Discourse on the Extended Meaning of *Shahada*: A Cognitive-Pragmatic Approach

Hasanuddin Chaer,* Ahmad Sirulhaq,** Abdul Rasyad*** & Djamil Abdurachman Malik****

Abstract

The existence of God is an extraordinary occurrence that presents a challenge for the limited human intellect to comprehend. Hence, arriving at that conviction necessitates unwavering trust and belief. In Islam, the affirmation of this conviction must be expressed in two lines known as the shahada. In addition to this paranormal event, the language structure pertaining to the two words found in the shahada includes the term أشهد (*ashhadu*), which translates as 'I testify'. This statement assumes that the person testifying had prior knowledge of God's existence, despite the fact that it is supernatural and challenging to ascertain. Why is the word أشهد (*ashhadu*) included in both sentences of the shahada? This essay seeks to examine the semantic significance of the linguistic expression realised in the proclamation of the two sentences of the shahada, specifically focusing on the word أشهد (*ashhadu*). This analysis will be conducted within a cognitive-pragmatic or sociocognitive framework. Typically, the cognitive pragmatics method considers not just the semantic meaning of a statement but also the pragmatic meaning of an utterance. During a speech or communication event, both of these meanings are consistently present as an individual intellectually constructs a representation of the context and scenario. The context encompasses not just tangible objects but also intangible aspects, for instance psychological and cognitive factors, including beliefs and knowledge. The findings obtained by this study indicate that the sentence أشهد (*ashhadu*), in addition to its semantic meaning of 'I testify', also possesses a pragmatic-psychological significance in the form of a linguistic texture (*zauqullughoh*) that may be experienced by the speaker. This may possibly offer psychological encouragement to individuals when they begin to self-explore or engage with their originator.

Keywords: language, acquisition, *shahada*, creed, religion

Introduction

Religion relies significantly on faith as a fundamental cornerstone. Every single religion's belief in the supernatural is a fundamental assumption underlying all religious teachings. In Islam, the belief in the supernatural is encompassed by the Six Pillars of Faith. These pillars include belief in Allah, his angels, the holy books, the Messengers (prophets), the Last Day and belief in predestination (destiny) and the numerous levels of existence. Nevertheless, throughout Islam, an individual is deemed to adhere to the faith not only by accepting the six fundamental tenets, but they must also publicly affirm their belief through a sacred declaration, referred to as the shahada. The proclamation serves as a validation that confirms the individual's legal conversion to Islam, whether through spiritual or worldly means, both in terms of societal acceptance and personal conviction. Hence, the question arises as to why individuals should proclaim their belief and align themselves with specific religions by way of the *shahada*, which conveys the notion of perceiving God directly. While God remains invisible, believers confidently express their knowledge and bear witness through the phrase "I testify." Rationally or based on sound judgment, one might be confident in their existing knowledge. It is in accordance with the traditional theory of knowledge, which speculates that knowledge is defined as a "justified true belief." While knowledge and faith are not always the same, faith continuously requires knowledge. In the field of linguistics, varying levels of knowledge exist that can be conveyed by different markers or concepts known as modalities, including terms such as "maybe," "seems," "could" and others. Nevertheless, when an individual utters the phrase "I testify," it signifies a state of unwavering conviction and absolute certainty. Thus, it may be asserted that an individual who has uttered the two lines of the shahada to

---

* Hasanuddin Chaer, Department of Language and Arts, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Email: hasanuddin_chaer@unram.ac.id.
** Ahmad Sirulhaq (corresponding author), Department of Language and Arts, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Email: ahmad_haq@unram.ac.id.
*** Abdul Rasyad, Department of History Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics, Universitas Hamzanwadi, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Email: rasyad.iis@hamzanwadi.ac.id.
**** Djamil Abdurachman Malik, Independent Researcher at Platonic Law Firm, Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Email: platonic.mataram@gmail.com.

proclaim their belief possesses unwavering faith, devoid of any uncertainty or hesitation. The term " أشهد" (ashhadu) in both sentences of the shahada is commonly understood to imply 'testimony' or 'I testify'. The term "أشهد " (ashhadu) holds substantial religious significance for Muslims and is considered a fundamental concept that requires a profound comprehension. By closely examining the language elements within, students, Qur'an researchers or truth-seekers might unearth and acknowledge their inherent being as individuals in the presence of God. Thus, individuals can experience a sense of tranquillity by immersing themselves in the realm of theology.

