



The Nahwu Thought of Ibn Malik: A Historical-Analytical Study of Its Contribution to Arabic Learning in Indonesia

الفكر النحوي عند ابن مالك: دراسة تاريخية تحليلية في إسهامات الفكر النحوي عند ابن مالك في تعليم اللغة العربية في إندونيسيا

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ABSTRACT

The study of nahwu plays a crucial role in Arabic language learning by ensuring accurate understanding of texts. Among prominent scholars, Ibn Malik holds a significant position through his *Alfiyah*, a grammatical work widely studied in Indonesia. His grammatical thought has been examined by numerous Islamic educational institutions across the country. However, limited attention has been given to Ibn Malik's historical contribution to Arabic language learning in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze the epistemological foundations of Ibn Malik's nahwu thought and examine its influence on Arabic language education in Indonesia. The research employs a qualitative approach based on historical analysis and library research, the study draws on primary sources, particularly *Alfiyah Ibn Malik* and *Al-Madāris al-Nahwiyyah*, supported by relevant books and scholarly articles. Data were analyzed using content analysis, focusing on identifying Ibn Malik's grammatical framework and its educational implications. The findings reveal that Ibn Malik's thought is grounded in three main principles: the acceptance of hadith as grammatical evidence (*istishhād*), the balanced application of *qiyās* between the Basrah and Kufah schools, and reliance on primary linguistic causality while avoiding excessive speculative reasoning. Ibn Malik's thought influenced Arabic education in Indonesia through *Alfiyah* in pesantren curricula and poetic nahwu works, including Javanese *Al-Ajrūmiyyah* by Shaykh Mahmud Mukhtar Al-Bode and Sundanese *Al-Ajrūmiyyah* by KH. Ishaq Farid. The study concludes that Ibn Malik's intellectual legacy has profoundly shaped both the scholarly tradition and pedagogical practices of Arabic language education in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Alfiyah Ibn Malik; Arabic Language Learning; Nahwu Thought.*

مستخلص البحث

تؤدي دراسة النحو دورًا مهمًا في الدراسات الإسلامية لأن تولد من معرفة النحو الدقيق فهم النصوص العربية. ويعدّ ابن مالك من أبرز علماء هذا المجال، إذ يحتل مكانة رفيعة بفضل كتابه ألفية، وهو منظومة نحوية تدرس على نطاق واسع في أنحاء العالم الإسلامي، بما في ذلك إندونيسيا. وعلى الرغم من كثرة الدراسات التي تناولت منهجه اللغوي، فإن إسهامه التاريخي في تطور تعليم اللغة العربية في إندونيسيا لم يحظ بالعناية الكافية. ولذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل الأسس المعرفية لفكر ابن مالك النحوي، وبيان أثره في تعليم اللغة العربية في إندونيسيا. واعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الكيفي القائم على التحليل التاريخي والبحث المكتبي، مستندة إلى المصادر الرئيسية وهي ألفية ابن مالك وكتاب المدارس النحوية والمصادر الإضافية هي الكتب والأوراق العلمية ذات الصلة بهذا الموضوع. وقد تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام تحليل المحتوى للكشف عن ملامح الإطار النحوي عند ابن مالك وأثاره التربوية. وأظهرت النتائج أن فكر ابن مالك يقوم على ثلاثة مبادئ رئيسية، هي: اعتماد الحديث الشريف ليكون استشهادًا نحويًا، وتطبيق القياس المتوازن بين المدرستين البصرية والكوفية، والاعتماد على العلة اللغوية الأولى مع تجنب الإفراط في التعليل النظري. كما كان لفكره أثر بارز في تعليم اللغة العربية في إندونيسيا من خلال المكانة المركزية للألفية في مناهج المعاهد الإسلامية، وترسيخ المنهج النحوي المعتدل، وظهور متون نحوية محلية مؤلفة على شكل الشعر. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن التراث العلمي لابن مالك قد أسهم إسهامًا عميقًا في تشكيل كلاً من التقليد العلمي والممارسات التربوية لتعليم اللغة العربية في إندونيسيا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ألفية ابن مالك؛ تعليم اللغة العربية؛ إندونيسيا؛ الفكر النحوي.

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INTRODUCTION

The discipline of *nahwu* (Arabic syntax) is a branch of linguistics that plays a pivotal role in ensuring the accuracy of reading and interpreting Arabic texts by analyzing syntactic relationships among words within a sentence (A. Rahman et al., 2024). Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, *nahwu* has consistently been positioned alongside *sharaf* (morphology) as a fundamental foundation for understanding various Islamic sciences derived from Arabic (Maulidiyah et al., 2024; Thobib & Amirudin, 2023). This significance is inseparable from the emergence of the phenomenon of *lahn*, linguistic errors committed by non-Arab communities (*mawālī*) and *muta'arrib* groups, which raised concerns regarding potential inaccuracies in the recitation and interpretation of the Qur'an (A. A. Rahman, 2010; Wahab, 2015). Such scholarly concerns stimulated the systematic development of *nahwu*, eventually giving rise to several major grammatical schools, including Basrah, Kufah, Baghdad, Andalusia, and Egypt, each characterized by distinctive intellectual orientations (Ihsanudin, 2017). Although the Basrah school is generally regarded as the most dominant in the formulation of Arabic grammar (Arif, 2022), the development of *nahwu* studies in Indonesia demonstrates a more eclectic pattern, shaped by the influence of various classical reference works originating from different schools, such as *al-Jurumiyah*, *Awamil Jurjani*, *Imrithi*, *Nahwu al-Wadih*, and *Jami' al-Durus* (Ramdiani, 2015).

Amid this diversity, *Alfiyah Ibn Malik* has emerged as one of the most influential and widely studied grammatical texts within the tradition of Arabic language learning in Indonesia, particularly in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). Through this work, Ibn Malik systematically organized the principles of Arabic grammar in a concise and memorizable poetic form (*nazam*), thereby facilitating learners' understanding of the complexities of grammatical debates. Ibn Malik's intellectual approach is also considered more moderate and inclusive than that of some earlier grammarians, as he expanded the basis of linguistic argumentation by incorporating *hadith* as a source of *istisyhad* (linguistic evidence).

