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## The Beginning of Baby's Ability to Speak: The Language Philosophy Point of View

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**Abstract** This research explores the structure of the human brain and the beginning of a baby's speech. The brain is divided into two hemispheres: the left hemisphere controls language functions, including spoken and written language, and the right hemisphere is responsible for image recognition and visual forms. A baby begins speaking before birth, learning language through words and utterances from their mother. Post-birth, they use crying, babbling, gestures, and emotional expressions. The baby must then go through three stages: pronunciation, vocabulary building, and sentence formation.

**Keywords:** Language Communication; Brain; Hemisphere; Crying; Bubbling; Gestures

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**Abstrak** Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi struktur otak manusia dan awal mula kemampuan bicara bayi. Otak terbagi menjadi dua belahan: belahan kiri mengontrol fungsi bahasa, termasuk bahasa lisan dan tulisan, dan belahan kanan bertanggung jawab atas pengenalan gambar dan bentuk visual. Seorang bayi mulai berbicara sebelum lahir, belajar bahasa melalui kata-kata dan ucapan dari ibu mereka. Setelah lahir, mereka menggunakan tangisan, ocehan, gerak tubuh, dan ekspresi emosional. Bayi kemudian harus melalui tiga tahap: pengucapan, pembentukan kosakata, dan pembentukan kalimat.

**Kata Kunci:** komunikasi bahasa; otak; hemisphere; tangisan; babbling; gerak tubuh.

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## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is the activity to make meaningful sounds which aiming at to convey a message to other people (Etikawati, 2020). Speaking cannot be separated from baby's cognitive and social development. A baby also learns that speaking has several functions, namely to get something desired, to build relationships with other people such as greetings, express feelings and to influence other people's actions. Further, it is said that there are some stages which a baby goes through to the beginning of speaking, namely; awareness of connectedness with other people, pre-talk and reciprocal interaction, babbling and recognizing conversational patterns, language motivating and the emergence of speech (Etikawati, 2020)

A baby's language development is an individual process and can be influenced by various factors, including the environment, stimulation, and genetic factors. Some previous researchers have focused on the beginning of human ability to speak. Ikhsania (2022) explained that, ideally at the age of 12-18 months a baby should be able to speak 20 words or more. The baby at this age should also be able to say simple, meaningful words, for example, "Mama" and "Papa" to call their parents. When the baby enters two years old, he can talk to express his needs and understand a few simple words. Meanwhile, the answer regarding the latest age at which baby can speak fluently and understand simple conversations is at the age of 3 years. Etikawati (2020) said that a baby at 4 to 5 months old, he begins to observe the mouth movements of adults and move his lips and tongue as if trying to imitate the adults. Then, at around 6 months of age, baby starts babbling. The next researcher was Wardhana (2013) has conducted her study to a child named Agus. At 0-3 years old, Agus can start saying the words ma..ma..-[ma] [ma], pa..pa..- [pa] [pa] and bu..bu..-[ma'am] [ma'am]. Her study also explained that Agus has started to be able to pronounce words or compose sentences, even though they are still not correct.

Fajar and Aminulloh (2023) also conducted a study related to the human ability to speak. He concludes that the ability to communicate in humans basically involves a number of important aspects in humans, which develop gradually, starting from the most fundamental aspects, namely genetic aspects, to the highest aspects, namely aspects of nurture and learning.

Based on the description that writer has described above, then the purposes of this writing is to describe the structure of the human brain and when the beginning of a baby begins to be able to speak.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The meaning of Philosophy**

Philosophy is a science that is extensive, meaning that it is closely related to our daily lives. In fact, it can be said that philosophy is the driving force of our daily lives as individuals and as collective human beings in the form of a society or nation (Mariyah et.al. 2021). Philosophy also means as free thinking, that is, radical and located on the plane of meaning (Asy'ari, 2001:1). Free means that nothing prevents the mind from working. The working of the mind is in the brain, therefore no power, neither king nor state ruler, can prevent someone from thinking, let alone regulate or uniform it. Even if someone is in prison, as long as he is healthy he can still work with his mind. Freedom also means being able to choose anything to think about, there is nothing forbidden to think about, everything depends on a person's choice and ability to think about it. He can think about his life on earth in various aspects, and he can also think about his life after death. If there are boundaries then the boundaries are internal, namely the choice of the object of thought so that it becomes a boundary for the object or internal way of working itself which concerns the ways and methods adopted.

