

SOPHIA C. PAPAETHYMIU-LYTRA, M.A.  
English Department  
School of Philosophy  
University of Athens

## A CHILD'S POTENTIAL VERB DEVELOPMENT AS FORM AND FUNCTION ASPECTS OF INTERLANGUAGE AND EFL

In this paper I shall discuss the functional aspects of a child's verb development in English as a second language, namely, which functions the child was able to perform in coherent and natural communication and what forms the child employed to express these verb functions. Finally, I shall briefly consider the implications of this research for the teaching of English as a foreign language to children.

### 1) Theoretical framework: basic assumptions

Three basic assumptions underlie the research reported here. Firstly, language learning takes place as we learn to communicate with the other members of the society we live in. (Bruner, 1978) Secondly, L<sub>2</sub> learners actively reorganize the input data and develop a language system as usage and use independently of the mother tongue of the learner or the target language. These developmental stages reflect the learners' transitional competence, what Pit Corder, 1977 calls 'language continua' and Selinker, 1974 'interlanguage' based on a cognitive, hypothesis-formulating approach to language learning. Thirdly, meaning in communication is not only a matter of the linguistic forms as they are related to each other in a sentence, but it is also a function of the relationship between utterance (what we want to say, our intention) and situation (physical and social, that is, to whom, Functions are here defined in terms of a speaker's ability to use the second/foreign language to express his/her own intentions our purposes in the context of a social encounter.