While linguistics and Qur'an studies are distinct fields of study, linguistics can be utilised to explain religious phenomena conveyed in the Qur'an. Linguistics investigates the fields of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Conversely, Islamic jurists regard the Qur'an as a sacred religious text. It explores several aspects pertaining to existence, encompassing the preservation of faith, safeguarding one's spiritual essence, enhancing rationality and cognition, upholding dignity, and more. These concepts form the fundamental foundation of religion.[1] Simultaneously, these perceptions are inherently connected to linguistic concepts as they are articulated in the specific form of natural language, specifically Arabic. A pragmatic-cognitive or sociocognitive approach is a discipline in linguistics that can be employed to clarify the profound meaning found within the verses of the Qur'an. Pragmatic-cognitive or sociocognitive studies examine the speaker's perspective on the meaning of a speech within a suitable and pertinent context. Thus, the sacred phrase "*Ashhadu alla ilaha illallah-Wa ashhadu Anna Muhammad Rasulullah*" is expressed. The statement 'I testify that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad as His Messenger' can be further expanded upon. This phenomenon is intrinsically associated with the belief system, where those who have recited the shahada experience not only a psychological state of absolute certainty, known as *haqqul yaqin*, but also obtain immense satisfaction and tranquillity from their faith, which permeates their daily lives.

Within the text of the Qur'an, Allah has explicitly or implicitly instructed Muslim intellectuals or scholars to comprehend the significance and circumstances surrounding these sacred statements. In Surah Al-Imran, verse 18 of the Qur'an, it is declared that Allah, the Almighty God, has proclaimed His own divinity. This declaration is supported by the angels and those who possess understanding. The term "shahada" is derived from the Arabic verb "*shahida*" (شهد), which conveys the concept of acquiring knowledge and comprehending the significance of the shahada without any doubt or hesitation. This is analogous to someone who genuinely comprehends by way of internal validation. The essence of the *shahada* lies in consolidating a Muslim's conviction in the monotheistic nature of Allah and acknowledging that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) is his chosen messenger. The two-sentence shahada statement is a linguistic term that contains a hidden message known only to Allah and His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him). *Ashhadu's* remark 'I testify' raises several crucial questions: What is the purpose of testifying? What specific events or phenomena are we observing? To whom do we provide our testimony? Where do these observations occur? From a practical and meaning-based perspective, these problems necessitate logical responses. Thus, believers' testimonies gain credibility and can be rationalised. Hence, this study aims to reveal the contextual significance and psychological mechanisms involved in the utterance of the two phrases of the shahada by employing a pragmatic-cognitive or sociocognitive framework.

Theoretical Framework

In his renowned publication titled: "Language Knowledge: Its Nature, Origin," Chomsky posited that people possess the ability to acquire language and master a set of abstract rules within it.[1] Acquiring a language involves more than just utilising cognitive and emotional faculties; it entails developing the ability to employ logical reasoning to reconstruct the encountered events. The ability mentioned pertains to the comprehension or recognition of language within a preexisting universal framework or the grammar encoded in our brains. This is due to the fact that the linguistic laws are already encoded in our brains. That is also the fundamental principle that forms the logical foundation for comprehending notions concerning morality. Additionally, Chomsky proposed the notion of innate human capacity for language acquisition, suggesting that individuals possess inherent cognitive abilities that enable them

[1] Esen M. Fevzi and Adem Esen (2019), "Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah for Socioeconomic Development Index: A Statistical Approach," in Salman Syed Ali (ed.), *Towards a Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah Index of Socio-Economic Development*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 207-230.
[2] Noam Chomsky (1986), *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin, and Use*, California: Greenwood Publishing Group.

to comprehend and replicate information from birth.[2] From this perspective, it may be contended that all languages share commonalities in terms of their structure and laws, which are rooted in innate cognitive mechanisms present in humans from birth. Linguistically, our genetic organs directly regulate the words we employ when speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Chomsky[3] asserts that language is an inherent concept that humans possess from birth. From this perspective, he explained and proposed a language acquisition hypothesis. According to this view, the process of language acquisition involves individuals identifying and engaging with the inherent concepts and significance specific to the human mind, reflecting its special and exceptional nature. According to Chomsky, human language is a distinctive characteristic that sets us apart from other animals. Chomsky's language theory has the potential to facilitate individual development in the study of language acquisition, which incorporates their psychological and cognitive processes.[4] Chomsky maintains that the presence of a universal language suggests a shared cognitive framework and a collection of cognitive abilities that are common to all of humanity. Chomsky suggests that the cognitive mechanisms implicated in language processing exert an impact on our perception of the world. The underlying cognitive processes that control language influence our understanding and communication of ideas. Hence, language use or structure alterations can indicate adjustments to our comprehension of the world.

In addition to the numerous disagreements that arose at that time, Chomsky's ideas propelled linguistics into a realm that encompassed not only structural aspects but also psychological elements, including psycholinguistics, cognitive-pragmatics and sociocognitive studies. Subsequent fields evolved that served to enhance Chomsky's original theses concerning the psychological aspects of language. Fundamentally, a relationship exists between human cognition of the universe and our linguistic expression. This concept has also sparked a discussion in subsequent studies of semantics and pragmatics. According to specific academics, a statement has two distinct meanings: the semantic aspect and the pragmatic aspect. The semantic aspect refers to what is explicitly stated, while the pragmatic aspect denotes the underlying intention or implied meaning. These two elements are invariably present in every instance of spoken language. These general principles in speech, namely context, relevance, aim and implicature, stem from this practical idea. The study of this is under the purview of the linguistic discipline, specifically in the field of pragmatics. The concepts of semantics and pragmatics in linguistics are inherently intertwined. Basically, the field of pragmatics assumes that there is a pre-existing meaning in the study, but the field of semantics does not always make the same assumption. In pragmatic studies, the interpretation process involves different levels of meaning, specifically semantic meaning and pragmatic meaning. Pragmatic meaning signifies the intentional meaning conveyed by the speaker within a specific context. The context encompasses tangible elements peripheral to the text and the psychological context, including the speaker's objectives, knowledge and beliefs. That is what leads pragmatic-cognitive studies to perceive certain levels in the meaning process. In simple terms, Börjesson[5] describes the relationship between semantics and pragmatics as follows.

