

# ISLAMIC VALUES ENCOUNTERED IN HUMAN LANGUAGE PRODUCTION AND COMPREHENSION AS A MENTAL PROCESS

NURLAILA

STAIN Malikussaleh Lhokseumawe, Aceh

Email : [nurlaila\\_daud@ymail.com](mailto:nurlaila_daud@ymail.com)

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## *Abstract*

*This study concerned mainly on the islamic values encountered in human language production and comprehension as a mental process. The production of language of human being positioned in Broca's area and comprehension of language is located in Wernike's area which are located in human left brain. The process of language in human brain is very abstract; it could not be directly seen by naked eyes. It was done by activating some features of the brain such as Broca's area, Wernike's area, angular gyrus, motor cortex, etc. Based on psycholinguistics theory, ability to speak or produce meaningful sounds were innate in human. Its meant that human were genetically predisposed to learn and use language. The phenomenon were closely related to islamics values that those facts specifically and deliberately created by God; the Almighty Allah with certain purposes and that regularity was shown in the nature of thing in the earth. This research aims at investigating the islamic values encountered in human language production and comprehension. This is a descriptive qualitative reasearch that the researcher herself functioned as the key instrument. It was found out that there were several kinds of islamic values found in human language production and comprehension namely social, moral, economical, and religious values.*

**Key Words:** *Islamic Value, Language Production and Comprehension, Mental Process*

## Introduction

Psycholinguistics is one of some branches of linguistics that discuss about human language on connection to human brain. This branch deals with the relationship between language and the mind, focusing mainly on how language is learned, stored, and occasionally lost. The relationship between language and mind has two aspects, they are acquisition and performance, both are closely related. The field of psycholinguistics attempts to answer questions about how language is represented and processed in the brain and what areas of the brain are used for language processing.

When someone says something, those expressions were processed first in the brain especially left brain where language localized. The process is done very quickly as quickly as sound. Those processes involved some physical features of the brain such as Broca's area,

Wernike's area and also angular gyrus. Thus, the focusing is only on one branch of linguistics that based on the writer's point of view that psycholinguistics is one of some dominant branch of linguistics that mostly teaches us about religion especially the Islamic values. It can be seen by the picture of brain itself, it is really look like a person doing prayer; it's pray every second to the one who had created it namely the Almighty Allah.

Since language is processed in our brain, it is really needed to know what part of brain language localized. Human brain is divided into two roughly symmetrical hemispheres, the right and left hemispheres (brain)<sup>1</sup>. Each of which is responsible for processing certain kinds of information concerning the world around us. There are three major areas of study in the domain of psycholinguistics, so far we have considered how language is represented in the mind and how language is acquired. The other two major areas are how people use their knowledge of language; namely: how do they produce messages that others can understand in turn and how do they understand what they hear. In this research, the focusing is only on the two latest points mentioned to describe more detail on the Islamic value found in human language production and comprehension.

There are various theories which have been arisen in human language production and comprehension, let us see three of them that are mostly related to this research, namely: the Imitation Theory, the Reinforcement Theory, and the last one is the Active Construction of Grammar Theory. The Imitation Theory claims that language can be acquired by memorizing the words and sentence of some languages, people learn language by listening to the speech around them and reproducing what they hear. The idea of acquiring a language is a process of learning to imitate the speech of others is at least partly true. Because of the largely arbitrary nature of the connection between the way a word sounds and what it means, children cannot guess what the words used by other speakers and then reproduce or "imitate" the sound, words, phrase or even sentences from his/her environment. Moreover, this theory implicitly said that children learn language that's spoken around them like the speech of their parents at home, caretakers or baby sitter, and it can also be the language used by the teachers at school. Unfortunately, however, the Reinforcement Theory is contradicted by the fact that even on the rare occasions when adults do try to correct a child's grammar, the attempts usually fail entirely. According to this theory, language is difficult to be mastered, and so a child first attempt at reproducing various words or sentence structures

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<sup>1</sup> O'Grady W. & Dobrovolsky M. *Contemporary Linguistics: an Introduction*. St. Martin Press: New York. P. 254

will not be perfect. So that's why learning to speak need much practice. Without practicing, it would be not possible for someone to speak in English or even in any languages in this world well. Learning to speech is just like learning to walk. A child has to learn how to coordinate the movement of the legs, to know when it will be safe to lift one foot off the ground without falling down, and days by days, a child can do that activity without needing any helping from adult, and so on. The Active Construction of a Grammar Theory, holds that children actually invent the rules of grammar themselves. Their inventions are based on the speech they hear around them ; this is their input or data for analysis. Children listen to the language around them and analyze it to determine the pattern that exists. When they think, they have discovered a pattern; they hypothesize a rule to account for it. Children add this rule to their growing grammar and use it in constructing utterances. For example, a child's early hypothesis about how to form the past tense of verbs will be to add /ed/. All past tense verbs will then be constructed with this rule, producing forms such as *holded* and *eated* along side *needed* and *walked*<sup>2</sup>. It means that when children discovered the different forms in the rules of a language, they modify the rules or add another one to produce the additional forms. In fact, the rules that they added as additional forms were not accepted by the general rule in the language being acquired.