The influence of Ibn Malik's thought is evident not only in the use of *Alfiyah* as a principal instructional text but also in the pedagogical practices of *nahwu* instruction across various Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Nevertheless, scholarly studies examining the historical contribution of Ibn Malik's grammatical thought to the formation of Arabic language learning traditions in Indonesia remain relatively limited. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate Ibn Malik's grammatical thought, its

epistemological foundations, and its influence on the development of Arabic language education in Indonesia through a historical-analytical library research approach.

Research on Ibn Malik's grammatical thought in recent years has generally focused on the linguistic methodology and epistemology of Arabic grammar (*nahwu*) that he developed. Rizal (2021) explains that Ibn Malik accepted the permissibility of employing prophetic traditions (*hadith*) as linguistic evidence (*istisyhad*) and considered them one of the sources of argumentation in the formulation of grammatical rules, in contrast to several classical grammarians who rejected such an approach. This study demonstrates that Ibn Malik adopted a moderate and argumentative approach in selecting linguistic evidence. These findings are reinforced by Khairunnisa et al., (2024a) who argue that Ibn Malik was not doctrinally attached to any particular school of Arabic grammar; rather, he tended to adopt opinions that possessed the strongest argumentative basis. Furthermore, Fukara (2024, 2025) reveals that Qur'anic readings (*qira'at*) and *hadith* exerted a substantial influence on Ibn Malik's construction of grammatical principles, thereby affecting later scholars such as al-Damamini. These studies confirm Ibn Malik's significant contribution to the development of classical Arabic linguistics; however, they remain predominantly focused on methodological and theoretical dimensions.

Other studies have highlighted the pedagogical dimension of *Alfiyah* Ibn Malik in Arabic language instruction. Fitrianto et al., (2025) argue that the *nazham* structure employed in the *Alfiyah* enables students to internalize grammatical rules more effectively due to its systematic, concise, and easily memorizable presentation. Likewise, Taha and Taleb (2022) explain that the *Alfiyah* gained widespread acceptance among scholars because of its well-organized verses and dense argumentative structure, leading numerous grammarians to compose commentaries (*sharh*) on the text. In the Indonesian context, Abdullah et al., (2021) demonstrate that the *Alfiyah* serves as a foundational text for the teaching of Arabic grammar in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) through memorization-based methods such as *bandongan* and *sorogan*. Moreover, it serves as a symbol of the Islamic scholar or *kiai's* intellectual authority and is an essential component in the transmission of the Islamic scholarly tradition in the Malay-Indonesian world.

Meanwhile, Mar'i et al., (2023) and Abedalaziz (2024) emphasize that Ibn Malik's thought has influenced not only Arabic grammar (*nahwu*) but also the understanding of

rhetoric and Qur'anic exegesis through Syarh Ibn' Aqil. Mar'i et al., (2023) explain that Ibn Malik served not merely as an authoritative reference in *nahwu* and *sharaf*, but also formulated a number of specific principles that shaped the grammatical interpretation of Qur'anic readings (*qira'at*). On the other hand, Jaeni and Z and Ashoumi (2017; Z & Ashoumi, 202 C.E.). demonstrate that the Alfiyah possesses cultural and moral dimensions within the tradition of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*).

Although previous studies have examined Ibn Malik's thought from methodological, pedagogical, and interpretative perspectives, scholarly attention to the historical contribution of his grammatical thought to the development of Arabic language learning in Indonesia remains relatively limited. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap through a historical-analytical approach, examining the contribution of Ibn Malik's thought to shaping the tradition of Arabic language instruction in Indonesia, particularly within the context of *pesantren* and Islamic education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, using both a historical review and library research as its primary methods. The qualitative approach is selected because the study focuses on processes, meanings, and the subject's perspectives rather than on numerical data (Adlini et al., 2022; Yadav, 2021). Data were collected using documentation and note-taking instruments to record, organize, and categorize relevant information from selected sources. Specifically, this research examines the *nahwu* thought of Ibn Malik and analyzes his role in Arabic language learning in Indonesia. The historical approach traces the development of events, ideas, figures, or texts over time (Ivanovich, 2025; More, 2023). It is especially useful for exploring the evolution of Ibn Malik's grammatical thought (*nahwu*), the tradition of Arabic linguistic scholarship, and its transmission into Indonesian education. In addition, library research analyzes various relevant sources, including classic and contemporary academic texts (Jaya et al., 2023).

The data sources in this study are categorized into three types. First, primary sources consist of the main texts under investigation, namely *Al-Madāris an-Nahwiyyah* and *Alfiyyah Ibn Malik*, which represent Ibn Malik's grammatical thought. Second, secondary sources include books, journal articles, theses, and dissertations that discuss the teaching of Arabic grammar using Alfiyyah Ibn Malik, as well as studies on Arabic language education in Indonesia. Third, educational documents are also utilized, such as curricula, textbooks, and policy documents related to Arabic language instruction in

Indonesia.

Data collection is conducted through library research, including critical reading, systematic note-taking, and data classification according to themes relevant to the research focus (García-Díaz, 2025). This process aims to identify key concepts, such as linguistic rules, syntactic structures, and grammatical terminology, in Ibn Malik’s grammatical thought and to examine how these concepts are implemented in the Indonesian educational context.

Data analysis is conducted through content analysis, which involves interpreting textual meanings and identifying conceptual patterns in Ibn Malik’s grammatical framework (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). The analysis is then connected to the development of Arabic language teaching in Indonesia, particularly regarding the use of Alfiyyah Ibn Malik as a primary reference in grammar instruction. The stages of data analysis follow the model proposed by Miles and Huberman, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Cholid, 2022; Qomaruddin & Sa’diyah, 2024).

