Yanṭiq: A proposed concept in philosophy of islamic communication

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to understand the nature of speaking from the perspective of philosophical anthropology and communication ethics, with particular emphasis on its role in reflecting human identity as al-insān al-nāṭiq (the rational and speaking being).

Method – This study employed a reflective-philosophical approach, analyzing classical and contemporary perspectives on language philosophy, communication ethics, and the degradation of speech in the context of social media and instant expression culture. The method consisted of a critical literature review and conceptual analysis rather than empirical sampling.

Result – The results showed that speaking is not merely a biological function or impulsive response but a conscious act that integrates reason, emotion, and moral responsibility. In the modern era, however, speech tends to lose depth, control, and ethical awareness, leading to risks such as misinformation, social fragmentation, and symbolic violence.

Implication – This study suggests the need to revive reflective, ethical, and intentional communication practices to strengthen social harmony, protect human dignity, and ensure that speech continues to serve as a medium of truth and genuine dialogue.

Originality/Value – This research provides a novel reinterpretation of the act of speaking within the framework of Islamicate philosophical anthropology and communication ethics, offering a critical alternative to contemporary communication practices dominated by speed and superficiality.

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Abstrak

Tujuan – Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami sifat berbicara dari perspektif antropologi filosofis dan etika komunikasi, dengan penekanan khusus pada perannya dalam mencerminkan identitas manusia sebagai al-insān al-nāṭiq (makhluk rasional dan berbicara).

Metode – Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan reflektif-filosofis, menganalisis perspektif klasik dan kontemporer tentang filsafat bahasa, etika komunikasi, dan degradasi berbicara dalam konteks media sosial dan budaya ekspresi instan. Metode ini terdiri dari tinjauan literatur kritis dan analisis konseptual, bukan pengambilan sampel empiris.

Hasil – Hasil menunjukkan bahwa berbicara bukan sekadar fungsi biologis atau respons impulsif, melainkan tindakan sadar yang mengintegrasikan akal, emosi, dan tanggung jawab moral. Namun, dalam era modern, ucapan cenderung kehilangan kedalaman, kontrol, dan kesadaran etis, yang berpotensi menimbulkan risiko seperti disinformasi, fragmentasi sosial, dan kekerasan simbolis.

Implikasi – Studi ini menyarankan perlunya menghidupkan kembali praktik komunikasi yang reflektif, etis, dan sengaja untuk memperkuat harmoni sosial, melindungi martabat manusia, dan memastikan bahwa ucapan tetap berfungsi sebagai medium kebenaran dan dialog yang sejati.

Orisinalitas/Nilai – Penelitian ini menawarkan reinterpretasi baru tentang tindakan berbicara dalam kerangka antropologi filosofis Islam dan etika komunikasi, memberikan alternatif kritis terhadap praktik komunikasi kontemporer yang didominasi oleh kecepatan dan kedangkalan.

Introduction

In modern communication, especially online, the prevalence of "meaningless words" and information noise reflects a pursuit of attention over substance, resulting in superficial exchanges and emotional detachment (Kekki, 2024). Simultaneously, digital environments encourage exaggerated emotional responses, as users amplify their feelings to match platform norms, which can distort genuine interaction and foster emotional tension or misunderstanding (103). These trends complicate authentic connection and effective information exchange in contemporary society (Liu, 2023).

On countless digital platforms, speech no longer emerges from deliberate reflection but rather from the release of immediate emotional reactions. This provokes a fundamental question regarding the very meaning of speaking: can it truly be called "speech" if it is nothing more than the emission of sound, devoid of thought and self-restraint? Both classical philosophers and contemporary scholars converge on the understanding that speech is not merely the articulation of sounds, but a conscious act—one that engages reason and gives shape to meaning. (Tomasello, 2019, 115–139) In this context, speaking must be understood as a form of rational communication that distinguishes humans from all other creatures, rather than as an uncontrolled utterance.

The concept of the human as *al-insān al-nāṭiq* within the Islamic philosophical tradition underscores that humanity's very essence as a speaking being (*nāṭiq*) is inseparable from the function of reason. For Ibn Sīnā, the human is described as *nāṭiq* precisely because of the capacity to organise meaning through the medium of language, guided by rational deliberation and ethical awareness. (Nasr, 2013, 44–61) Meanwhile, contemporary philosophy likewise emphasises the centrality of cognitive processes in shaping meaningful speech. Speaking is not a mere reflexive act, but the outcome of the simultaneous interplay of ideas, affect, and reason. (Clark, 1996, 23–50) Thus, when speech ceases to reflect depth of thought, the human being forfeits one of their existential essences as a rational and communicative creature.

This paper seeks to re-examine the meaning of speech (*nutq*) as a defining characteristic of the human being from both philosophical and linguistic perspectives (as a part of '*Seven Communication Traditions*'). To clarify what is at stake in this inquiry, the discussion centers on the notion of yanṭiq—speaking as the product of coordination between reason and emotional restraint. This conceptual emphasis enables the paper to transcend a formal account of language, suggesting that meaningful speech is not merely correct in terms of linguistic structure, but also whole in its intention, significance, and moral responsibility. Such a broadened understanding aligns with pragmatic theories of communication, as Grice's cooperative principle underscores that the quality of communication is determined by relevance, clarity, and due consideration (Schwellenbach, 2025). Accordingly, the analysis leads to a more profound implication: speaking is, in essence, a process of thinking expressed verbally, rather than a mere emission of sound or an unmediated release of emotion.