The Active Construction of a Grammar Theory gave a real explanation on the point that the Imitation and Reinforcement Theory cannot explain at all. This theory make us to realize that children's mistakes are expected to occur and to follow nonrandom patterns, because they are forming utterances based on grammatical rules, although the rules are often different from the rules used by adult. It is predicted that children will fail to imitate adult forms accurately when the rule is not fixed even though adults try to give reinforcement for many times, the child cannot change something found before<sup>3</sup>.

Based on the statement stated above that related to psycholinguistics field of study, the researcher tries to find out some facts on the process of language production and comprehension in human brain as one the miracles of God creation which is closely linked to the values of Islamic teaching. Thus, this research focused mainly on "Islamic Values Encountered on Human Language Production and Comprehension as a Mental Process".

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<sup>2</sup> Jannedy, S, et. al. *Language Files*. Department of Linguistics: Ohio State University Press.1994. p. 264-266

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* p. 266

This research was done to get the answers of the research problem about kinds of Islamic values found in human language production and comprehension.

The result of this research is useful for getting additional information on theory of linguistics contribution especially psycholinguistics towards the values of Islamic teaching in a school or in an institution. Practically, the result of this research is hopefully beneficial for teacher or lecturer in teaching languages especially on how languages are processed in our small brain but can save billion words and information without having known term “full”.

### **Islamic Values in Human Language Production and Comprehension**

#### **A. Kinds of Islamic Values**

Before elaborating deeply about kind of Islamic values, it was important to know what value is. Hornby gave the definition of values as the quality of being useful or important<sup>4</sup>. It is principles or standards followed and done by people continuously from generation to generation. Islamic value is values that are found in Islam that are standards on which we judge an action to be right or wrong. These standards can make us easily understood and be able to differentiate between good and bad. The indicators of saying good or bad are relevant to the rules of Islam itself.

According to Faizi that the Islamic value system is immutable and does not accept any change with time simply because Allah is immutable and the universe is working under permanent laws and principle given by Allah. He divided values in Islam in several kinds, namely: moral, social, political, civil and economical values<sup>5</sup>. In this research, it was only taken some that was relevant to the topic. The information on each relevant value is discussed below in more detail as explanation below:

##### **1. Social Value**

Social values cannot be separated by human relationships among others. It is mentioned in Islam that all values affecting human should be based on the concept that is found in Qur'an that each human being is endowed by Allah with high potential for doing good to himself and to his society, and his personality must be respected. Allah takes note of diversities of cast, color, language, and wealth, which serve their own useful purposes in the social scheme and also describes them as signs

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<sup>4</sup> Hornby, AS. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. International New Students' Edition. Oxford University Press. 1995. P. 1319

<sup>5</sup> Faizi, Nisa W. *The Reflection of Islamic Values in the Compulsory Subjects of Social Sciences at Secondary Level in Karachi*. A Dissertation. Jinnah University for Women, Karachi. 2010. P. 2.

of Allah for those who hear and possess knowledge. In Quran Surah Al-Hujarat Verse 13, Allah states that I divided mankind into tribes and nations for the facility of intercourse. Here is the full verse:

*O mankind, we have created you from male and female, and have made you nation and tribes that you may know one another. The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is he who best in conduct. Lo Allah is the greatest knower. (Q.S Al-Hujarat:13)*

The statement from Allah above was then become stronger by the Saying of our prophet, Muhammad (PBUH) as in the following:

*Muslims are all brothers and are all equal none of them can claim any privilege or any superiority over any others.*

The concept of universal brotherhood is established by Islam. The Holy Quran stressed that a true brotherhood could be made only by virtue of mankind's relationship with one another and other factors like common interest, common pursuits and common occupations may help to foster this brotherhood.