Previous research findings are also reviewed to strengthen the analysis and provide a deeper understanding of Ibn Malik’s contribution to scholarly traditions and instructional practices. The complete research methodology is presented in the following figure:

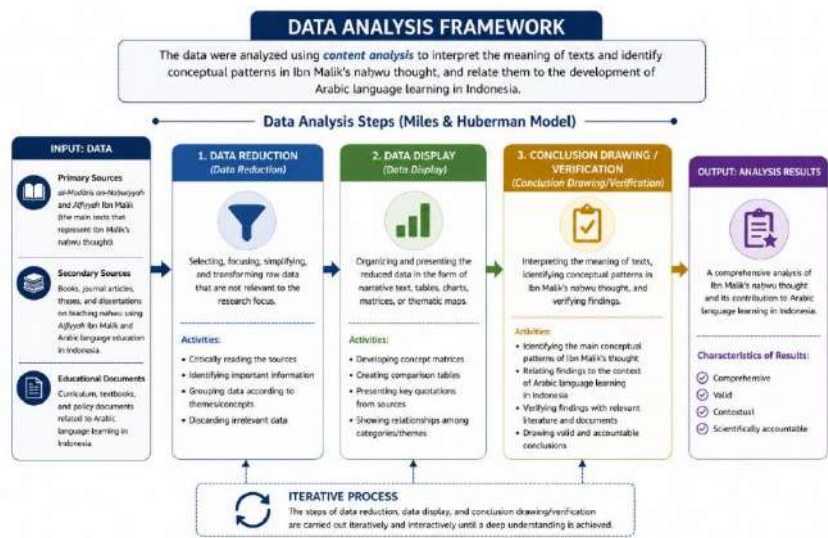


Image 1. Data Analysis Framework

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ibn Malik and the Intellectual Context of Nahwu Development

Ibn Mālīk, whose full name was Jamāl al-Dīn Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn Mālīk al-Ṭā’ī al-Jayyānī al-Andalusī, was one of the most influential scholars in Arabic linguistics and grammar. He originated from Jayyān (Jaén), a prominent city in Andalusia east of Córdoba (Mastufah et al., 2020). Scholars generally agree that he was born at the beginning of the seventh century Hijri, although they differ regarding the exact year of his birth, whether 600 H or 601 H (Mukhtar, 2008; Saeful Milah, 2009).

Belonging to the Ṭā’ī tribe, Ibn Mālīk devoted himself to the study of Arabic language sciences and *qirā’āt* from an early age. This intellectual background led many scholars to associate him with the Andalusian school of *nahwu*, despite the fact that he spent much of his scholarly career in the eastern Islamic world (Abdullah et al., 2021). He pursued his education in several major intellectual centers, including Jayyān, Damascus, and Aleppo, where he studied under prominent scholars of his time (Mastufah et al., 2020; Saeful Milah, 2009).

Ibn Mālīk passed away in Damascus in 672 H (Hakim, 2021). Throughout his life, he authored numerous works in both prose and poetic form, demonstrating his expertise in Arabic linguistics and *qirā’āt* (Mastufah et al., 2020; Rizal, 2021). Among his most celebrated works *are* al-Kāfiyah al-Shāfiyah, Tashīl al-Fawā’id wa Takmīl al-Maqāṣid, and al-Khulāṣah, which is widely known in Indonesia as Alfiyah Ibn Mālīk (Mastufah et al., 2020; Mukhtar, 2008).

The Epistemological Foundations of Ibn Malik’s Nahwu Thought

One of Ibn Malik’s most influential contributions to *nahwu* was *al-Khulāṣah*, popularly known as *Alfiyah Ibn Malik*, a grammatical compendium of 1002 verses that presents Arabic grammatical principles in a systematic, comprehensive, and accessible manner. Written in concise language and focused on essential grammatical concepts, the work was designed to facilitate learning while avoiding overly complex debates (Abbah, 2008). Its enduring prominence reflects Ibn Malik’s distinctive and moderate methodological approach, which differed from that of earlier grammarians and was grounded in a systematic framework for formulating Arabic grammatical rules. The methodological foundations underlying Ibn Malik’s grammatical thought can be outlined as follows:

a. The Use of Hadith as a Source of Arabic Grammatical Evidence

One of the distinctive features of Ibn Malik's grammatical thought was his acceptance of hadith as a source of linguistic evidence (*istishhād*) in formulating Arabic grammatical rules. Unlike earlier grammarians, who primarily relied on the Qur'an, pre-Islamic poetry, and the speech of eloquent Arabs, Ibn Malik argued that hadith possessed linguistic authority comparable to classical Arabic poetry. In *Shawāhid al-Tawḍīḥ wa al-Taṣḥīḥ li Mushkilāt al-Jāmi'al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, he challenged the prevailing view that rejected hadith as grammatical evidence due to concerns over transmission by meaning and the involvement of non-Arab narrators. Instead, he maintained that hadith constituted a valid and reliable source for grammatical reasoning, thereby broadening the epistemological foundations of Arabic grammar (Mukhtar, 2008).

Ibn Malik strongly refuted this position after critically examining the arguments advanced by scholars such as Ibn Ḍā'ī', who opposed the use of *hadith* in grammatical reasoning. According to Ibn Malik, permitting the use of *hadith* as linguistic evidence was methodologically more justifiable than prohibiting it, given the weakness of the arguments presented by its opponents. This position is clearly reflected in his statement (Malik, 1984):

الجواز أصح من المنع، لضعف احتجاج المانعين

"Permissibility is more valid than prohibition because the arguments of those who prohibit it are weak".

In employing hadith as a source of grammatical evidence, Ibn Malik demonstrated a more systematic scholarly approach than many earlier grammarians. He not only cited the hadith texts themselves, but also frequently identified the collections and compilers from which the narrations were derived. However, this practice was not consistently applied to every citation. This method markedly differed from that of some previous Arab linguists, who occasionally referred to hadith merely as *kalām al-'Arab* (Arab speech), or cited them indirectly using expressions such as *qawl al-nabī ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* or *wa fi al-ḥadīth*. Such practices indicate that Ibn Malik possessed considerable intellectual confidence in openly positioning hadith as one of the essential sources for the formulation of Arabic grammatical principles (Rizal, 2021).