Then Suriasumantri (2005:20) explains that "a person who philosophizes can be likened to someone who stands on earth and looks up to the stars. He wants to know his essence in the galactic universe. "A person who philosophizes can also be compared to "A person who stands on a high peak, looking down at the canyon and valley below. He wants to perceive his presence with the universe he gazes at." He explained more clearly that people who were philosophizing themselves felt that they were not satisfied enough to know science only from the perspective of science itself, for this reason he wanted to see the nature of science in the constellation of its relationship with other science, such as science and morals, science and religion. He wants to know for sure that knowledge brings him happiness.

### **The meaning of language**

Language is an important medium in human life. Language can be called the essence of social phenomena. The use of language can show a representation of someone's experience. On the other hand, this experience also shapes a person's language model. Language is also a system, means that it is same as other systems, which are at the same time systematic and systemic. So language is not a single system but it is built by a number of subsystems namely, phonology, syntax and lexicon subsystems. This language system is a symbol system, the same as the traffic symbol system or other symbol systems. It's just that this language symbol system is in the form of sounds, not images or other signs, and these sounds are language sounds produced by the human speech apparatus.

Chaer (2003:30) explains that the language symbol system is arbitrary, meaning that the symbols in the form of sounds do not have an obligatory relationship with the concept that they symbolize. The language process starts from semantic encoding, grammatical encoding, phonological encoding which continues with phonological decoding, grammatical decoding and ending with semantic decoding. The processes of semantic encoding and grammatical encoding occur in the speaker's brain. Meanwhile the process of phonological encoding starts in the speaker's brain and it is carried out by the speech apparatus in the speaker's oral cavity. Then, phonological decoding starts from the listener's ear and continues into the listener's brain, followed by grammatical decoding and ending with semantic decoding. If the physiological organs of the speaker and listener are in a normal healthy condition, then the semantic message sent by the speaker can be received well by the listener's brain. This situation indicates that the language process is going well.

The language process is two-way, that is, it goes back and forth between speaker and listener. It means that a speaker can quickly change into a listener, and conversely a listener can quickly change into a speaker. All of these processes are controlled by the brain, which is a tool that regulates and controls the movement of all human activities, including language activities.

## **The meaning of Philosophy of Language**

Philosophy of language is a conceptual investigation and philosophical study into the nature of language and its meaning, the use of language, and the theoretical concepts and relationships that define meaning in language and its relationship to reality. The Philosophy of language is basically a science that was developed recently since the 20th century after the emergence of modern linguistics which was pioneered by Mongin Ferdinand de Saussure. The philosophy of language itself is closely related because its existence reveals the discussion of the universe, so that philosophy and language can be combined to become a philosophy of language (Sunardi in Labib R. M. 2022).

Thus, the presence of philosophy of language can be said to be something new, because it emerged at the same time as the philosophy of the 20th century which was logocentric. Verhaar shows that there are two kinds of the philosophy of language, namely philosophy about language and philosophy based on language. Verhaar provides two definitions of "language" which are used as starting points for philosophizing, namely language which is interpreted as exclusive and language which is interpreted as inclusive. Language in an exclusive sense is a description that can be used as a general introductory guide to the school of "analytic philosophy" which was born in England, meanwhile, language that is defined as "inclusive" is language intended for the hermeneutic school (Singgih, 2024)

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Brain Structure, Growth and Function**

The brain is a component in the human nerves system. The brain is inside the skull. The brain of a baby when they are just born weighs approximately only 40% of the weight of an adult human brain (Chaer, 2003: 116). In the human brain there are parts related to hearing, speech, controlling speech organs and so on. However, in general, the structure of the human brain is divided into two hemispheres, namely the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere, both of which have different functions (Badib, 2006:2). In more detail, he explained that the left hemisphere controls language functions, including spoken and written language, and understanding verbal information. On the one hand, the right

hemisphere is unable to produce language or understand abstract words, so the function of the right hemisphere is related to image recognition, understanding and studying visual forms. Agreeing with Badib, Chaer (2003:120) explains that the function of the right hemisphere is related to emotions, songs, both emotional and verbal signals.