The central question posed in this paper is: What is the true meaning of *yanṭiq* within the context of the philosophy of language and human communication? How are the processes of thinking, self-control, and speaking interrelated in the realisation of healthy communication? This inquiry is crucial, given the extent to which public discourse has been reduced to uncontrolled arenas of verbal attack.

Amidst an era of increasingly expansive freedom of speech, particularly through social media, a new urgency arises to distinguish between "speaking" and merely "voicing." While freedom of expression is indeed vital, it must not serve to legitimise destructive utterances, especially those born of hatred and unrestrained emotion.(Abuisaac et al. 2021) Quality communication in Islam demands not only technical proficiency in language but also the capacity for reflective thought and emotional regulation. For this reason, the cultivation of speech cannot be limited to rhetoric or articulation alone; it must also encompass the nurturing of reason and ethics.(Arace et al. 2021; Khiabany, 2007) Several studies indicate a strong correlation between emotional literacy, reflective capacity, and the quality of both interpersonal and public communication. Thus, an understanding of *yanṭiq* as the coordination of reason and self-control becomes increasingly pertinent in shaping a communicative society that is both healthy and civilized (Tan, 2023).

In this context, we situate the term yanṭiq as a philosophical element within the discourse on the human being, beyond the reductionist view of "the rational animal." In al-Attas's thought, the human is instead described as a "new creation," precisely because of the responsibility borne towards both oneself and other beings (In'ami et al. 2025). It is this philosophical framework that we seek to integrate as a new contribution to the philosophy of Islamic communication. This philosophical dimension is developed based on the above conception of the human being and subsequently explored through the works of Muslim philosophers, most notably al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. Through al-Fārābī's philosophy, we encounter the notion of Ittiṣāl as a key term closely related to nuṭq or logic within the communicative context. Furthermore, we draw on Ibn Sīnā as a philosopher who helped establish the logical foundations for understanding how reason arrives at truth—foundations which, in their practical application, necessarily require communicative strategies for conveying that truth.

Based on previous philosophical investigations in the field of communication studies, we aimed to reformulate the classical concept of yanṭiq (mantiq, or logic) in the context of contemporary communication, expanding its role from a purely rational discipline to a holistic framework that integrates logical reasoning with ethical and communicative values. In Islamic communication, this re-conceptualized yanṭiq offers several advantages: it ensures clarity, coherence, and accountability in message delivery, while grounding communication in the ethical principles of honesty, trustworthiness, and justice. From an ethical-communicative perspective, the integration of mantiq aligns with the Islamic imperative for communication to be both truthful and morally responsible, as emphasized in the Qur'ān and prophetic traditions. Furthermore, mantiq's emphasis on evidence-based reasoning and its gradation of certainty support the development of communication that is not only logical but also sensitive to context and audience, fulfilling both ethical and practical demands of contemporary discourse.

Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative-philosophical approach, specifically hermeneutics and conceptual analysis. Hermeneutics is applied to explore the meaning of the terms *yanṭiq* and *al-insān al-nāṭiq* as developed within classical Islamic philosophy, and to reinterpret their relevance in the context of contemporary communication. Conceptual analysis, meanwhile, is utilised to examine the relationship between reason, speech, and emotional regulation in the act of speaking. This approach enables a deeper exploration of meaning, not merely from a linguistic standpoint but

also from philosophical and psychological perspectives. As Higgs and Smith observe, a philosophical approach to communication studies pays close attention to the integrity of meaning and the existential dimension of human beings in the use of language. (Higgs and Smith, 2007, 46, 67, 116–17, 136)

The first theoretical framework employed in this paper is the concept of *al-insān al-nāṭiq* in Islamic philosophy, particularly as articulated in the works of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. For al-Fārābī, the human being is described as nāṭiq not merely because of the capacity to produce sound, but because of the potential for thought expressed through language in an orderly and meaningful manner. (Al-Farabi 1995, 84) Ibn Sīnā further develops this by emphasising that nuṭq is the fruit of the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*), composed of the faculty of thought (*quwwah al-fikriyyah*) and the faculty of expression (*quwwah al-nuṭqiyyah*).(Ibn Sina 1960, 14, 370, 430) Speaking, therefore, reflects the function of reason in shaping responsible utterance. This concept provides a philosophical foundation for viewing speech not merely as a technical act, but as an intellectual and ethical activity uniquely human.

This paper subsequently adopts a psychological-communication approach to examine the interrelation between cognition, emotion, and speech. Recent research in psychology indicates that human verbal communication is shaped simultaneously by cognitive processes (the processing of meaning) and affective processes (the influence of emotion). (Burgoon et al. 2021, 98–120) Effective speech thus requires not only intellectual acuity but also the ability to regulate emotions, such as anger, fear, or anxiety, lest these distort the intended meaning. From this perspective, speech that is not governed by reason risks becoming merely an outlet for negative emotions that undermine communication. Emotional regulation, therefore, is a fundamental condition for ethical and rational communication. Several studies have further demonstrated that integrating emotional intelligence with cognitive reflection significantly enhances the quality of interpersonal communication.(Karimullah 2024; Karni et al. 2025; Ma'ruf et al. 2025; Morgan et al. 2025)

Complementing this, the paper also draws on Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, particularly his insistence on the centrality of context in meaning-making. In Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein argues that the meaning of a word depends on its use within "language games," implying that social structures and situational contexts are constitutive of communication.(Wittgenstein 2010, 19–31) This suggests that speech cannot be understood apart from the rules, norms, and intentions that accompany it. Such a view is highly pertinent to the present discussion: genuine communication arises from the coordination of reason, social norms, and contextual awareness. Meaning is not automatically embedded in an utterance but is formed through social practice, which necessarily entails moral responsibility for every spoken word.