The objections raised against the use of *ḥadīth* as a source of *istishhād* primarily emerged from issues of linguistic validation, particularly because some prophetic traditions were transmitted *bi al-ma'nā* (according to meaning), meaning that the

wording reported by transmitters might not always correspond exactly to the Prophet's original expressions (Al-Kaladi, 2024; Hasanov, 2026). Ibn Mālik, however, viewed the rejection of *ḥadīth* as linguistic evidence as a sign of an overly narrow conception of linguistic sources (Rizal, 2021). Rather than accepting *ḥadīth* indiscriminately, Ibn Mālik developed a structured hierarchy of *istishhād*, placing the Qur'an as the primary source, followed by *ḥadīth*, the statements of Arabs (*aqwāl al-ʿArab*), and poetry as the final source of evidence (Rizal, 2021). This hierarchy shows that Ibn Mālik did not reject *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), but instead reorganized the relationship between *naql* (transmitted evidence) and *ʿaql* (rational analysis) in constructing grammatical rules (Al mashaqaba, 2024; Harianto et al., 2025; Yaacob, 2025).

Ibn Mālik emerged as a scholar who broadened the application of *simāʿī* sources by incorporating *ḥadīth* and various linguistic forms beyond the strict limitations established by early Basran grammarians (Aminah et al., 2026). Within the epistemological framework of Arabic grammar, *ḥadīth* constitutes part of *al-samāʿ*, a transmitted (*naqlī*) source used to verify linguistic patterns and formulate grammatical principles alongside the Qur'an, Qur'anic readings (*qirāʾāt*), poetry, and Arabic prose (Ashar & Hamzah, 2025; Harianto et al., 2025; Roziqi & Bakar, 2025). Therefore, Ibn Mālik's extensive use of *ḥadīth* was not merely a preference for additional examples, but represented a significant repositioning of linguistic data authority within the foundations of Arabic grammatical theory (*uṣūl al-naḥw*) (Khairunnisa et al., 2024b; Rizal, 2021; Saeful Milah, 2009).

b. The Systematic Application of Qiyas in Arabic Grammar

According to Ibn Malik, *qiyās* or what may be termed syllogistic analogy is “a practical procedure that does not require further justification; thus, once a grammatical rule has been established and its linguistic application is clear, the rule may also be applied to other linguistic cases” (Arifuddin, 2013). This principle strengthens the role of *qiyās* in grammatical reasoning. For Ibn Malik, *qiyās* may legitimately be employed in the formulation of Arabic grammatical rules, provided that it is applied appropriately. It should not be employed as freely as it was by the Kufah school, nor should it be applied with the excessive rigidity characteristic of the Basrah school (Mukhtar, 2008).

In applying the method of *qiyās*, Imam Ibn Malik paid close attention to linguistic usages that were both widespread and standard. He did not readily accept analogical reasoning based on weak or insufficient linguistic evidence (Arifuddin, 2013).

Consequently, Ibn Malik established clear boundaries regarding which linguistic phenomena could legitimately be subjected to *qiyās* and which could not.

One example of a linguistic form that, according to Ibn Malik, should not be generalized through *qiyās* is the use of the letter *alif* as the universal marker of the dual form (*muthannā*) in the nominative (*raf'*), accusative (*naṣb*), and genitive (*jarr*) cases. This usage appears in the following poetic verse (Mukhtar, 2008):

إن أباه وأبأ أباه قد بلغنا في المجد غايتها

In this example, the letter *alif* functions as the marker of the accusative case in the first occurrence of *abāhā* and as the marker of the genitive case in the second occurrence of *abāhā*. According to the Kufah scholars, it is permissible to establish an analogical rule (*qiyās*) based on this poetic evidence. This is because the Kufah school regarded any linguistic form found in Arabic poetry as a valid source for Arabic grammatical principles, including analogical reasoning.

Ibn Malik, however, rejected such an extension of *qiyās*. In his view, the use of *alif* as a universal marker for the dual form across all grammatical cases was neither common nor conventional and contradicted the established grammatical norm. Consequently, he classified this phenomenon as *syaz* (anomalous or exceptional usage) within Arabic grammar. Concerning *syaz* forms, Ibn Malik maintained that such usages should be confined to poetic compositions or *naẓm* and should not serve as the basis for general grammatical rules (Mukhtar, 2008).

c. Primary Linguistic Causality ('*Illah*) in Ibn Malik's Grammatical Reason

One of Ibn Malik's methodological foundations was the use of primary linguistic reasoning while avoiding excessive engagement with secondary or non-essential linguistic explanations. The linguistic logic employed by Ibn Malik was limited to what was necessary, namely, explanations that prevent ambiguity in language use (Arifuddin, 2013). One grammatical rule derived from this methodology is the permissibility of constructing a *mubtada'* (subject) from an indefinite noun (*ism nakirah*) that an adjective has qualified.

Traditionally, a grammatical rule maintained that an indefinite noun could not function as a *mubtada'*. According to Ibn Malik, however, this prohibition was based on secondary rather than primary reasoning. As long as the *mubtada'* formed from an indefinite noun conveys complete and comprehensible information to the interlocutor

(*mufīd*), there is no reason to prohibit its use. Concerning this issue, Ibn Malik states in one of the verses of *Alfiyah*:

ولا يجوز الابتدا بالنكرة مالم تفد كعند زيد نمرة

Based on this consideration, Ibn Malik formulated an analogical rule (*qiyās*) stating that any indefinite noun qualified by a descriptive element may legitimately function as a *muḥtadā'*, because such qualification renders the expression sufficiently informative and understandable to the listener.