---

[3] Noam Chomsky (1967), "Recent Contributions to the Theory of Innate Ideas: Summary of Oral Presentation," *Proceedings of the Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science 1964/1966: In Memory of Norwood Russell Hanson*, Springer Netherlands, pp. 81-90.
[4] Noam Chomsky (2014), *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (No. 11), Cambridge: MIT Press.

[5] Kristin Börjesson (2016), "The Semantics-Pragmatics Interface: The Role of Speaker Intentions and the Nature of Implicit Meaning Aspects," *Langages*, Vol. 201, pp. 15-32.
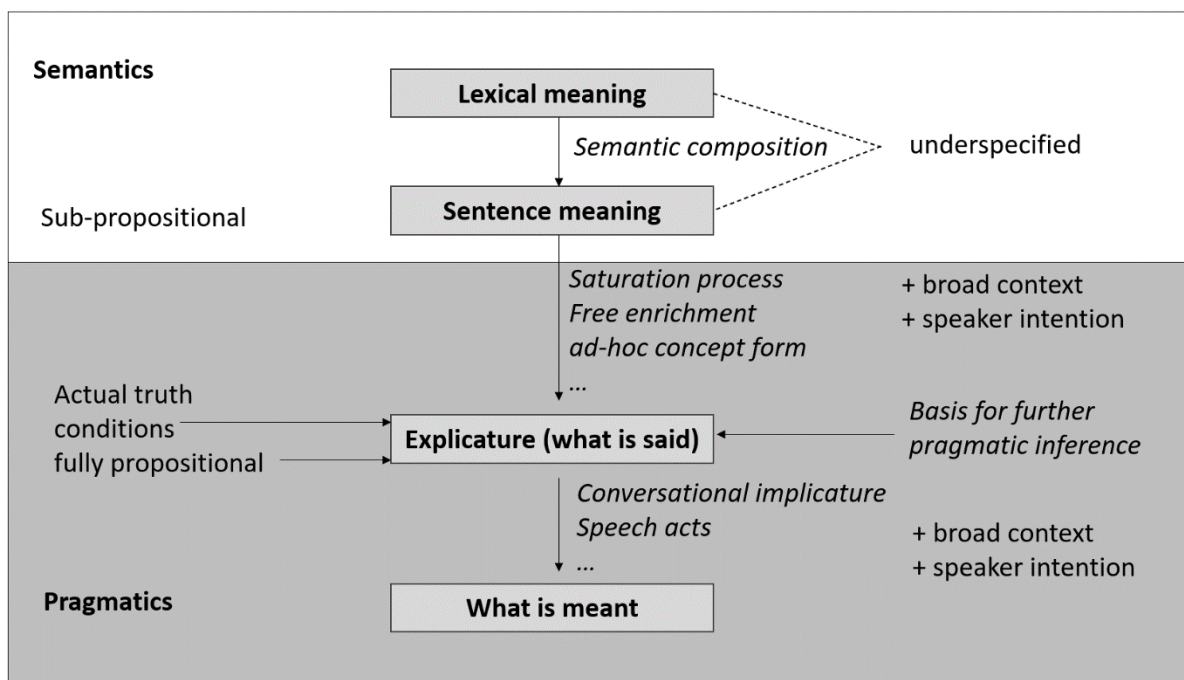
According to sociocognitive theory, context is not external but exists within an individual's cognition.[6] In this scenario, an individual has created a representation of the current state of affairs within a specific communication context and subsequently describes the information communicated based on the developed model. During construction, cognitive variables such as information, beliefs and attitudes are crucial in governing actions and utterances. According to van Dijk,[7] the context model governs the pragmatic elements of a statement, while the situation model governs the semantic elements of a statement. Both characteristics are consistently present concurrently in every statement. Chomsky's theory of language acquisition proposes that people possess innate genetic mechanisms that enable them to acquire the ability to talk, suggesting a connection with the current context. This device is accommodated within the human brain. Simultaneously, sociocognitive theory proposes the existence of a cognitive system that governs an individual's verbal communication. One of these cognitive systems is a system of beliefs. The belief system is intricately governed by a sophisticated process within the human brain. Hence, this theory is intriguing to employ in analysing the dynamics of religious communication scenarios, particularly in relation to the language articulation of the two phrases contained within the shahada.