Grice's cooperative principle provides a philosophical basis for communicative rationality. Its maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and clarity demonstrate that meaningful communication necessitates truthfulness, proportionate information, contextual coherence, and intelligible expression, thereby grounding speech in ethical and epistemic responsibility. (Berstler 2025; Suzuki 2025) Speech that neglects these principles is liable to miscommunication or failure. Within the combined framework of Islamic philosophy and communication psychology, Grice's principles reinforce the idea that successful human communication depends on the exercise of reason and the

goodwill to be understood. Every utterance, therefore, carries an epistemic and ethical responsibility that cannot be ignored.

The sources used in this paper encompass classical texts from the traditions of Islamic philosophy and the philosophy of language, as well as contemporary literature from international journals and academic works in linguistics, communication, and psychology. Sources were selected purposively to provide a robust and relevant theoretical framework. Classical works, such as *al-Madīna al-Fāḍilah* and *Kitāb al-Nafs*, were employed to trace the philosophical roots of *yanṭiq*. At the same time, recent journal articles were utilized to connect these concepts with present-day communicative phenomena. Through the integration of classical and contemporary sources, this study seeks to bridge philosophical insights with the modern socio-linguistic contexts that contemporary society is currently navigating.

Result and Discussion

Islam and Speaking: Between Utterance and Meaning

A clear distinction between sound, utterance, and meaning is foundational in linguistics and the philosophy of language, but its significance is amplified when viewed through the lens of the philosophy of communication. Sound is the physical, acoustic signal; utterance is the intentional structuring of sound into linguistic forms; and meaning emerges from the mental and symbolic processes that connect utterances to ideas or reality. (Hurley and Elyas 2024; Osborne 2024, 61–82) A common error in understanding speech is to reduce it merely to the capacity to produce sound or to arrange words. In truth, speaking presupposes the presence of meaning that can be understood and accounted for. Within modern semantic approaches, a meaningful utterance carries communicative intention, relevance, and intelligibility within a given context. Thus, speech cannot be separated from the capacity to think and to construct directed meaning. (Sami 2025)

In the Islamic philosophical tradition, the term *nāṭiq* does not refer merely to a creature capable of producing sound, but rather to a being capable of thought and of expressing that thought through language. In the works of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, the human being is described as al-insān al-nāṭiq because of the possession of *quwwah al-nuṭqiyyah*. This faculty enables the apprehension of universal meanings and their articulation in linguistic symbols.(Abdullah 2017; In'ami et al. 2025) Humanity's status as a speaking being, therefore, is not grounded in the mere production of sound, as in animals, but in the ability to formulate complex meanings and to share understanding with others. Human utterance presupposes a logical structure and intentionality, directing speech towards specific ends such as explanation, request, objection, or evoking emotion in others.

From a pragmatic perspective, speech inherently carries the dimension of action. J. L. Austin, in his theory of speech acts, argues that speaking is not merely the transmission of information, but also the performance of acts, such as promising, commanding, refusing, or inviting. (Kauffeld and Goodwin 2022) This underscores that meaningful utterance must be understood in terms of its intentional and functional dimensions, rather than merely as sound. Animals may produce sounds to indicate hunger or threat, yet their vocalisations lack the complex intentional structures that characterise human speech. Recent neurolinguistic studies further confirm this distinction, showing that the human brain's language centres (Broca's and Wernicke's areas) are responsible for the processing of symbols, syntax, and semantic comprehension—capacities absent in other

species. This reinforces the argument that speech is a uniquely human faculty, grounded in intellectual activity.(Fedorenko et al. 2024; Gómez et al. 2024; Wani and Wani 2024)

Speech also reflects the structure of thought. When one speaks in a coherent, logical, and intelligible manner, it indicates that the pathways of thought are well-ordered. Conversely, chaotic utterances, marked by emotional repetition and incoherence, reveal disturbances in the cognitive process. Research in cognitive psychology demonstrates a positive correlation between verbal ability, reflective thinking, and executive control in the brain. This affirms that the quality of speech cannot be separated from cognitive maturity and emotional regulation.(Islami et al. 2024; Tang 2025) Within the framework of yanṭiq, speaking is therefore both an intellectual and a spiritual act, expressing the quality of one's character rather than simply the capacity to produce words.

One of the essential distinctions between human beings and animals lies in the representational function of language. Animals may produce sounds to signal needs or threats, but such sounds lack the complex symbolic systems that can flexibly represent reality or ideas. Humans, by contrast, are capable of speaking about what is absent through language, forming abstract concepts, and constructing narratives of the past as well as projections of the future.(Beguš 2024; Breithaupt et al. 2024; Ferretti 2025) In this sense, speech is not merely a mechanism of stimulus-response communication, but a medium of meaning-making and reality-creation. To reduce speech to a purely biological activity is thus an epistemological error, neglecting the rational and cultural dimensions of human language.