Applying the same methodological foundation, Ibn Malik also permitted the use of a temporal adverb (*ẓarf zamān*) as the predicate (*ḵabar*) of a subject denoting a concrete entity, as in the example: الليلة الهلال.

Furthermore, Imam Ibn Malik allowed the occurrence of a circumstantial clause (*jumlaḥ ḥālīyyah*) that is not preceded by the conjunction *wāw* and does not contain a pronoun referring back to the possessor of the circumstantial state (*ṣāḥib al-ḥāl*), as in the example (Ḍayyif, 1968): رأيت القمح القمح بدرهمين. This permissibility, however, is not absolute. It is subject to the condition that the sentence conveys complete and meaningful information that the interlocutor can clearly understand. In addition, such constructions are only acceptable when they do not create ambiguity, misunderstanding, or the possibility of misinterpretation.

Ibn Malik and the Formation of Nahwu Pedagogical Traditions in Indonesia

a. The Centrality of *Alfiyah* Ibn Malik in Nahwu Instruction

The work of Ibn Malik, namely *Alfiyah*, has been extensively studied in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) throughout Indonesia, particularly in institutions that focus on mastering classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*). The study of *Alfiyah* in Indonesia cannot be separated from the scholarly connections between Islamic knowledge traditions and the first generation of Indonesians who pursued their studies in the Arab world (Abdullah et al., 2021). In relation to the study of Islamic sciences, educational traditions in Indonesia place great importance on the continuity of scholarly transmission (*sanad*). This emphasis ultimately motivated many Indonesian scholars to study directly in Makkah and Madinah in order to obtain a clear and authentic chain of scholarly authority. In fact, Abdullah et al. state that in Madinah, there were *halaqah* (study circles) or scholarly assemblies that discussed *Alfiyah* (Abdullah et al., 2021). This

text served as a primary teaching and learning material for many scholars who taught the instrumental sciences ('ilm al-*ālāh*) in the *halaqah* of Madinah. In addition to *Alfiyah*, *Jurumiyah* was also taught. Both texts became highly popular in the *pesantren* of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago under the names *Alfiyah* and *Jurumiyah*, respectively.

The existence of these *halaqahs* provided Indonesian scholars with opportunities to study directly, face-to-face, with prominent *shaykhs*. Over time, several Indonesian scholars emerged as teachers in Makkah, including Imam Nawawi al-Bantani (1813–1897) and Kiai Mahfudz al-Tarmasi (1919) (Bruinessen, 1999). These scholars became the principal links connecting the Islamic scholarly traditions of *pesantren*, including the study of *Alfiyah* grammar (*nahwu*) in Indonesia, particularly in Java and Madura, with those in Makkah through the institutionalization of *halaqah*. Subsequently, *Alfiyah* was studied by one of the most charismatic Indonesian scholars, KH Khalil Bangkalan.

A chain of transmission (*sanad*) of *Alfiyah* associated with KH Khalil Bangkalan was later documented in the Lirboyo sanad record. The chain of transmission of *Alfiyah Ibn Malik* studied by Kiai Cholil Bangkalan is as follows: Kiai Cholil from Shaykh Nawawi bin Umar Banten, from Shaykh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, from Shaykh Abdussamad bin Abdurrahman al-Palimbani, from Sayyid Aqib bin Hasanudin al-Palimbani, from Shaykh Muhammad Thayyib bin Ja'far al-Palimbani, from his father Shaykh Ja'far bin Muhammad al-Palimbani, from Syamsudin Muhammad bin 'Alauddin al-Babili al-Mishri, from Shaykh Syihabuddin Ahmad al-Sanhuri, from Shaykh Syihabuddin Ibn Hajar al-Haitami, from Shaykh Zakariyya al-Anshari, from Shaykh 'Alamuddin Shalih bin Sirajuddin al-Bulqini, from Shaykh Ibrahim bin Ahmad al-Tanuhi, from Shaykh al-Syihab Muhammad bin Sulaiman al-Halabi, from Muhammad Jamaluddin Ibn Malik (Abdullah et al., 2021).

The sanad chain of *Alfiyyah Ibn Mālik* presented above is not merely biographical data, but rather an epistemic mechanism that validates the authenticity, continuity, and authority of the knowledge being transmitted. In the Islamic tradition, sanad functions as a system that connects oral transmission, scholarly authority, and global intellectual networks, so that a book does not stand as a dead text, but as legitimate knowledge because it is received through teacher-student relationships (Cahyadi et al., 2025; Didin et al., 2026). Similar to sanad in the context of *ḥadīth*, the value of a sanad does not only lie in its existence, but also in its *ittiṣāl* (continuity), the credibility of the transmitters, and the intellectual capacity of each chain of scholars who

received it (Nuraini, 2024; Sumaila & Isnayanti, 2025). Therefore, the inclusion of the transmission chain from Ibn Mālik to Kiai Cholil, consisting of a succession of scholars, provides an argument that the acceptance of *Alfiyyah* in the Islamic boarding schools of Indonesia is understood as knowledge that has passed through a process of traditional legitimization, similar to the practice of *thabat*, which documents texts and teachers as markers of scholarly authenticity (Daud et al., 2025).

After *Alfiyyah* reached Java through the scholarly network of KH Khalil, the text eventually spread and became widely studied in various Islamic boarding schools throughout Indonesia. Among the factors contributing to its popularity is the comprehensive treatment of Arabic grammatical principles presented by Ibn Malik. Ultimately, *Alfiyyah* does not merely explain Arabic syntax, rather, it provides a broad exposition of Arabic grammar encompassing both *nahwu* and *sharaf* (morphology). Walad Abbah further explains that “*Alfiyyah* discusses only the essential matters that students need to know, guiding them toward correct language usage and mastery of *i’rāb*, without elaborating on scholarly disputes or highly complex issues in grammatical studies” (Arifuddin, 2013). Moreover, Ibn Malik states in his *Alfiyyah* verses that “*Alfiyyah* brings difficult matters closer through concise explanations; it is something that can make those who dislike the study of *nahwu* fond of it, without requiring any further work” (Lubis, 2018). This statement appears in the following verses:

