*Moes and Tellinghuisen* (2014) delineated five themes related to a biblical view of human nature. I will use Module 28 to exemplify three of these themes. The three themes are: embodiment, relational beings, and meaning seekers.

*We are embodied*; our body is essential to our production and comprehension of language. One example of embodiment is the concept of critical periods- periods of time where the body is most sensitive to a particular kind of environmental influence. Childhood (up to about age 7) seems to be a critical period for language development. In one experiment, Asian immigrants who had lived in the US 10 years took a grammar test; those who had arrived before age 8 had the same understanding of grammar that native speakers did, with a sharp decline in grammar for higher years (Johnson and Newport, 1991 as cited by Myers and Dewal, 2011). Another example of our embodiment is how specific areas in the brain are used for specific aspects of language. Broca’s area and the motor cortex are used for speaking, whereas the auditory cortex and Wernicke’s area are used for hearing. Wernicke’s area is also used for language comprehension: “Damage to Wernicke’s area also disrupts understanding” (Myers and Dewal, 2011 page 376). Even more specifically, different neural networks are activated by different parts of speech (Shapiro et al., 2006; Speer et al., 2009). The neural networks for a person’s native language and their second language are also different (Perani & Abutalebi, 2005). Our bodies affect and are used for our production and comprehension of language, which means that we are embodied.

*We are relational beings*; relationships with other people influence our use of language and language influences our relationships. Different languages bring different perspectives and thus contribute to a different culture. One example of such a language difference is that “English has a richer vocabulary for self-focused emotions such as anger, whereas Japanese has more words for interpersonal emotions such as sympathy” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991 as cited by Myers and Dewal, 2011 page 379). This is related to the fact that America is an individualist society and Japan is a collectivist society (as mentioned in Module 13). This indicates a connection between the language used by people and the relationships those people have with each other. Another example of the connection between language and the way people interact is that bilingual individuals score differently on personality tests depending on which language they take the test in; this is a reflection of the different cultural associations each language has (Chen & Bond, 2010; Dinges & Hull, 1992 as cited by Myers and Dewal, 2011). Language (a way to communicate) is so important to our relationships that without a shared language (for example, in a conversation between a deaf person and a non-signing hearing person) it is difficult to form relationships: “Blindness cuts people off from things. Deafness cuts people off from people” (Helen Keller as cited by Myers and Dewal, 2011 page 375). Without communication (which is what you get from language), relationships are harder to form, and without strong relationships, people are unhappy. There is statistical evidence for this as well: “People with hearing loss, especially those not wearing hearing aids, have reported feeling sadder, being less socially engaged, and more often experiencing others’ irritation” (Chisolm et al., 2007; Fellinger et al., 2007 as cited by Myers and Dewal, 2011 page 375). Language is an important part of our lives, and relationships and language are interconnected, therefore relationships are also an important part of our lives, therefore we are relational beings.

*We are meaning makers*. Language is a way to understand and communicate meaning; we are always seeking and making meaning through the use of language. This is noticeable in terms of language development. Language development starts with receptive language- recognizing and comprehending language. One of the contexts of meaning seeking is “perceiving patterns” (Moes & Tellinghuisen, 2014 page ix). Statistical learning is such an example of perceiving patterns. Infants (7-8 months) are skilled at pattern detection; they notice which syllables and sentence structures are more frequent and pay attention to anything different from the pattern they have detected (Saffran et al., 1996, 2009; Marcus et al., 1999). As children develop, they come to understand the meaning of language and produce meaningful sounds of their own. Infants start with the babbling stage, making meaningless sounds. However, once infants are about 10 months old, their babbling sounds similar to the language they hear (de Boysson-Bardies et al., 1989 as cited by Myers and Dewal, 2011). By about one year old, children can make one word sentences, usually nouns, and can learn to associate specific words with specific meanings. For example, a researcher can train infants to look at a picture of a fish when the researcher uses the word “fish” (Schafer, 2005). By about age two, most children use telegraphic speech - simple two word sentences with a noun-verb form. From that stage on, children “quickly begin uttering longer phrases” (Fromkin & Rodman, 1983 page 372). Children learn to convey meaning through language.

Moes, P. & Tellinghuisen, D. (2014). *Exploring Psychology and Christian Faith: An Introductory Guide.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Myers, D. & DeWall, N. (2015). *Psychology in Modules* (11th ed.). New York: Worth.