Beyond its cognitive function, speech also carries an ethical responsibility. Human utterances have the power to build or to destroy, to heal or to wound. In the Islamic tradition, every word spoken is recorded and subject to accountability (Toprak 2025; Yusupova 2025) as articulated in Qur'ān, Sūrah Qāf (50:18): "Not a word does he utter, but there is an observer ready at hand." This perspective resonates with modern philosophers such as Paul Ricoeur, who emphasised that language is a medium of moral action. For this reason, speech must never be divorced from ethical responsibility and the intention to foster understanding rather than discord. (Jani 2025)

In the social context, speech also constitutes a shared reality. Language is not merely a vehicle for individual expression, but a medium through which collective meaning is constructed. Through conversation, societies establish norms, identities, and social consensus. Habermas underscores this in his theory of communicative action, which regards language as the primary instrument for fostering rational understanding free from distortion. (Chavanayarn 2024) When speaking is reduced to emotional outbursts or propaganda, it loses its capacity to serve as a means of building a common world. Thus, *yanṭiq* also signifies the ability to situate words within responsible social and historical relations.

Ultimately, to understand speech as yanṭiq requires us not only to learn how to articulate words but also to think before speaking. In today's digital era, speaking has become increasingly effortless, yet the responsibility of thought and empathy does not always accompany it. As a result, communication often devolves into conflict, misinformation, and polarization. Revitalizing the meaning of yanṭiq as the coordination of intellect and speech offers a pathway to healthier and more civil communication. In education, this provides a crucial foundation for cultivating communicative character that is rational, ethical, and empathetic. Hence, speaking must be repositioned as an art of thinking and of ethics, not merely as a rhetorical skill. (Sakdiah et al. 2025)

Reason as the Pathway of Thought in Speaking

Within the framework of philosophical anthropology, ʿ*aql* (reason) is not merely an instrument of abstract cognition, but the central axis that orders and guides the act of speech. To think before speaking is not simply a matter of social etiquette; it is the very manifestation of reason at work—

filtering, arranging, and structuring ideas prior to their articulation in words. When speech is released without the interval of thought, what emerges may be confusion of meaning, disorder of structure, or even the breakdown of social relations. (Horne 2025) Thus, the path of thought must be recognized as the logical and ethical foundation of every human act of language. Reason functions as the principal bridge that links inner experience with meaningful expression. In the Islamic philosophical tradition, Ibn Sīnā notes that the intellect first forms *maʿānī* (concepts, meanings) before they are embodied in *alfāẓ* (verbal utterances).(Ibn Sina 1960, 189)

The notion of this "path of thought" emphasizes the logical sequence between idea and language. In modern cognitive linguistics, this stage is described as conceptual planning—the mental process that precedes speech production, wherein the speaker designs meaning and selects the appropriate linguistic form. (Levelt 1993, 5, 11, 40) Research in neurolinguistics supports this perspective, demonstrating that the prefrontal cortex is activated just moments before an utterance is spoken, indicating the mind's active work in organizing meaning. Although this process occurs in milliseconds, it plays a decisive role in determining the clarity and orientation of communication. When it is disrupted—by emotional pressure, anxiety, or impulsivity—communication becomes ineffective, or even destructive. (Grossberg 2025; Su et al. 2025) Hence, the functioning of reason in speech cannot be underestimated, for it bears profound implications not only for individual expression but also for the health of social relations and the pedagogy of language.

The primary function of reason in speaking is to order language and sustain the logic of communication. In this sense, reason operates as the architect of discourse: it does not merely assemble words, but also governs the structure of thought and the direction of dialogue. Without the clarity of logical reasoning, language can easily degenerate into a tool of manipulation or disinformation. (Stranzl and Ruppel 2025) Hence, the practice of logical thinking has long been regarded as a pillar of rhetorical education, both in classical and modern traditions. Contemporary studies support this by demonstrating that the ability to reason coherently in speech is strongly correlated with the quality of persuasion, empathy, and audience comprehension. Within this framework, speaking becomes more than the mere transmission of messages; it is a responsible act of constructing arguments.

Reason also functions as a filter between what is worthy and what is unworthy of utterance. Not everything known must be spoken, and not every feeling deserves verbal expression. This distinction marks the difference between the wise and the impulsive: the ability to discern information according to relevance, timing, and ethical values. Recent research in interpersonal communication describes reason as a "pragmatic regulator," enabling individuals to adjust speech in accordance with social norms, relational status, and situational context. Without this filtering function, speaking risks devolving into a socially harmful or offensive act.(Cremaschi et al. 2021; Cuffari and Figueiredo 2025; Demirekin 2025; Liu 2025) Thus, speech governed by reason always carries the imprint of caution, consideration, and responsibility.

In the philosophy of language, ordered thinking is regarded as the absolute condition for ordered speech. Wittgenstein reminds us that "an error in thought will manifest as an error in language," for the structure of language mirrors the structure of one's mental world.(Wittgenstein 2009, cclv, 215, 223) When the path of thought is clouded, the utterance produced will inevitably be confusing. For this reason, disciplined and reflective thinking must be established as the primary prerequisite to speaking—especially in the context of public discourse or scholarly dialogue. This principle aligns with the ethos of scientific communication, which prioritizes precision, argumentation, and coherence as its core values. Speaking, therefore, is not merely an expression, but an expedition of logic requiring discipline.