The complete differences in function between the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere can be seen in the following Figure 1, which is adapted from Simanjutak in Chaer (2003: 121).

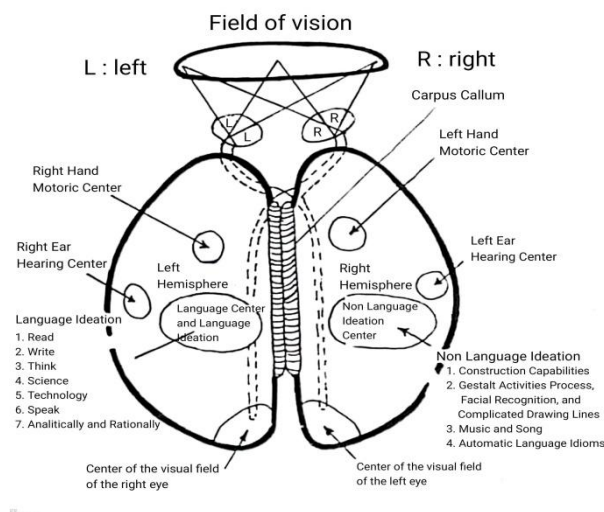


Figure 1. *Left and Right Brain Hemispheres*

Based on the Figure 1 above, it can be seen that language skills, both verbal and written, are found in the left hemisphere.

William Sears, M.D, an expert in the field of pediatric medicine said that a person's intelligence is shaped by experience and heredity. However, according to him, intelligence itself does not guarantee success. In fact, what is most important is what children do with the intelligence they were born with. Meanwhile, Tony Buzan has concluded that parenting is the main factor that determines the development (or not development) of a child's hidden potential. ([http://longbakri.blogspot.com/2007\\_08\\_01\\_archive.html](http://longbakri.blogspot.com/2007_08_01_archive.html)).

### **Brain Growth**

Badib (1998:38) explains that the weight of a normal adult human brain ranges between 1000 and 2000 grams with an average of around 1330 grams,

where the brain consists of 10,000 million neurons which grow rapidly in early pregnancy with a growth rate of around two and a half million per minute.

The Figure 2 as follows shows the development of the brain cells of a newborn baby up to the age of fifteen days (Jensen, 1995:245).

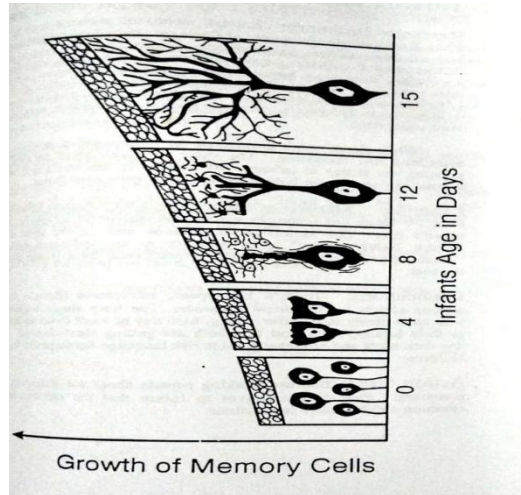


Figure 2. *The Development of baby's brain cells in days*

Based on the Figure 2, it can be understood that humans are biologically destined to develop their brains and abilities quickly. In a short time, the human brain has developed to be perfection.

Kent and Miolo in Dardjowidjojo (2008:268) explain that children actually start speaking before they are born, meaning when they are still in fetal form. According to him, the child was exposed to human language through the intrauterine canal when he was still a fetus. The words from his mother that he hears every day are biologically "entered" and "implanted" in the fetus. When the fetus is born into the world, it is closer to its mother than its father. This has been proven, if the baby cries then he will stop if his mother holds him. This indicates that the baby has known his mother through the words his mother said that he heard since he was in the womb.