تُقَرَّبُ الْأَقْصَى بِلَفْظٍ مُوجَزٍ # وَتَبْسُطُ الْبَدَلِ بِوَعْدٍ مُنْجَزٍ

وَتَقْتَضِي رِضًا بِغَيْرِ سُخْطٍ # فَائِقَةٌ أَلْفِيَّةَ ابْنِ مُعْطِي

Lubis also explains that one reason *Alfiyyah* became highly popular in Indonesia is that it presents grammatical studies in a form considered easier to understand and memorize (Lubis, 2018). Through its promise of providing “satisfaction” without generating “aversion,” the text is also viewed as containing an effective and efficient method for facilitating the understanding of Arabic grammatical rules. In other words, *Alfiyyah* not only contains grammatical content but, through its presentation in poetic meter and verse patterns, also embodies a distinct method and approach to Arabic language instruction, particularly in the teaching of Arabic grammatical rules, thereby making it easier for learners to comprehend.

b. The Emergence of the Moderate and Argumentative *Nahwu* School

In formulating the rules of Arabic grammar, Ibn Malik was a distinguished scholar from Andalusia. Consequently, his intellectual framework was significantly influenced by earlier grammatical schools, particularly the Basrah and Kufah traditions. Therefore, in order to understand the influence of Ibn Malik's grammatical thought on Arabic language studies in Indonesia, this section also discusses his inclination toward these two schools of grammar.

Ibn Malik's Inclination toward the Basrah School

Regarding Ibn Malik's inclination toward the scholars of Basrah, Dayyif (1968) explains that Ibn Malik followed the opinion of Sibawaih concerning the omission of the *nūn al-jamā'ah* in a present-tense verb (*fi'il muḍāri'*) when it is followed by *yā al-mutakallim*, as in the example *تأمروني*. In addition, Ibn Malik adopted Yunus's view, which held that the second occurrence of *immā* functions as a conjunction (*ḥarf al-'aṭaf*) in the example *قام إما زيد وإما عمر*. According to Ibn Malik, however, the actual conjunction in this construction is only the letter *wāw*. Nevertheless, the *wāw* must occur together with the word *immā* in order to convey a meaning comparable to that expressed by the conjunction *aw* ("or"). Ibn Malik explains this principle in one of the verses of *Alfiyah*:

وَمِثْلُ أَوْ فِي الْقَصْدِ إِمَّا الثَّانِيَهُ # فِي نَحْوِ إِمَّا ذِي وَإِمَّا الثَّانِيَهُ

Ibn Malik's opinion has also exerted considerable influence among Arabic language learners in Indonesia, particularly within Islamic boarding school circles that study *Alfiyah*.

Dayyif (1968) further explains that Ibn Malik followed the opinions of al-Mubarrad on several issues, including the permissibility of attaching *lām al-ibtidā'* to a fronted predicate (*khabar muqaddam*) when it appears in the form of a prepositional phrase (*jār wa majrūr*), as in the example *إن محمداً لِيكَ واثق*, and the classification of *izā al-fujā'iyyah* as a type of adverb of place (*ẓarf makān*). Another Basrah scholar whose views were adopted by Ibn Malik was Imam al-Akhfash. Ibn Malik followed al-Akhfash concerning the issue of the circumstantial accusative (*ḥāl*) describing the state of a *muḍāf ilaih*.

According to Ibn Malik, a *ḥāl* may indeed be used to describe a *muḍāf ilaih*, provided that the *muḍāf ilaih* constitutes a part of the *muḍāf* or is analogous to a part of the *muḍāf* itself. In support of this view, Ibn Malik cites the Qur’anic verse: **واتبع ملة** **إبراهيم حنيفا**. In this verse, the word *ḥanīfan* functions as a *ḥāl* of the word *Ibrāhīm*, even though *Ibrāhīm* occupies the grammatical position of *muḍāf ilaih* in relation to the word *millata*. This construction is nevertheless permissible because *Ibrāhīm* is conceptually equivalent to a constituent part of *millata*. Consequently, if the word *millata* were omitted, the sentence would become: **واتبع إبراهيم حنيفا** which still conveys the intended meaning appropriately.

The grammatical rule concerning a *ḥāl* that describes a *muḍāf ilaih* is also articulated by Ibn Malik in the following verses of *Alfiyah*:

وَلَا تُجْزِ حَالًا مِّنَ الْمُضَافِ لَهُ # إِلَّا إِذَا اقْتَضَى الْمُضَافُ عَمَلَهُ
أَوْ كَانَ جُزْءَ مَالِهِ أُضِيفًا # أَوْ مِثْلَ جُزْئِهِ فَلَا تَحِيفَا

Ibn Malik's Inclination toward the Kuffah School

In addition to his inclination toward the Basrah scholars, Ibn Malik also demonstrated an affinity with the views of the Kufah scholars. This dual influence is likewise reflected in Indonesia, where both grammatical traditions have shaped the development of Arabic grammar. One of Ibn Malik’s views that aligns with the Kufah school concerns the grammatical status of a noun occurring after a prepositional phrase (*jār wa majrūr*). When a nominative noun (*ism marfūʿ*) appears after a prepositional phrase that is preceded by a negative particle (*nāfi*), an interrogative particle (*istifhām*), or another element such as a descriptive noun (*mawṣūf*) or a relative construction (*mawṣūl*), that noun is considered the subject (*fāʿil*) of an implied verb. The implied verb, if explicitly expressed, would be *istaqarra* (“to be situated” or “to remain”). To illustrate this rule, consider the following sentence: **أفي الدار أحد**.