Epistemologically, good speech is the outcome of an internal dialogue between reason and the heart. From the perspective of neuroethics, it has been shown that the brain regions governing morality and language are interconnected through the prefrontal and limbic systems. This suggests that honest, coherent, and just speech is not only the product of logical training, but also of the capacity to weigh values. (Gilbert and Russo 2024; Ochang et al. 2024; Salles and Farisco 2024) Reason, in this sense, does not stand alone; it works in concert with ethical consciousness in determining what is worth saying. Speaking thus becomes both an intellectual and spiritual act. Al-Fārābī described this as a part of '*umam fādilah*' as an instrument of '*madina al-fādilah*'(Al-Farabi 1995, 143) — which we justify as pure utterance born of a straightened reason.

Effective education in speaking, then, ought not to halt at pronunciation or vocabulary acquisition, but must prioritize the cultivation of clear pathways of thought. Many communication curricula today overemphasize presentation techniques and articulation, while neglecting the formation of deep and ordered thinking patterns. (Morris 2025) Recent studies have revealed that students with higher levels of critical thinking skills demonstrate greater coherence and persuasiveness in debates and academic discussions. This underscores that speaking competence cannot be separated from the ability to think logically and ethically.(Ajani and Matiyenga 2025; Hubbart 2025; Leibovitch et al. 2025; Melisa et al. 2025) Thus, communication training must always involve strengthening reason as the foundation of every utterance.

The integration of reason into the act of speaking is the hallmark of both intellectual and spiritual maturity. In an era of social media dominated by reactive utterances, the ability to think clearly before speaking has become a rare yet indispensable competence (Karim, 2024). Speech without thought can wound, mislead, or erode social trust. By contrast, speech guided by reason is an expression of compassion, responsibility, and the nobility of the human being as al-insān al-nāṭiq, the rational and speaking creature. Thus, to strengthen the function of reason within communication is not an optional refinement but an ethical necessity for sustaining a civilized and meaningful social life.

Emotional Control: Ethics in Speech

Speaking is not merely a physiological act or a linguistic skill; it is also an affective activity deeply intertwined with the speaker's emotional condition. Emotion, when properly cultivated, can be the source of beauty in speech, adding warmth, authenticity, and a distinctly human touch.(Kulshayeva et al. 2025; Larrouy-Maestri et al. 2025) However, when left unchecked, emotion can equally become the source of communicative breakdown, transforming words into eruptions of anger,

insults, or manipulation. In the complexity of social interaction, emotional management becomes the key to sustaining ethical and meaningful communication.(Denner et al. 2025; Krings et al. 2025) Thus, emotional control in speaking is not the negation of feeling, but the wise governance of affect—ensuring that emotion supports meaning rather than undermines it.

Modern communication psychology emphasizes the centrality of emotion regulation as a crucial factor in the success of social interactions. Individuals who possess this capacity tend to maintain coherence in their speech, remain focused on the purpose of dialogue, and avoid impulsive reactions that distort meaning. (Karami and Karimi 2025) Conversely, the failure to regulate emotions risks producing communicative "noise," which can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and even verbal aggression. Effective communication, therefore, requires a harmony of cognition and affect, where speech is not only logical but also proportionately attuned to emotional resonance.(Aldè et al. 2025) This insight is consistent with theories of social cognition, which demonstrate that unregulated emotions can diminish reasoning capacity and impair decision-making during conversations. (Asakavičiūtė et al. 2025) Emotional control, then, is not a peripheral skill but a foundational principle of ethical speech.

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, the discipline of emotion is closely tied to the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, which refers to the purification of the soul. *Tazkiyah* is not merely a spiritual refinement but also the cultivation of self-awareness and the disciplining of reason in the face of impulsive desires.(Ibrahim et al. 2025) In the communicative realm, *tazkiyah* becomes a prerequisite to ensure that speech is not driven by anger, arrogance, or the egoistic will to dominate. Al-Ghazālī reminds us that the tongue is the mirror of the soul: if the soul is clouded, the utterance will likewise be murky and harmful. (Karakaya 2022) By contrast, the one who has purified the soul speaks with composure, order, and responsibility. This is the essence of communicative ethics from a spiritual perspective, where the quality of one's speech reflects their spiritual maturity.

The analogy of a road—blocked, full of potholes, or strewn with stones—offers a most fitting metaphor for communication dominated by uncontrolled emotion. A dead-end road signifies incomplete thinking, which causes speech to stall or veer off into irrelevance. A road full of potholes illustrates the fractures of meaning that emerge when emotional outbursts interrupt the flow of argument. Meanwhile, a stony road represents the disturbances of desire: the urge to interrupt, to belittle, or to impose one's will. Healthy communication can only unfold along a well-paved road— smooth and deliberate—symbolizing speech that is rational, compassionate, and oriented toward understanding.(Julia et al. 2024) Thus, this metaphor is not a mere image, but a concrete representation of the inner dynamics of the human being in the act of speaking.