Apart from that, a baby really needs love during the period of brain development. Research shows that without love, the baby will die slowly. Affection causes the brain and body systems to open up, function well, accept, explore and develop. Information is brain food. The baby's brain will grow and develop continuously to form an increasingly complex network with the nerve connections it already has. Mothers are the first teachers, and primary caregivers

of our baby. Therefore, the influence of a mother in inputting and answering various questions and providing information to children plays a very important role in helping to make children smarter. Always talk to the baby because the baby responds to our conversation. Look him in the eye, imitate his voice, call his name, and use simple language. Move your body so that the atmosphere becomes lively. Ask questions, as this may elicit a response. Tell him about something, sing when putting to sleep, bathing or during other activities.

### **Brain Function**

As described by Hurlock (1980: 82), the first task in communicating with other people is to understand what other people say. In the child's developmental stage, he is better able to understand what other people are saying rather than expressing his own thoughts and feelings in words, where this appears more clearly in the first years of infancy. In the early development of spoken language, baby convey the contents of their thoughts and feelings through crying and babbling (also read Ahmadi, 2005:95). The baby will cry or even scream if he feels unhappy or sick and he will babble or grope if he feels happy and safe. Even, when we pay attention, the baby's babbling becomes clearer and clearer over time, and the baby will slowly be able to imitate the sounds he hears.

The speaker's facial expressions, tone of voice and hand signals will help the baby to understand what is being said to him. Feelings of joy, anger and fear can be understood from the age of three months. Meanwhile, research conducted by Kuhl at the University of Washington in Seattle in Jensen (1995:242) proved that baby at the age of six months can recognize sounds and differentiate between up to 150 human speech sounds. This shows that the baby is experiencing rapid development in learning and acquiring language.

In the pattern of learning to speak there are four forms of pre-speech, namely; crying, babbling, gesturing and expressing emotions. The first form is Crying. Crying is very common during the first months. As previously explained, a baby's crying is a form of communication between the baby and the other world when he feels unhappy or sick. Displeased perhaps because of thirst, hunger and so on, or sick because of feeling cold, hot or something else. As stated



by Ostwald and Peizman (1974: 230) that "crying is one of the ways baby communicates with the world in general." Even though people around him do not always correctly interpret what the baby is trying to convey. Baby's crying also indicates that the baby is trying to communicate, because it can be said here that a baby's cry is the baby's first social action. This indicates a transition on the part of the baby, from being dependent on the mother to being able to relate to the outside world.

The second form of pre-talk is babbling. As the sound mechanism develops, baby can make a number of explosive sounds, some of which are suppressed and eventually develop into babbling. And in time some of these explosive sounds will form the basis of real speech. It was explained by Hurlock (1980: 84) that at the age of six months most baby can combine certain vowel sounds with consonant sounds such as, "ma ma", "da da", and "na na". This babbling activity begins in the second or third month and reaches its peak when the baby is eight months old. The next form of communication used by baby is gestures. A baby uses gestures as a substitute for speech, and not as a complement to speech as adults do. Even though baby can already say a few words, many babies continue to use gestures combined with words, for example a baby stretches out and smiles, meaning he wants to convey a message and the idea that he wants to be held. Then, if he pushes the plate with rice on it and says "No" it means he doesn't want to eat. The fourth form of communication is the form of emotional expression. Hurlock (1980:85) explains that emotional expression is the most effective form of pre-speech communication among other forms of communication. For example, if he feels happy, he will tend to calm his body, smile and make sounds such as laughter. Emotional expressions are also a form of pre-speech communication whose meaning is more easily understood by other people, and vice versa, baby will more easily accept and understand the meaning of emotional expressions from other people.

### **Stages of Learning to Talk to Baby**

#### **Pronunciation**

The way baby learns to pronounce words is partly through trial and error, especially by imitating the words of adults who are nearby. At this stage, baby

has difficulty pronouncing consonants and mixtures of consonants rather than pronouncing vowels and diphthongs. At this stage, much of the baby's speech cannot be understood until the baby is eighteen months old.