In this example, following the opinion of the Kufah scholars, Ibn Malik considers the word *aḥadun* to function as the *fāʿil* of the preceding prepositional phrase (*jār wa majrūr*) (Ḍayyif, 1968). However, this rule applies only when the prepositional phrase is preceded by one of the elements mentioned above. If no such element precedes it, then

the correct grammatical analysis of *aḥadun* is as a postponed subject (*mubtada' mu'akhkhar*). At the same time, the prepositional phrase functions as a fronted predicate (*khabar muqaddam*), since the *mubtada'* is an indefinite noun (*ism nakirah*) and the predicate is a prepositional phrase. Ibn Malik's view on this issue is also expressed in *Alfiyah* through the following verse:

وأول مبتدأ، والثاني فاعل أغنى في "أسار ذان

This grammatical principle has also become widespread in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools. Its influence stems from the prominence of Ibn Malik's work as one of the primary instructional texts used in many Islamic boarding schools throughout Indonesia. Consequently, many readers of Arabic texts, particularly Islamic classical books, analyze a noun occurring after a prepositional phrase preceded by the conditions mentioned above as functioning as a *fā'il*.

Another view discussed by Ḍayyif concerns the permissibility of a predicate (*khabar*) beginning with the letter *fā'*, as found in the following Qur'anic verse (Ḍayyif, 1968):

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ

In this verse, the Basrah scholars posit an implied predicate, namely *مما يتلى عليكم* ("among what is recited to you"), meaning *حكم ذلك* ("the ruling concerning that"), before the phrase *فَاقْطَعُوا*. Ibn Malik, however, follows the Kufah view that *فَاقْطَعُوا* itself functions as the predicate. Accordingly, there is no prohibition against a predicate beginning with the letter *fā'* when it takes the form of an imperative verb (*fi'l al-amr*).

Furthermore, Ḍayyif explains that Ibn Malik classified the word *عسى* as a *fi'l nāqish* in the same category as *kāna*. A *fi'l nāqish* is a verb whose meaning is not complete by merely mentioning its nominative complement (*ma'mūl marfū'*), but also requires the mention of its accusative complement (*ma'mūl manṣūb*). Ibn Malik refers to this issue in the following verse of *Alfiyah* (Ḍayyif, 1968):

كَكَانَ كَادَ وَعَسَى لَكِنُ نَدَرُ غَيْرُ مُضَارِعٍ لِهَذَيْنِ خَبَرُ

In this verse, Ibn Malik classifies *'asā* as one of the verbs that functions similarly to *kāda*, which is affiliated with the category of *kāna* and its counterparts. However, the

predicate (*khavar*) of *ʿasā* must itself take the form of a verb, specifically a present-tense verb (*fiʿl muḍāʿirī*). This understanding has also significantly influenced the study of Arabic grammar in Indonesia, where *Alfiyah* serves as a principal reference for grammatical instruction.

The Intellectual Value of Ibn Mālik's Integration of Basrah and Kufah Approaches

The preceding discussion demonstrates the dual influence of the Basrah and Kufah schools on Ibn Mālik's intellectual formation. He did not merely inherit the theoretical frameworks of these two grammatical traditions; rather, he critically examined, selected, and modified their arguments into a distinctive grammatical framework that emerged from a dialogical scholarly tradition rather than from a single line of transmission (Khairunnisa et al., 2024a). Therefore, interpreting Ibn Mālik solely as a representative of the Basrah school would constitute an oversimplification of his intellectual position. The interaction between these two traditions matters because it shows that Ibn Mālik's scholarly authority rested not on strict adherence (*taqlīd*) to a particular grammatical school, but on critically evaluating arguments and selecting views with stronger linguistic evidence.

Ibn Mālik's intellectual character, which combined elements of both Basrah and Kufah, was further reinforced by his scholarly biography. He received his early education in Andalusia before traveling to the Eastern Islamic lands, where he studied under scholars associated with the Basrah grammatical tradition. His engagement with the works of Sībawayh and his study with al-Sakhāwī, whose grammatical orientation was strongly influenced by Basrah principles, contributed significantly to the formation of his linguistic thought. At the same time, Ibn Mālik demonstrated a distinctive scholarly approach through his extensive utilization of prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*) as a source for grammatical evidence. This approach shows that his intellectual independence was reflected not only in his ability to navigate between the Basrah and Kufah schools but also in his effort to expand the epistemological foundations of Arabic grammar itself (Khairunnisa et al., 2024a).

Thus, the dual influence of Basrah and Kufah should not be understood as an indication of Ibn Mālik's uncertainty in choosing a grammatical orientation. Instead, it reflects his intellectual maturity in critically engaging with different scholarly traditions and weighing their arguments on methodological grounds. Overall, the influence of these two schools shows that Ibn Mālik's grammatical thought was shaped primarily by the Basrah tradition, while remaining receptive to Kufah perspectives, ultimately

developing into an independent and creative Andalusian contribution to Arabic grammatical theory (Khairunnisa et al., 2024a).

c. The Development of Local Nahwu Texts Based on Nazam Tradition

As discussed in the previous section, one of Ibn Malik's major contributions to the development of *nahwu* was his formulation of Arabic grammatical rules in the form of poetic verses (*abyāt*) or didactic poetry (*nazm*). This approach has had a profound influence on the development of Arabic grammar throughout the Muslim world, particularly in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, numerous grammatical texts have been composed in the form of poetic verses or *nazm*. One such example is *Nazm At-Tarjamah Al-Ajrumiyyah*, authored by Shaykh Mahmud Mukhtar Al-Bode, a scholar from Cirebon. This work contains a translation of *Matan Al-Ajrumiyyah*, a renowned grammatical text widely studied in Indonesian *pesantrens*. Shaykh Mukhtar composed this translation in the form of Javanese poetry using the *Rajaz* meter. Among the contents of the text are the following verses (Fauz, 2017):

"Wa ba'du ikilah tarjamah Jurmiyyah	# kanggo pelajar madrasah ibtida'iyyah"
"Kang masih ora ngerti bahasa Arab	# jalaran ora kulino ngaji kitab"
"Mulo podo ngajio kitab ulama	# luwih penting tinimbang ilmu dirgama"

