	He is home.	He is home.
That home.	/	She's home.	She is home.
We are home.	/	We're home.	Home
We not home.	/	We're not home.	We are not home.
It's not home.	She is not home.	She's not home.	She's not home.
I know play on the computer.	I know to play on the computer.	I know how to play on the computer.	I know to play on computer.
It's him Ronny?	/	Is he Ronny?	Is he Ronny?
It's not him Ronny.	That's not Ronny.	He is not Ronny.	He's not Ronny.
How old are you Woody?	How many?	How much years haves Woody?	How old are you Woody?
Where are him?	Where are they now?	Where are they now?	Where they are now?
The dog it's have paws.	The dog's	The dog have's legs.	The dog hap paws.
The cow it's not have paws.	The cow don't have legs.	The cow doesn't have	The cow don't hap paws.
The cow it's have hooves.	The cow	The cow haves legs.	The cow hap hooves.
I have a brother?	/	Do you have brother?	/
It's have Elena dog?	/	Is Elena haves a dog?	It's hap the horse hooves?
I be to school.	/	Yesterday I go to school.	I've been on school today.
I don't go to a birthday.	/	He yesterday don't go in party.	I don't go on party.

I go to a birthday.	/	Yesterday I go on birthday.	
I sitting to a chair.	/	Now I'm sitting in chair.	
What are you doing?	What are you doing?	What are you doing?	What are you doing?
Every day I look a television.	Every day I watch TV.	Every day I watch TV.	All day I see on television.
I don't look every day TV.	I don't watch TV every day.	I don't watch TV every day.	I no look TV every day.

Student 5 (8 years old)	**Student 6 (8 years old)**	**Student 7 (6 years old)**	**Student 8 (8 years old)**
She isn't sleeping.	She is not sleep.	She's not sleeping.	She is not sleeping.
My father's	My father	My daddy is working...	My father
My mother isn't drive a car.	My mummy no driving a car.	My mummy a car.	My mother it's not drive a car.
I'm live in Skopje.	I living in the Skopje.	I Skopje.	I living in Skopje.
Where are you living?	I can swim.	I swim.	Where's you living?
Where's	Where's... your mother?	My mummy.	Where work your mother?
	Where's living you?	/	I know swimmimg.
I don't know how to swim.	I don't swimming.	I can't swim.	I don't know swimming.
Are you know how to swim?	/	Can you swim?	Are you know swimming?
I can play.	I playing.	I can dance.	I know to play.
Can I play on the computer?	/	/	/
I don't...	No is on the computer.	/	/
Where are you living?	Where's you living?	/	Where are you living?
Where are you now?	Where' s your now?	Where are you?	Where are you now?
You are home.	You're home.	I'm.	You are home.
He is home.	He is home.	He is	He's in home.
/	She is home.	She is.	She's not home.
We are in home.	We is home.	We are.	We're home.
We are not home.	We're not home.	We're not.	We are not home.
She is not in home.	She's not home.	She's not.	She is not in home.
I know how to play on computer.	I working on the computer.	I play the computer.	I know play in the computer.
Is he Ronny?	He is Ronny?	He is Ronny?	Is he Ronny?
He isn't Ronny.	No, isn't Ronny.	He's not Ronny.	It's not Ronny.
How old is Woody?	How old is Woody?	How old are you Woody?	How old is Woody?
Where are they now?	Where's we're now?	/	Where's him now?
The dog's have ears.	The dog is a legs.	The dog.	Dog have a legs.
The cow didn't have ears.	The cow is legs.	The cow no have.	The cow it's not have.
The cow has toes.	Cow no	The cow have	The cow it's have a legs.
Did you have a brother?		The cat it's not have hooves.	Are you have a brother?
Is Elena's have a dog?	Have your Elena's dog?	Elena have a dog?	Have Elena's dog?
Yesterday I been in school.	Yesterday I go on school.	/	He yesterday is not be in school.

I didn't been on a party yesterday.	He isn't	/	I don't be in birthday party.
Yesterday I been on party.	Yesterday I on birthday.	/	Yesterday I be on party.
Now I'm sitting on chair.	Now sit on chair.	/	Now I sitting on a chair.
What are you doing?	What doing?	What are you doing?	What do you doing?
Every day I'm watching TV.	I watching on TV.	I look television	Every day I look a TV.
I don't see television every day.	I not watching a TV.	I no look television.	Every day I don't look a TV.