Research in social psychology shows that emotional regulation has a significant impact on openness, empathy, and social cohesion during group conversations. Individuals who are capable of restraining their emotional impulses tend to be more effective in offering constructive critique, providing sound advice, and responding to disagreement. Even in the sphere of public discourse, the capacity to manage emotions stands as a primary marker of communicative leadership: the ability to assert ideas firmly without descending into attack. (Cleary et al. 2024; Niven et al. 2024; Syrjämäki et al. 2024) For this reason, the education of communication must begin to incorporate emotional cultivation as part of the curriculum of speech literacy. Without emotional competence, rhetorical skill risks degenerating into a destructive weapon of verbal aggression. This marks the

central challenge in cultivating a communicative society that is both ethical and psychologically mature.

The ethics of speech do not end with the truthfulness of content; they extend to manner, intention, and the emotions that accompany expression. In contemporary philosophy of language, the emotional dimension of speech is captured in the notion of illocutionary force—the performative strength of an utterance shaped by its affective expression. A command voiced in anger bears an impact entirely different from the same command spoken calmly. Speech, therefore, carries not only propositional content but also the disposition of the speaker's soul. (Mauchand and Pell 2021; Vassilicos 2024) Awareness of this fact compels us to weigh every word before it is uttered, lest communication become a vessel for aggression cloaked in logic. To speak ethically is to examine the heart before opening the mouth, and to weigh emotion before weighing diction.

In the digital world, the challenge of emotional control in speech becomes even greater due to the absence of nonverbal cues and the emotional distance that often serves as a natural regulator in face-to-face communication. Social media comments, for instance, are frequently written in states of anger and impulsivity, without the benefit of reflective thought. (Chavanayarn 2024; Ma'ruf et al. 2025; Syrjämäki et al. 2024) This phenomenon is identified in psychology as the online disinhibition effect—the tendency to lose emotional restraint in online interactions due to feelings of safety and anonymity. As a result, speech in digital spaces often appears sharper, harsher, and more injurious than in offline interactions. For this reason, awareness of emotional regulation in speech must be extended into the virtual sphere to foster a communicative ecosystem that is both humane and healthy. Digital literacy, therefore, should integrate emotional mindfulness as a core competency in online communication.

Ultimately, the regulation of emotion in speech constitutes a form of spiritual, intellectual, and social responsibility. Human utterance does not stand alone; it carries layers of meaning, leaves psychological imprints, and bears moral traces in the consciousness of the listener. For this reason, it is vital not only to learn the art of speaking well but also to cultivate the discipline of meaningful silence when emotions remain unsettled. (Niven et al. 2024; Zhang 2025) In Islam, silence in moments of anger is considered an act of worship, just as speaking with adab is an expression of noble character. (Ashraf and Sitwat 2024) Thus, the human being as *nāṭiq* is not defined merely by the ability to arrange words, but by the wisdom to discern when and how those words ought to be spoken. This is the path of purified speech—a road cleared of the potholes of emotion and the stones of desire.

Communication as Mutual Understanding: To Be Understood and to Understand

At its core, communication is not merely the transmission of messages but the meeting point between intention and meaning formed by both parties: the speaker and the listener. From a pragmatic perspective, the meaning of an utterance is not determined solely by its linguistic structure but also by the intention of the speaker and the inference of the hearer. Hence, successful communication is not simply that which is delivered, but that which is comprehended in accordance with the speaker's intent. Such mutual understanding requires the mental capacity of both parties to interpret the context, emotions, and logic of speech. In the philosophy of communication, this shared comprehension constitutes the very essence of dialogue, presupposing the presence of

reason and the goodwill to listen. (Maulana 2024) Thus, complete communication is an intersubjective event that involves not merely the exchange of words but the exchange of meanings within a shared consciousness.

One of the fundamental principles of communication is the principle of clarity, which in Grice's theory is expressed as the maxim of manner: "be clear, be brief, and be orderly." Clarity does not signify mere simplicity but the ability to convey ideas with structured logic, appropriate language, and adequate contextualization. (Hassanein 2021) Without clarity, utterance loses its effectiveness and risks distorting meaning. In today's complex social contexts, clarity has become not only a technical but also an ethical necessity, for it determines whether a message brings benefit or leads astray. Recent studies in cognitive pragmatics suggest that the alignment between verbal and nonverbal expression deeply influences the perception of clarity. To speak clearly, then, is to speak integrally: precise in content, sincere in intention, and wise in manner.

More than a tool of information exchange, communication is a primary medium for the formation of social relations and the moral fabric of human interaction. Good communication reflects the values of justice, empathy, and responsibility, and may thus be regarded as part of ethical praxis in human life. In Islamic tradition, speech is even considered an act of worship that will be held accountable, as emphasized in the Qur'ān (Qāf:18): "Not a word does he utter but that with him is an observer prepared [to record]." This consequence reveals that every word carries both spiritual and social weight. (Lamat and Marjuni 2025) Communication, therefore, is never a value-free activity but a moral action that must be undertaken with full awareness of its implications for oneself and for others.

From the perspective of communication ethics, speaking is not merely about truth but also about intention and value. To view communication as an act of worship implies that speaking concerns not only what is said but also why and for whom it is uttered. Values such as trustworthiness, honesty, and compassion form the integral foundation of healthy and civilized communication. (Heller and Brown-Schmidt 2025) For this reason, communication education should not be confined to the teaching of persuasion or rhetorical techniques; it must also cultivate a character that recognizes every utterance as a moral wager. Communication performed with sincere intention, logical structure, and humility has a greater potential to foster deep and sustainable understanding.