In Islam family is considered as a basic unit of human society and the foundation of family is laid through marriage. The relationship between children, wife, and husband should be everlasting and strong. Islam has given a duty to man to give financial support to his family where as the duty of his wife is to look after her children and home. Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

*The best one among you is he who treats the members of his family best.*

Based on that hadith, a man is the one who must take care of his family best financially than the women and a woman must keep the children and home with great care. Both of them should maintain and do cooperation each other to fulfill the needs of family. The correlation between those statement above and human language production and comprehension was seen in the first Allah statement on Surah Al-Hujarat 13, those social values first could be seen in the last sentence of the Surah namely Allah is the greatest knower is really linked to the theory of language processing in mind that our brain would not store anything which that terms, phrases, sentence or even a word if that words were never heard, listened, or learned before; that the limitation of human; but Allah is the best knower, knows everything. In the second social value on relation to hadith above namely talking about the same quality of human being, was relevant to the features of the brain itself. All humans in the world have had the same capabilities of brain given since birth. Then human himself

fulfill the brain with some knowledge and information to be stored in short or long term memory.

In social values mentioned above stated that in Islam family was considered as a basic unit of human society and the foundation of family was laid through marriage. The relationship between children, wife, and husband should be everlasting and strong. To correlate those statements with the human language production and comprehension was then in part of the working of Broca's area and Wernike's area and some others brain features, they are also one unit team work. They must work together cooperatively to produce and to comprehend on areas of how someone say it and what others say. When Broca's area and Wernike's area did not work in good team, human would not produce any meaningful information; but the meaningless sound would be heard and that people cannot understand at all and of course by having done so, the communication was fail and human cannot fulfill the desire of himself/herself in continuing their needs of information and also their daily needs such as the desire of eating, drinking, and others needs in life. For example: Without having good language production and comprehension, it would not be possible for a person to have special meal that someone wanted to eat if the interlocutors could not understand what we order or asked for because we produced meaningless sound or expression.

## 2. Moral Values

Islam had given some universal fundamental rights for human beings as a whole, which were to be respected and observed under all types of circumstances. To get these rights Islam provides a very effective moral ways. So whatever leads to the welfare of the man or the society was morally good in Islam and whatever was injurious morally worse. Islam had given us so much importance to the love of Allah and love of individual that it warned again and again of formalism. We recite in the Quran.

*Actuality, it is not righteousness that you turn our face towards east or west but it is righteousness is to believe in Allah and the day of judgment and the Holy Books and the Angles and the Messengers, out of love for him, for orphans, , for the wayfarer, for the needy, for those asks and for the freeing of captives to be steadfast in their prayers and they practice regular in doing charity, and to be firm and patient in pain or suffering throughout all periods of pains, such are the people of the God-conscious and truth. (QS. Al-Baqarah: 177)*

Truthfulness, humanity, patience, modesty, integrity, steadfastness and fulfilling one's promises are moral values which are emphasized again and again by Quran. We recite in the Holy Quran.

*And Allah loves those who are being steadfast. (QS. Ali-Imran:146)*

Islam lays a great emphasis on specific acts of kindness and defines the responsibilities and rights of countless relationships of people. Our first obligation is to look after our family as parents, children, husband and wife. Then the other relatives, neighbors, friends, and acquaintances, orphans and widowers, the needy, our fellow Muslims brothers, all our fellow human being and animals as well. Special respect and care for parents is very much stressed in the Islamic teaching and a very important part of a Muslim's faith.

So, by setting the Allah pleasure as the objective of Muslim life, Islam has furnished us the highest possible standard of moral virtues. That was bound to provide limitless ways for moral evolution of human beings, through belief in Allah Almighty and the Day of Judgment furnishes a force which enables a person to adopt the perfect moral character. Islam does not do this work through a false sense of innovation and originality.

By having looked at the above statement, the relationship to the human brain which was the topics discussed that closely linked to psycholinguistics. In moral value point of view, humans might use his/her brain where the language processing part, something we thinks over in our mind must be relevant with what something said or uttered by our mouth. It meant that we must keep our brain in good manner, refresh it to get good language production and comprehension, to make us easy to understand what being learned, so that we could deliver those good and right information and also knowledge to others; not to give a wrong description and comprehension especially for a teacher or lecturer in teaching must always be able to send the correct information. Those points were closely linked to the first information we got so that we could have ability to transfer those ones to other persons.

### 3. Economical Values

The dictionary meaning of word "economical" is careful in using money, time, etc. In this context, the case was not money but the carefulness in this case was the economical of using words since the point of discussion was language. In

psycholinguistics point of view that human language was processed in brain and human must be very economical in using and choosing the words that he/she wanted to utter since what we were saying was directed to somebody called listeners and the listeners was the one who had feeling of understanding the words we produced. So, just say the good things, do not produce the bad ones, the ones that cause problem by our utterances. In Indonesian we often heard the expression “*berkatalah yang baik-baik atau diam saja*”, it means that, we need to say only the right thing, and not to say meaningless utterances. We need think over first the word we are going to produce not say whatever we wanted to say.