Methodology

This article analyses the composition of the Islamic doctrine, which serves as the cornerstone of religious conviction. This study investigates this subject via the lens of semantics, pragmatic cognition and sociocognition. This methodology operates under the assumption that an utterance or statement possesses two distinct levels of interpretation: semantic and pragmatic. The pragmatic level describes aspects of the meaning of the utterance that are contingent on the speaker's intentions and intentions in the relevant context, whereas the semantic level describes the semantic meaning of the utterance. Particularly pertinent in this instance is the psychological context existing within the speaker, including knowledge, beliefs, intentions and tangible properties. In accordance with this methodology, we undertake the following: (1) meticulously scrutinise the vocabulary employed in the *shahada*; (2) faithfully translate the vocabulary in the *shahada* according to its definition in the dictionary; (3) conduct a comparative analysis of the meaning of the vocabulary in the *shahada* in relation to other word structures; and (4) interpret and explicate the significance of the creed's sentence structure by considering the speaker's intentions within a pertinent context. Sociocognitive understanding is utilised

---

[6] Teun A. Van Dijk (2014), *Discourse and Knowledge: A Sociocognitive Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[7] Teun A. Van Dijk (2001), "Multidisciplinary CDA: A Plea for Diversity," in R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London: Sage Publication.

to interpret the appropriate context in this instance, which pertains to the psychological constructs associated with the communication situation.

The Meaning of the Word Shahada in Linguistic Structure

The declaration of Islamic faith is based on the concept of shahada (two testimonies), which consists of two linguistic structures that convey the testimony of oneself and Allah via sacred linguistic practices and expressions. This custom is commonly observed during worship at a place of worship and when praying. The term "creed" refers to the act of perceiving, uncovering and understanding the fundamental nature of God's existence within the *qolbu mu'min baitullah'*, which is the believer's spiritually perceptible heart. Semantic phenomena within this linguistic structure are derived from our conceptual discoveries and experiences; these phenomena psychologically characterise the language experiences of individuals.[8] Hence, the linguistic configuration of the two sentences comprising the shahada intimates that the speaker is imagining and experiencing these sentences during an act of worship concerning Allah. The encounter entails an elevated state of introspection, which is directly observed by means of spiritual phenomena. By stating ashhadu in his testimony, an individual assumes to have seen a "infinite being" (al-Wujudul Mutlaq). Simultaneously, he demonstrates that he is an extremely limited and feeble being (al-Wujudul Muqayyad). This concept emphasises the significance of interpretation (ta'wil) in explaining the duality of the exoteric and esoteric connotations associated with the term 'shahada'.[9] Within this framework, each word carries nuanced indications regarding our nature and cognitive processes as human beings in the concept of thinking.[10] By applying the analogy to Descartes' Cogito Ergo Sum ('I think, therefore I exist'), one could understand ashhadu ('I see, therefore I exist'). Although these two statements (Cogito Ergo Sum and ashhadu) appear similar at first sight, they are pragmatically and cognitively incomparable. This is due to the fact that the structure of the word *shahada* encompasses the subjective experience of a servant who is witnessing the existence of Allah within themselves while making a vow or promise, thereby conveying the meaning of *zauqullughoh* (linguistic texture). In contrast, Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* remains limited to intellectual speculation, as it incorporates presuppositions and testimonies concerning the nature of existence. Likewise, Descartes' assertions remained confined to the realm of intellectual illusion and fantasy, failing to penetrate the depths of the mind.

Specifically, the distinction between cogito ergo sum and the creed is determined by the degree of belief in the creed. In the Rektha Dictionary, the word "shahada" is defined as having the following semantic connotations: (1) "syahida," which signifies to prove, see, be present, or know; (2) "syahida bi," which denotes to swear or promise; and (3) "*syahida lahu bi*," which means to vow, declare, acknowledge or witness the process of the second life (resurrection) subsequent to one's life in this world. Thus, from a sociocognitive perspective, the statement of an individual who has pledged allegiance or an agreement in two sentences of the shahada contains a number of pragmatic implications, specifically that he perceives, comprehends and subsequently accepts the assertions that he has made. Therefore, the linguistic structure of the statement "I attest that Allah is the only deity" (*Ashhadu Alla ilaha illallah*) is a structure that is sociocognitively, semantically, and pragmatically (or psychologically) significant. Consequently, it remains pertinent in any context and at any time, as the statement itself incorporates a psychological dimension in the form of belief. This adheres to the pragmatic principle or maxim of relevance. Alternatively, while the statement "I testify, therefore I exist" appears to be structurally consistent with "*cogito ergo sum*," the pragmatic significance of "I testify, therefore I exist" is significantly greater on account of the element of belief.

An individual who has taken an oath or expressed an agreement has initially perceived, then come to believe in that which he has disclosed. Consequently, this understanding and conviction are articulated through the construction of a linguistic framework known as the *shahada*, which states "I attest that Allah is the only deity." From a pragmatic stance, it is impossible for an individual to assert this without a cognitive foundation consisting of prior knowledge and convictions, specifically the understanding that Allah exists and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Consequently, the structure of the shahada

[8] Timothy C. Clausner and William Croft (1999), "Domains and Image Schemas," *Cognitive Linguistics*, Vol. 10, pp. 1-31.