Mutual understanding in communication largely depends on the capacity for active listening, rather than merely waiting for one's turn to speak. Active listening involves opening oneself to the perspectives of others, mentally reconstructing their meaning, and responding with empathy. In communication psychology, this capacity is often referred to as empathetic listening, which has been shown to strengthen interpersonal connections and prevent conflict.(Heller and Brown-Schmidt 2025; Hofmeister 2024; Østergaard 2025) Communication failure often arises not from lack of information, but from the failure to grasp the content and intention of the other. Hence, communication, as a means of mutual understanding, presupposes an inner maturity of character, not just external linguistic skills. In a world filled with noise and distraction, the ability to listen attentively reflects intellectual maturity and spiritual strength.

In today's digital age, communication often becomes distorted due to the prevalence of rapid, brief, and emotionally charged utterances. Social media accelerates the exchange of messages but does not necessarily deepen understanding. (Chavanayarn 2024) On the contrary, the ease of speaking often triggers conflict and misunderstanding, given the lack of contextual nuance and the ambiguity of intention. Studies in digital linguistics reveal that online discourse often generates polarization due to the loss of empathy and direct interaction.(Syrjämäki et al. 2024; Wagner 2019) For this reason, modern societies must revive the principle of communication as a form of worship, one that combines clarity, goodwill, and responsibility. Only then can communication once again serve as a bridge of meaning rather than a chasm of division.

Within the framework of Islamic epistemology, communication functions not merely as the transmission of data, but as the transmission of ḥikmah—wisdom. Ḥikmah demands depth, patience, and subtlety of meaning, dimensions that cannot be attained if communication is reduced to efficiency or driven by sensation. The Qur'anic concept of *qawl balīgh*—a word that penetrates deeply and touches—underscores that the value of communication lies in its impact upon both intellect and heart. (Annur, 2021; Borham et al. 2023) Thus, speech imbued with *ḥikmah* represents the highest form of communication, for it conveys truth with wisdom and resonance. In this sense, yanṭiq does not signify merely the ability to speak, but the capacity to arrange wisdom into an utterance that is both beautiful and responsible.

Consequently, mutual understanding in communication must be cultivated as a culture, not left as a private skill. A culture of striving to understand and to be understood constitutes the foundation of a just, healthy, and civilized society. Such a culture can only be realized through education, exemplarity, and habituation in daily life.(Narçiçek and Akay 2025) Studies in character education affirm that dialogical learning—centered upon listening and understanding—fosters social empathy and care across differences. To shape a communicative society, then, is to shape a moral society. (Negara et al. 2024) In a world ever more interconnected, speaking and listening are no longer matters of mere voice and ear, but matters of heart and value.

Analysis

The concept of *yanṭiq*, as elaborated in the preceding sections, emphasizes that speaking is a coordinative act between reason (ʿaql), heart (qalb), and tongue (lisān). Reason functions as the center of meaning and logic, the heart as the guardian of emotion and ethics, while the tongue serves as the instrument of articulation. (Al-Farabi 1995, 83; Taimiyah 1988, 53–54) These three elements do not operate in isolation but interact dynamically in every act of authentic speech. Thus, what one utters does not merely represent the content of thought but also reflects the quality of the soul. In healthy communication, all three elements harmonize to produce utterances that are clear, directed, and meaningful. Without such synergy, speech loses its orientation, becomes easily carried away by emotion, and risks descending into destructiveness.

In contemporary social life, particularly in the digital era, the meaning of speaking has undergone significant degradation. The culture of social media—with its speed and impulsivity—tends to drive individuals to express before thinking, to speak before reflecting. Many utterances arise from spontaneous emotional reactions without the filtering of reason or moral consideration. (Borham et al. 2023; Chavanayarn 2024; Sakdiah et al. 2025) This has diminished the quality of

public communication, which often degenerates into arenas of verbal conflict and polarized opinion. Within this context, the concept of yanṭiq becomes highly relevant as an ethical and rational foundation for human utterance. It reminds us that speaking is an activity that demands intellectual and spiritual responsibility.

The phenomenon of instant debate, prevalent in public and media spaces, further exemplifies the crisis of rational communication. More often than not, debates are oriented toward winning arguments rather than pursuing shared truth. In such circumstances, reason is subordinated to ego, and speech becomes an empty rhetorical device, detached from truth or empathy. However, in both the classical tradition of Islamic philosophy and in Western philosophy, speaking has always been regarded as an epistemic act directed toward goodness and the illumination of reason.(Dhona 2024) When the cognitive and affective dimensions of speech are severed from ethics, communication deteriorates into a war of words rather than a space for dialogue. This situation highlights the importance of developing an education in speech that is not only rhetorically sound but also rooted in character and integrity.

Intelligent and ethical speech does not emerge instantaneously; it is the outcome of long-term cultivation. Within the context of education, speaking skills should not be confined to technical training—such as debate or public speaking—but must also be nurtured through the strengthening of reflective and moral values. (Negara et al. 2024) Learners must be guided to recognize that every word uttered carries social and moral consequences. Character education, when integrated with communication training, becomes a crucial foundation for the formation of a dialogical and civilized society. This aligns with an integrative approach to education that emphasizes the development of the whole person: one who thinks with clarity, feels with discernment, and speaks with wisdom. Hence, the true capacity for speech is not merely a skill but a virtue.