#### 4. Religious Values

A man must be able to fulfill his mission toward his duties as a Caliph of Allah in this world. For enabling a man to do this Islam seeks the individual to discipline through the offering of prayers to Allah Almighty five times a day, through the observance of fast for one month in a year, through the giving of *Zakat* or alms giving for the welfare of the poor, through undertaking Pilgrimage to the *Ka'bah* at least once during his life time and through readiness to undertake Jihad in the cause of Allah. In the Holy Quran Allah has referred the Muslims as the best community among mankind and Islam seeks to build up the Muslims as the model for the whole humanity. The first and foremost religious duty of man is to offer prayer five times a day. Islam has given a great stress on it. In Quran we recite,

*Established worship at the time of going down of the sun until the dark of night and the recitation of the Quran at dawn is ever witnessed, and some part of the nights also awake for it, a largess for them. It may be that Allah will raise them to a praised estate. (QS. Al-Bani-Israel:79)*

By understanding the religious value that the regularity of Islam could be seen in the process of doing some obligation a Moslem must do like doing prayers five times a day and a night, fasting every *Ramadhan* month, giving *Zakat* especially sharing with the poor and also undertaking Pilgrimage to the *Ka'bah* at least once during his life time. By having those points that must be done by a Moslem it was shown the regularity process that could be found in human language production and comprehension. In production of language for example, it could be pointed out some regularities that was shown in the process of producing sound become words, then the combination of words become phrases and etc. Jannedy et. al. stated that such as in the process of utterance a word for example, a person must select the word wanted to be said in his/her mental dictionary first. This process activate Wernike's



area, which then interpreted the dictionary entry, identify the meaning of the word, how to pronounce it, and so on. The phonetics information for the entry is sent via the arcuate fasciculus to Broca's area. Then Broca's area determines what combination of the various articulators is necessary to produce each sound in the word and instruct the motor cortex which muscle to move, and then it was sent to the Broca's area to determine which muscles must be used to utter the word chosen. After that, Broca's area will order a motor cortex which muscles to move, etc.<sup>6</sup>. Those processes shown the regularity and that regularity had been arranged by God the Almighty Allah.

## **B. Human Language Production and Comprehension in the Brain**

Language and the brain is closely related each other. It is considered as a system of signs, an inventory of elements, each defined by its position relative to the others, or as a system of values determined solely by their mutual relation. In fact, language and the brain have correlation since language is processed in our brain. When someone speaks a language, the process must be first in the brain especially left brain. Human brain is divided into two namely left and right brain. These hemispheres are connected by a bundle of nerve fibers called the corpus callosum. By means of the corpus callosum the two hemispheres are able to communicate<sup>7</sup>. These nerve fibers make it possible for the two hemispheres to communicate with each other and build a single, coherent picture of our environment from the many different kind of stimuli—visual, tactile, oral auditory, and olfactory—that we receive<sup>8</sup>. Language exists in the collectivity, in the form of a set of imprints in each brain, almost like a dictionary, of which every individual would have a copy. It can also be called as mental dictionary which can save billion words or unlimited numbers of vocabularies. It would make us easy to remember as *kamus berjalan* (walking dictionary) which contain a collection of words that cannot be counted by human himself, which can be brought everywhere we go without needed to carry on hand or put on the bag and also without having worry of left somewhere unknown because of

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<sup>6</sup> Jannedy S, Poletto R, Weldon T.L. *Language Files*. Materials for an Introduction to Language & Linguistics. Ohio State University Press: Columbus. 1994. P. 254.

<sup>7</sup> Akmajian A, Demers R.A, & Harnish RM. *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication*. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology: USA. P. 312

<sup>8</sup> Jannedy, S, Poletto, R, & Weldon T.L. *Language Files*. Ohio State University Press. Columbus. 1994. P. 252

forgetful to put where, and which can be used anytime we need spontaneously without needed to open and not need to find the entry word for getting fast in searching, and some other effective ways of using comparing to real dictionary of a language that we need specific time for opening it, for getting certain alphabet, and so on.

In Quran Surah Al-Baqarah verse 31 Allah says:

*And He taught Adam all the names, then presented them to the angels; then He said: Tell me the names of those if you are right.*

The verse above is shown us closely on the thing human will not know if it was not taught by Allah. It is reflected in human memory of language called mental lexicon, it will save anything if we have never heard, seen, felt before. Thus, human will not have the understanding of any words without having learned first. But after we learned and know the words, it would be easy for someone to construct and use it for daily communication.