[9] Achmad Khudori Soleh and Erik Sabti Rahmawati (2023), "The Strength of Ibn Rushd's Integration of Religion and Philosophy: An Islamic Historical Discourse," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 173-187.

[10] Ryan L. Boyd and H. Andrew Schwartz (2021), "Natural Language Analysis and the Psychology of Verbal Behaviour: The Past, Present, and Future States of the Field," *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, Vol. 40, No. 1, pp. 21-41.

implies not only semantic implications but also the presumption that this knowledge and belief pertains to future events: knowledge and belief in the existence of Allah and His Messenger. This attribute renders this assertion continuously applicable within the framework of boundless space and time. Furthermore, this is the reason why the phrase "I testify" (*ashhadu*) remains relevant and satisfies the psychological position of the speaker. The statement "*I testify*" comprises a linguistic texture that evokes profound psychological emotions in the speaker, allowing them to experience it not only from a psychological standpoint but also in an objective sense. Alternatively, the statement does not solely allude to the notion of an inaccessible deity from a semantic perspective. On the contrary, concepts that pertain to objective facts experience a rigorous process of reasoning that encompasses the most profound psychological aspects. To reach this line of thinking, every linguistic texture associated with the psychological aspects of the statement, including but not limited to disappointment, pain, anxiety and jealousy, is either reintroduced or assimilated into the sacred linguistic dimension of the creed. In this situation, each spoken word, sentence and language possesses its own vitality.

In this case, one could contend that an individual is precluded from providing testimony or swearing to his belief in the two-sentence statement of the shahada if it is not grounded in objective facts, feelings or personal experience, or if he does not believe that objective facts exist concerning what he has not observed or experienced. Nevertheless, additional theological phenomena bolster the existence of the linguistic texture that is perceptible in the linguistic structure of the two principle sentences. The term "*shahada*" (two testimonies) is interpreted in this context as a semantic exchange between two eminent speakers, specifically Allah and His Messenger; it signifies an inner dialogue that is strongly associated with particular aspirations and values.[11] Basically, psychological added value results from the assumption that there are two great speakers, one between Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) and the other between God and an individual. This linguistic structure, represented by the phrase "*Ashhadu alla ilaha illallah, Wa ashhadu anna Muhammad Rasulullah,*" (I attest that Allah alone is the deity I hold in high regard and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah), ensures that a servant will not question the veracity of his statements.

Presuppositions of this nature are merely expressions of pragmatic models of logic or significance.[12] Consequently, the referential meaning of the word "*ashhadu*" remains intact. Even when the speaker is alone, or to whomever the individual pledges allegiance (completely confidently), it is continuously present. These assumptions are based on the theological fact witnessed in Islamic teachings that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) declared in his allegiance to Allah. This declaration was reached through a sequence of internal dialogue or esoteric dialogue. Initially, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) attested to the singular existence of God Almighty in every situation. Furthermore, Allah's covenant and oath of allegiance to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as His preferred human being are concurrent. This later served as the foundation for the two sentences comprising the shahada, commonly referred to as the apostle's creed and the monotheism creed. Conversely, the linguistic presumption arising from this theological fact demands the existence of a genuine and robust interlocutory connection between Allah and Muhammad, or between Allah and his servant. This generates a force that strengthens an individual's faith in the absolute existence of God's presence.

Moreover, from a practical perspective, it is recognised that a remark, particularly one related to evidence, has a perlocutionary impact. Briefly, when a person utters the two phrases in the shahada, they engage in a verbal act of agreement. Hence, the remark has ramifications for additional behaviours endorsed by the individual expressing the statement. These actions are also motivated and guided by a deeper religious component. Based on this premise, various verbal expressions, such as divine orders and advise, are received and executed with great discernment, specifically in perceiving the nuances and characteristics of language, also known as zauqullughoh.[13] In this situation, the psychological phenomenon is characterised by the profound understanding and dependence on an individual who utters the two phrases of the shahada. According to Peirce, the meaning of words and utterances consists of multiple psychological dimensions, including the content within the linguistic sign or text.[14]

[11] Juan C. Aceros (2012), "Social Construction and Relationalism: A Conversation with Kenneth Gergen," *Universitas Psychologica*, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 1001-1011.

[12] Julia White, Jesse Mu and Noah D. Goodman (2020), "Learning to Refer Informatively by Amortising Pragmatic Reasoning," *Computer Science Computation and Language*, https://arxiv.org/pdf/2006.00418.pdf.

[13] Patricia A. Duff (2014), "Case Study Research on Language Learning and Use," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 34, pp. 233-255.

[14] John Dewey (1946). "Peirce's Theory of Linguistic Signs, Thought, and Meaning," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 43, No. 4, pp. 85-95.