One significant approach to cultivating ethical speech is the development of reflective speaking—the habit of thinking before speaking and evaluating the impact of one's utterances on others. Contemporary research suggests that reflective practices in communication promote empathy, reduce verbal aggressiveness, and improve the quality of interpersonal dialogue. An education grounded in reflection and positive emotional engagement has proven effective in shaping learners who are not only cognitively intelligent but also socially mature.(Karimullah 2024; Larrouy-Maestri et al. 2025; Ma'ruf et al. 2025) Within this framework, yanṭiq may be understood as a form of communication that integrates wisdom and compassion into language. Every spoken word, therefore, becomes part of the moral and intellectual edifice of the human being.

The present crisis in the meaning of speech is closely tied to the decline of reflective reading and writing practices. When the processes of deep thinking are replaced by the consumption of instant and superficial content, the quality of speech inevitably deteriorates. Human beings tend to speak from fleeting impressions rather than from genuine depth of understanding. (Abuisaac et al. 2021; Fisher 1984; Kauffeld and Goodwin 2022) This indicates a rupture between reason and the tongue—a disconnection long cautioned against by classical thinkers, who warned that speaking without thinking leads to moral ruin. In this light, the task of restoring the bond between thought and speech becomes a pressing mission for education, families, and society alike. *Yanṭiq* must once again be taught as an essential life skill—integral, ethical, and spiritual in value.

The implementation of ethical and reflective speech education requires an interdisciplinary approach that integrates linguistics, psychology, philosophy, and pedagogy. A dialogical learning model—grounded in empathy and reinforced by ethical principles of speech—must become a core component of character education curricula. In pesantren or value-based educational institutions, this can be strengthened through traditions such as *musyāwarah* (deliberation), *muḥāḍharah* (public speaking practice), and *talaqqī* (learning through direct transmission), all of which emphasize *adab* (proper conduct) in speaking(Elmahjub 2023; Zhang 2025; In'ami et al., 2025). Recent studies suggest that integrating spiritual values and local cultural traditions into communication pedagogy has a significant impact on fostering a communicative maturity grounded in both ethics and identity. Thus, the development of yanṭiq in education is not merely a philosophical discourse but a practical agenda in educational reform.

Ultimately, cultivating the capacity for intelligent and ethical speech is a strategic step toward building a society that is both communicatively healthy and collectively ethical. In an increasingly plural and rapidly evolving world, communicative challenges become ever more complex, and only those who can discipline their minds, guard their tongues, and preserve their hearts can contribute to genuine social harmony. The concept of *yanṭiq* offers both a philosophical framework and a practical guide, reminding us that speaking is not merely an act of expression but an existential responsibility. Education, culture, and media, therefore, must be directed toward reviving the noble values of communication. In doing so, we will not only form individuals who are eloquent in speech but also wise in their words.

Conclusion

This study has shown that *yanṭiq*, within the framework of Islamic philosophy, represents a harmonization between reason (ʿaql), moral consciousness (*qalb*), and verbal expression (*lisān*), thereby positioning speech as a deeply integrated human faculty. The classical insights of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā affirm that the designation of the human being as *al-insān al-nāṭiq* arises not merely from the biological capacity to articulate sound, but from the rational and ethical ability to express meaning deliberately, coherently, and truthfully. This conceptualization resonates strongly with contemporary communication psychology, which highlights the complex interrelationship between emotion, cognition, and verbal behavior. Seen through this theoretical lens, *yanṭiq* enriches Islamic communication philosophy by offering an integrated paradigm in which speech becomes a disciplined coordination of logos, pathos, and ethos—transforming utterances from mere acoustic events into bridges of understanding, ethical accountability, and shared meaning.

The practical implications of this framework are equally significant. In an age when digital communication is often characterized by impulsive expression, fragmented attention, and the erosion of contextual depth, *yanṭiq* provides a normative foundation for cultivating more responsible communicative behavior. Its principles can guide the development of communication pedagogy in educational settings—particularly in Islamic schools and pesantren—by emphasizing the unity of intellectual clarity, emotional discipline, and moral integrity. Likewise, media ethics may draw upon the concept of *yanṭiq* to encourage value-oriented discourse in online environments, where truth is frequently overshadowed by immediacy and popularity. Public communication and leadership can also benefit from this model, which grounds all speech in

intentionality, sincerity, and the pursuit of the common good. To teach speaking, in this sense, is simultaneously to teach thinking, ethical deliberation, and spiritual self-awareness.

Ultimately, the revitalization of *yanṭiq* carries profound moral and spiritual significance. In a society marked by acceleration and banality, the meaning of speech is threatened with dilution, yet humane communication cannot flourish without the inner refinement of the speaker. For this reason, educational institutions—especially those rooted in Islamic values—must reclaim the deeper function of speech training as an integrated cultivation of reason and the purification of the heart. Communication is, after all, a mirror of the soul: to speak with clarity is to reveal the clarity of one's inner being. Thus, our task is not merely to produce individuals who are capable of speaking, but to form persons worthy of speaking—those whose words arise from disciplined intellects and purified hearts. This is the ethical and intellectual mission of the true *al-insān al-nāṭiq*.

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