In addition to Shaykh Mukhtar's work, there is also a versified adaptation of *Al-Ajrumiyyah* composed in the Sundanese language while retaining the Arabic script (*Sunda Pegon*). This text was written by KH. Ishaq Farid (1987) of Cintawana Islamic Boarding school, Tasikmalaya, West Java, an exceptionally distinguished Sundanese scholar of the twentieth century. Among the contents of this work are the following verses (Sya'ban, 2020):

جونتو العلم نافع جع تواضع	#	كلام لفظ مركب تور مفيد وضع
أري مركب لفظ أنو رغكفن	#	أري لفظ أيتا سورا أكرائن
وضع بسا عرب دمقصود كاسبت	#	أري مفيد أنو ميري هرتي تمت
"Kalam lapad murokkab tur mupid wado	#	contona [العلم نافع] jeung tawado"
"Ari lapad eta sora aksara'an	#	ari murokkab lapad anu rangkepan"
"Ari mupid anu mere harti tamat	#	wado basa Arab dimaksud kasebat"

The emergence of such works demonstrates the significant influence of Ibn Malik's pedagogical model in Indonesian Arabic grammatical instruction. By

presenting grammatical concepts in poetic compositions that could be memorized and recited, Indonesian scholars adapted Arabic grammatical knowledge to local linguistic and cultural contexts while preserving the traditional didactic method exemplified in *Alfiyah Ibn Malik*. This tradition has contributed substantially to the enduring popularity and effectiveness of grammar instruction in *pesantren* throughout Indonesia.

The tradition of composing nahwu texts in the form of *nazm* in Javanese and Sundanese languages within the *pesantren* of Nusantara should not merely be understood as a technical adaptation of the Alfiyyah Ibn Mālik model, but rather as a form of vernacularization or localization of Islamic scholarship, namely the process through which knowledge originating from the Arabic-Islamic intellectual heritage is transferred into local languages, scripts, and cultural horizons without altering its scholarly substance (Zuhri, 2022). Within this framework, the use of Javanese, Sundanese, and Pegon script demonstrates that Nusantara scholars did not act as passive recipients of the Arabic tradition, but rather as active agents who selected, translated, and reconfigured canonical works to suit the pedagogical needs of local Muslim communities (Rohman et al., 2025; Sobirin & Muhdi, 2026). Pegon itself functions as an intellectual medium that bridges continuity with Arabic sources while simultaneously enabling the articulation of knowledge in a language more familiar to students, whether through *bandongan*, *sorogan*, *makna gandul*, or interlinear annotations, thus making nahwu learning more accessible without abandoning the authority of the original texts (Husniyah et al., 2026; Supriadi et al., 2026).

From a pedagogical perspective, the *nazm* form and the selection of *bahr rajaz* supported memorization, long-term retention, and the simplification of complex grammatical concepts. Therefore, Ibn Mālik's model has endured not only because of the tradition's prestige, but also because of it remains effective as a didactic instrument that continues to be reproduced and even modified in local contexts (Akbar & Abdul Hakim, 2024; Solehudin & Hanifansyah, 2024). Therefore, the emergence of Javanese or Sundanese Pegon *nazm al-Ajrumiyyah* should be understood as a practice of *pesantren* knowledge-making, namely an effort to maintain nahwu as authoritative, teachable, and rooted in local Islamic identity. It is not merely a poetic translation, but part of a broader process of forming the intellectual tradition of Nusantara Islam, which is pluralistic, contextual, and resilient amid currents of homogenization in religious knowledge (Fathoni et al., 2025; Mahfud et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Ibn Mālik's grammatical methodology shows that his epistemological principles were not merely theoretical foundations for formulating Arabic linguistic rules, but also the basis for a more dynamic and inclusive pedagogical tradition of Arabic grammar. His moderate approach in integrating various sources of linguistic authority, particularly through the expanded use of ḥadīth as a valid source of grammatical evidence, reflects an epistemological openness that challenged the narrow limitation of linguistic references to pre-Islamic poetry and established Arab speech. This broader conception of *samā'* enabled Arabic grammar to develop beyond rigid textual boundaries and directly influenced the emergence of a more flexible approach to teaching and learning Arabic grammar.

Furthermore, Ibn Mālik's balanced application of *qiyās*, positioned between the permissiveness of the Kufah school and the strictness of the Basrah school, produced a methodological framework that combined textual evidence with rational analysis. This moderate epistemological stance helped shape a pedagogical model that emphasized both memorizing established grammatical principles and understanding their underlying reasoning. Likewise, his preference for primary linguistic reasoning (*'illah*) over excessive speculative explanations encouraged the simplification and systematization of grammatical concepts, making complex linguistic theories more accessible to students.

The combination of these three epistemological principles, openness toward linguistic sources, moderation in analogical reasoning, and reliance on essential grammatical reasoning, ultimately shaped the pedagogical strength of *Alfiyah Ibn Mālik*. Its comprehensive yet concise presentation, poetic structure, and systematic arrangement allowed grammatical knowledge to be transmitted effectively across generations. In the Indonesian pesantren context, this epistemological flexibility became the foundation for developing localized Arabic grammatical works in the form of *naẓm*, including Javanese and Sundanese adaptations of classical texts. Therefore, Ibn Mālik's intellectual legacy shows a clear causal relationship between his epistemological framework and the emergence of an adaptive pedagogical tradition, in which Arabic grammar remained authoritative while being continuously reproduced to meet local educational needs.

Despite these findings, this study is subject to several limitations. As a library-based historical analysis, it relies primarily on classical and secondary textual sources and does not incorporate empirical evidence regarding the contemporary implementation of Ibn Malik's grammatical thought in Arabic language classrooms. Moreover, the discussion is confined to the Indonesian context and does not provide a comparative examination of Ibn Malik's influence across other Muslim societies or in relation to other major grammatical traditions. Future research may address these limitations by employing empirical approaches, comparative analyses, and broader geographical perspectives to further explore the relevance and pedagogical impact of Ibn Malik's grammatical methodology in contemporary Arabic language education.

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