When examined on a deeper level, ontologically, the declaration of faith can be seen as both a psychological and spiritual entity. This statement has existed or been acquired since our prenatal stage. Therefore, humankind consistently questions and seeks the ultimate Entity that governs the cosmos. The study into the existence of this ultimate entity is an age-old question that has captivated humanity since ancient times. Consequently, it is implausible for God to withhold sensory faculties from humans in their pursuit of finding God, notwithstanding the existence of atheists who do not believe in God. An atheist is an individual who does not engage in introspection or exploration of the spiritual aspects inherent within oneself, as bestowed by a higher power. It terminates solely at the mind. In effect, additional moral standards, for instance the notions of virtue, vice and fairness, are not exclusively guided by rationality, but rather influenced by deeply ingrained ideals within the psyche. In other words, there is a connection between the study of language (notably pragmatic-cognitive aspects) and religion when it comes to gaining a comprehensive understanding of the meaning and psychological aspects of oaths and vows (known as shahada) made to Allah. (For additional information, refer to the works of Forrester.[15]

The aforementioned comprehension is consistent with the perspectives of prominent Islamic scholars worldwide. For instance, al-Ghazali maintains that the term "shahada" signifies "cognisance." In this instance, we ascertain the existence of Allah by the holy hermeneutics of the term 'shahada'. Al-Ghazali posits that knowledge regarding the existence of Allah can be acquired from three distinct sources of comprehension: the textual evidence found within the universe, the scriptural texts (Qur'an and Hadith), and rational interpretation.[16] In addition, according to al-Ghazali, the spiritual teachings of the faith are profoundly rooted within humanity and can be experienced by individuals who are not governed by their desires. Al-Ghazali also claims that the true meaning of the shahada can only be comprehended by individuals who possess both a virtuous heart and a deep understanding of kashf, which refers to the state of spiritual enlightenment where one is granted by God the ability to perceive what is hidden from others[17] Al-Ghazali asserts that linguistic texts encompass distinct categories and levels of meaning, namely exhibiting exoteric and esoteric dimensions. The two elements mutually enhance each other to convey the profound significance of sacredness.[18] Hence, it may be asserted that the principle unveils God's essence to spiritually inclined individuals by means of nature, as explained by Wahlberg[19] in comparison to Adamson.[20] From a sociocognitive-pragmatic perspective, the psychological aspect of texts extends beyond conventional knowledge stored in the mind, encompassing profound knowledge that is engrained in the human psyche.

More importantly, if a testimony assumes the presence of two individuals who make promises or provide evidence for the objective existence of God, how can this phenomenon be rationalized? What specific event or occurrence was observed? This question pertains to a crucial and fundamental subject. Simultaneously, the response to the inquiry should not be in conflict with logic. Hence, the application of pragmatic-cognitive reasoning might elucidate this phenomenon. By employing pragmatic-cognitive reasoning, we can seek more accurate answers by examining the boundaries of semantic and structural meaning.[21] In this instance, we might infer that the scientific method operates under the same modus operandi or principle. It is well recognised that every scientific field has its own set of concepts, methods and theories. This includes scientific concepts and procedures that are used to interpret religious, legal and cultural writings.[22] As a case in point, in physics and chemistry, conducting research without a sterile and clean microscope might hinder one's ability to observe and obtain essential information. If

[15] Duncan B. Forrester (2017), "Theology as Queen or Servant," in Martyn Percy and Stephen Lowe (eds.), *The Character of Wisdom*, London: Routledge.

[16] Muhammad Nasri Hassan Basri, Mohd Hasrul Shuhari, and Mohd Fauzi Hamat (2019), "Al-Ghazali's Thought on the Existence of Allah Swt in Ihya''Ulum Al-Din," in N. S. Mat Akhir et al. (eds.), *Role(s) and Relevance of Humanities for Sustainable Development, European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Vol. 68, pp. 532-542.

[17] Habib and Moh Habib (2022), "Semiotic-Sufistic Interpretation of Imam Al-Ghazali: Case Study of" Verses of Light" in the Holy Qur'an," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Literature and Muslim Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2.

[18] Drakshan Azam (2019), "Meaning and Principles of al-Ta'wīl in al-Ghazālī's Thought," *Al-Aẓvā,* Vol. 34, No. 51, pp. 55-72.

[19] Mats Wahlberg (2020), "Divine Revelation," *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition), in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/divine-revelation/.

[20] Peter Adamson (2021), "Abu Bakr al-Razi," *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2021 Edition), in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/abu-bakr-al-razi/#ReliProp.

[21] Julian C. Muller (2005), "A Postfoundationalist, HIV-Positive Practical Theology," *Practical Theology in South Africa = Praktiese Teologie in Suid-Afrika*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 72-88.