### **Building Vocabulary**

At this stage the baby begins to learn to say the names of people and objects around him, starting from those closest first. This is then followed by expressing types of verbs such as the words "give, take, eat, drink", followed by expressing types of adjectives such as the words "hot, sweet, spicy". In general, at this stage the baby is not yet able to express connecting words and pronouns. However, the baby's vocabulary will gradually increase as he gets older.

### **Sentence**

Usually the baby is able to express his first "sentence" when he is between the ages of twelve and eighteen months. The form of the sentence expressed usually consists of one word accompanied by a sign. Gradually the words will be put together into sentences, however at this stage the baby still uses lots of signs until he enters childhood.

### **Speech Development in Early Childhood**

When the children are two years old, the forms of pre-speech communication that were so useful in infancy have been largely abandoned by this time. The children no longer babbled and their crying had greatly reduced. The use of gestures at this time was primarily as a complement to speech-to emphasize the meaning of the words spoken-and not as a substitute for speech. At this time, children continue to learn to communicate with others with emotional expressions that are overall more socially acceptable and are no longer considered a form of pre-speech in infancy.

During this time, children have a strong desire to learn to speak. Two reasons underlie why this happens, namely, first, learning to speak is the main means of socialization. Children who communicate more easily with peers will find it easier to make social contacts and be more easily accepted as group members than children whose communication skills are limited. Children who take part in pre-school activities will experience obstacles both socially and

educationally, unless they are as articulate as their classmates. The second reason is that learning to speak is a means of gaining independence, for this reason children who cannot express their wants and needs or who cannot try to be understood by others tend to be treated as baby and fail to achieve the desired independence. Generally at this time, children have difficulty pronouncing certain sounds and sound combinations, such as the consonants "z, w, d, s, and g" and consonant letter combinations such as st, str, dr, and fl." To help children pronounce words fluently, it is recommended that children listen to the radio or watch TV at this time.

Children's vocabulary development at this time includes general words such as "good and bad," "give and take" and also words with special uses such as numbers and names of colors. At this time, children are starting to be able to form simple sentences which usually consist of three or four words, however many of these sentences are incomplete. Usually sentences consist mostly of nouns and less verbs, prepositions and conjunctions. Then, after a child is three years old, he is generally able to form sentences consisting of six to eight words. It is described as in the Figure 3 as follows:

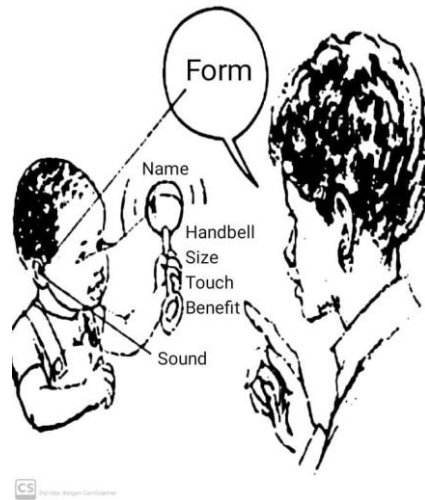


Figure 3. *Development of the baby's ability to speak*

Based on the figure 3 above, it can be understood that, at this stage the baby learns to associate meaning with objects, and then words become symbols or names for objects. Then the factors that influence a child's speaking quantity include: intelligence factors, type of discipline, child's sequential position, family

size, family socio-economic status, racial status, second language, and sex role classification.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion above, then the writer comes to conclusion that in the human brain there are parts related to hearing, speech, controlling speech organs and so on. However, in general, the structure of the human brain is divided into two hemispheres, namely the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere, both of which have different functions, where the left hemisphere controls language functions, including spoken and written language, and understanding verbal information. Meanwhile, the function of the right hemisphere is related to image recognition, understanding and studying visual forms. Human (read babies) actually begin to speak before they are born, namely when they are still fetuses, meaning that when they are still in the mother's womb. They are able to learn language through words and utterances from their mother. The forms of language communication used by baby after he was born include crying, babbling, gestures and emotional expressions. The way baby learns to pronounce words is mostly. Then, there are three stages that baby must go through when they want to learn to say something, namely: pronunciation, building vocabulary and sentence.

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