The brain is covered by a one-quarter-inch thick membrane called the cortex. As has been stated above that this physical features is the one that make human different with animal. This membrane makes human capable of higher cognitive functions, such as the ability to do math or use language that those activity cannot be done by other creatures in the world. In reality, most of the language centers in the human brain are contained in the cortex. That is why when someone got damage in his/her brain could be caused of accident, specific disease, strong blow to the head for example, can result language impairment. The figure below is shown the physical features of human brain which can be seen clearly that the shape is like a person doing prayer. It indicated that the brain of any human being that is central of doing anything are always pray to its creator; that is Almighty Allah. Allah has created human being best than other creatures in the world, the ones who can use their brain to think, speak and behave well. Those are not possible to be done by animal or other creatures. These facts are actually as a prove of the power of the Almighty Allah for the people who use their mind to think and realize that Allah is actually everything and we must pray only to Him not to other for He had created us as the best creator among others.

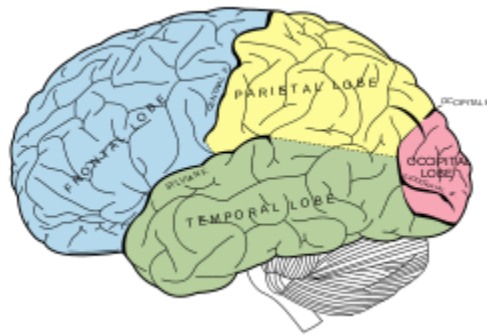


Figure 2.1 The Human Brain where Languages are Processed

If we look deeply on the picture of human brain above where language is processed, it looks like someone is doing prayer. It prays to its creators at any second without stopping, without feeling tired and bored. This fact is in link with the statement stated in Al-Quran Surah Ali Imran verse 44, as quoted below:

*“The seven heavens declare His glory and the earth (too), and those who are in them; and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification; surely He is Forbearing, Forgiving. (QS. Ali-Imran: 44).*

From that verse, we understand that all creatures in this universe that are created by Allah are actually always does prayer to his creator. Human brain which cannot be seen by naked eyes also parts of God’ creature, and so does it. It is also one of the prove that there is Allah, Who arrange all things in this world and Who is the most powerful in this universe.

Linguistically and scientifically, from the picture above can be explained that there are several portions of the cortex are specialized to perform particular functions that play a role in language use. Auditory cortex or Primary Auditory Area for example, is responsible for receiving and identifying auditory signals and converting them into a form that can be interpreted by other areas of the brain. The second special area is called visual cortex or Primary Visual Cortex. By the name indicate; word visual is responsible for receiving and interpreting visual stimuli and is thought to be the storage site for pictorial images. The last one is called motor cortex. Word ‘motor’ make us possible to guess the function of it, because it is synonymous with word ‘move’. It is in fact responsible for sending signal to our muscles, including those of our face, jaw, teeth, palate, lips and tongue, to make them move when we want to produce language<sup>9</sup>. For example when we want to say words “Pen”, it would not be happened if we have only one lip because sound *P* is produced by using two

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* P. 253

lips and linguistically it is often known and categorized into a voiceless bilabial stop sound; the sound is produced by using two lips and the air stream through the vocal tract is completely stop.

Those facts above make us remind about the regularity of these world created by the Almighty Allah. Everything is created in this world Allah has purposes for it. Nothing created useless, nothing is done by coincidentally. Allah created human, animal, fruit, insect, trees, etc has certain purposes for nothing happened in this world known by Allah.

In Quran Surah At-Talaq verse 12 Allah stated that:

*Allah is He Who created seven heavens, and of the earth the like of them; the decree continues to descend among them, that you may know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah indeed encompasses all things in (His) knowledge<sup>10</sup>.*

Based on that verse above, it is understood that all creatures created by Allah to indicate that Allah is the one Who arranged all things and that is shown the power of Allah among others.

## Conclusion

There are some Islamic values found in human language production and comprehension, namely social, moral, economical, and religious values. All those kinds of Islamic values are unique and not all people got specific understanding for it. Those findings above indicated that the kinds of Islamic values are utilized by human being in doing communication each other. The values related to the ideology of human in facing and communicating with his/her Creator and also to the same level of capability namely with the other human being.

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<sup>10</sup> (<http://etext.virginia.edu/>)accessed on October 3th, 2013.

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