[22] Ziad M. M. Shehada (2020), "The Islamic Influence on Built Environment in Ancient Islamic Cities: A Descriptive-Analytic Study," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 81-94.

one does not consistently refine their intellect and intuition via a sequence of ongoing scientific investigations, one will be unable to ascertain the contents of the atomic nucleus. According to al-Razi, the process described is an inherent and divine functioning of the soul.[23]

The scientific phenomena pertaining to religion or the cognitive processes involved in belief are undoubtedly applicable in this particular circumstance. Hence, the psychological and semantic symptoms linked to the *ashhadu* statement do not merely arise from unquestioning trust or conviction but sensory experiences encompassing complex internal psychological processes. In this scenario, the person speaking is also the scientific tool used to gain insight. Essentially, the more one strives to enhance their cognitive abilities, the higher the likelihood that they will see the presence of God with clarity in their thoughts. Hence, the term "ashhadu," denoting "I testify," possesses pragmatic coherence. As previously said, people possess inherent innate faculties that need to be further developed to uncover God's presence. Otherwise, how could God materialise in human life or consciousness spanning millennia?

The previously mentioned argument corresponds to Chomsky's theory of language acquisition, which contends that the human brain possesses innate mechanisms that enable the comprehension and utilisation of intricate linguistic comprehension.[24][25][26] Similarly, Grafman's hypothesis regarding the brain's role in religious belief and conduct is in accordance with this idea. He asserts that social cognitive processes have an influence on religious ideas and experiences. Furthermore, he claims that religious cognition can be considered as subcategories or variations of social cognition. Therefore, it is conceivable that they engage similar brain networks that are commonly associated with facilitating human social interactions.[27] The study conducted by Perez-Diaz et al.[28] likewise demonstrates the correlation between the practice of prayer or yoga. It is acknowledged that yoga incorporates religious customs and employs several methods, including prayer, to attain a condition referred to as thoughtless awareness. McNamara et al.[29] investigated the brain activity connected with the practice of prayer in Sahaja Yoga Meditation in order to research the distinct impacts of repeated utterances, occasionally known as "mantra effects." Their research demonstrates a distinct association between the medial prefrontal cortex in the human brain and engagement in religious activities or utterances. The phenomenon of testifying in the utterance *'ashhadu'* is the fundamental aspect of theological teachings in religion, representing the aspiration of the human soul. It is scientifically valid to assert that fundamental linguistic structure of religious teachings is accurate. By employing this respected linguistic framework, a language acquirer can attain an understanding of language by employing the preexisting knowledge and perception within the human brain. This concept is referred to as a 'innate thought' as clarified by the academic, Chomsky.

Conclusion

The word "*ashhadu*" has three semantic meanings: (1) *syahida*, which refers to proving, seeing, being there or knowing; (2) *syahida bi*, which denotes to promise or swear; (3) *syahida lahu bi*, which means to vow, proclaim, acknowledge, or witness the process of the second life (resurrection) after life in this world. From a sociocognitive perspective, the statement of a person who affirms or pledges via the two sentences in the shahada has various pragmatic meanings. These meanings indicate that the person has knowledge, perception and conviction regarding what they have uttered. An individual cannot confidently or willingly affirm their beliefs through a concise utterance of the shahada unless it is supported by verifiable evidence or personal convictions, and unless they acknowledge the existence of objective evidence for aspects they have not personally experienced or witnessed. Nonetheless, the presence of linguistic texture (*zauqullughoh*) in the linguistic structure of the creed's two sentences is

[23] Nora Jacobsen Ben Hammed (2020), "Meno's Paradox and First Principles in Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī," *Oriens*, Vol. 48, No. 3–4, pp. 320-344.

[24] Noam Chomsky (2011), "Language and Other Cognitive Systems. What is Special about Language?," *Language learning and development*, Vol. 7, No. 4, pp. 263-278.

[25] Noam Chomsky (1998), "On the Nature, Use and Acquisition of Language," in *Handbook of Child Language Acquisition*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 33-54

[26] Jan Nuyts (2004), "The Cognitive-Pragmatic Approach," *Intercultural Pragmatics*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 135-149.

[27] Patrick McNamara (2023), "Religion and the Brain: Jordan Grafman's Contributions to Religion and Brain Research and the Special Case of Religious Language," *Cortex*, Vol. 169, pp. 374-379.

[28] Oscar Perez-Diaz et al. (2023), "Monitoring the Neural Activity Associated with Praying in Sahaja Yoga Meditation," *BMC Neuroscience*, Vol. 24, No. 61.

[29] McNamara (2023), "Religion and the Brain," pp. 374-379.

influenced by another psychological context, specifically the belief that the utterance of the creed's two sentences is a manifestation or communication of meaning between two eminent communicators, notably Allah and His Messenger. This concept ensures that that the statement remains pertinent in the infinite scope of space and time, continuously strengthening one's convictions. Ultimately, this experience provides a psychological stimulus for individuals to cultivate their inner being while engaging in the process of self-discovery or encountering their creator. Likewise, the configuration of the term "*ashhadu*" might be seen as a method by which God manifests His essence by means of human cognitive perception. In this scenario, humans have been endowed with genetic implants in their brains, enabling them to comprehend the principles of language and perceive supernatural occurrences. Thus, the name of Allah constantly appears in the minds and history of mankind in unlimited space and time.

References

Aceros, Juan C. (2012), "Social Construction and Relationalism: A Conversation with Kenneth Gergen," *Universitas Psychologica*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1001-1011.

Adamson, Peter (2021), "Abu Bakr al-Razi," *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2021 Edition), in Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/abu-bakr-al-razi/#ReliProp.

Azam, Drakshan (2019), "Meaning and Principles of al-Ta'wīl in al-Ghazālī's Thought," *Al-Aẕvā*, Vol. 34, No. 51, 55-72.

Basri, Muhammad Nasri Hassan., Shuhari, Mohd Hasrul., and Hamat, Mohd Fauzi (2019), "Al-Ghazali's Thought on the Existence of Allah Swt in Ihya''Ulum Al-Din," in Akhir, N. S. Mat., Sulong, J., Harun, M. A. Wan., Muhammad, S., Lin, A. L. Wei., Abdullah, N. F. Low and M. Pourya Asl (eds.), *Role(s) and Relevance of Humanities for Sustainable Development, European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Vol. 68, 532-542.

Börjesson, Kristin (2016), "The Semantics-Pragmatics Interface: The Role of Speaker Intentions and the Nature of Implicit Meaning Aspects," *Langages*, Vol. 201, 15-32.

Boyd, Ryan L. and Schwartz, H. Andrew (2021), "Natural Language Analysis and the Psychology of Verbal Behaviour: The Past, Present, and Future States of the Field," *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 21-41.

Chomsky, Noam (1967), "Recent Contributions to the Theory of Innate Ideas: Summary of Oral Presentation," *Proceedings of the Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science 1964/1966: In Memory of Norwood Russell Hanson*, Springer Netherlands, 81-90.

Chomsky, Noam (1986), *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin, and Use*, California: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Chomsky, Noam (1998), "On the Nature, Use and Acquisition of Language," in *Handbook of Child Language Acquisition*, Leiden: Brill, 33-54.

Chomsky, Noam (2011), "Language and Other Cognitive Systems. What is Special about Language?," *Language learning and development*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 263-278.

Chomsky, Noam (2014), *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (No. 11), Cambridge: MIT Press.

Clausner, Timothy C. and Croft, William (1999), "Domains and Image Schemas," *Cognitive Linguistics*, Vol. 10, 1-31.

Dewey, John (1946). "Peirce's Theory of Linguistic Signs, Thought, and Meaning," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 43, No. 4, 85-95.

Dijk, Teun A. Van (2001), "Multidisciplinary CDA: A Plea for Diversity," in Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London: Sage Publication.

Dijk, Teun A. Van (2014), *Discourse and Knowledge: A Sociocognitive Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Duff, Patricia A. (2014), "Case Study Research on Language Learning and Use," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 34, 233-255.

Fevzi, Esen M. and Esen, Adem (2019). "Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah for Socioeconomic Development Index: A Statistical Approach," in Ali, S. (ed.), *Towards a Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah Index of Socio-Economic Development*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 207-230.

Forrester, Duncan B. (2017), "Theology as Queen or Servant," in Percy, Martyn and Lowe, Stephen (eds.), *The Character of Wisdom*, London: Routledge.

Habib and Habib, Moh (2022), "Semiotic-Sufistic Interpretation of Imam Al-Ghazali: Case Study of" Verses of Light" in the Holy Qur'an," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Literature and Muslim Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2.

Hammed, Nora Jacobsen Ben (2020), "Meno's Paradox and First Principles in Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī," *Oriens*, Vol. 48, No. 3-4, 320-344.

McNamara, Patrick (2023), "Religion and the Brain: Jordan Grafman's Contributions to Religion and Brain Research and the Special Case of Religious Language," *Cortex*, Vol. 169, 374-379.

Muller, Julian C. (2005), "A Postfoundationalist, HIV-Positive Practical Theology," *Practical Theology in South Africa = Praktiese Teologie in Suid-Afrika*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 72-88.

Nuyts, Jan (2004), "The Cognitive-Pragmatic Approach," *Intercultural Pragmatics*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 135-149.

Oscar Perez-Diaz, Alfonso Barrós-Loscertales, Uffe Schjoedt, José L. González-Mora, Katya Rubia, José Suero and Sergio Elías Hernández (2023), "Monitoring the neural activity associated with praying in Sahaja Yoga meditation," *BMC neuroscience*, Vol. 24, No. 61.

Shehada, Ziad M. M. (2020), "The Islamic Influence on Built Environment in Ancient Islamic Cities: A Descriptive-Analytic Study," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 81-94.

Soleh, Achmad Khudori and Rahmawati, Erik Sabti (2023), "The Strength of Ibn Rushd's Integration of Religion and Philosophy: An Islamic Historical Discourse," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 173-187.

Wahlberg, Mats (2020), "Divine Revelation," *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition), in Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/divine-revelation/.

White, Julia, Mu, Jesse, and Goodman, Noah D. (2020), "Learning to refer informatively by amortising pragmatic reasoning," *Computer Science Computation and Language*, https://arxiv.org/pdf/2006.00418.pdf.