

Characteristics of Traditional Arabic Grammar Texts in the Curriculum of *Pallidars* Education in Malabar

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Abstract

Investigating the regional peculiarities in the curriculum of traditional Islamic education fulfils the preservation of the rich heritage of traditional Muslim communities and facilitation of the exchange of knowledge among them in contemporary contexts. This study “How does the Pallidars curriculum for the Arabic grammar education in Malabar integrate traditional Islamic texts with local adaptations to effectively teach Arabic grammar and linguistic structures?”, with three objectives, identifying the peculiarities of the textbooks by analyzing their content and methodology, evaluating the effectiveness of these textbooks in facilitating Arabic grammar learning and exploring concise biographies of the textbook authors. The research methodology involved a comprehensive analysis of textbooks, including their structure, content, and pedagogical approaches. Interviews with teachers and students who have used these textbooks conducted to gather insights on their effectiveness and practical application. Key findings highlights that the curriculum demonstrates a systematic progression from basic verb conjugation to complex linguistic structures, using key texts at different levels. The curriculum incorporates a strong focus on memorization, especially at advanced levels, to internalize grammatical rules. It integrates commentaries and works by local scholars alongside classical Arabic texts. The study provides valuable insights for educators, students, and researchers in traditional religious education of Pallidars.

Keywords: Islamic education, Curriculum, Arabic grammar, Pallidars system, Malabar

Introduction

The curricula of traditional Islamic education exhibit regional diversity, reflecting the unique cultural, historical, and social contexts of Muslim communities in different countries. Examining these peculiarities offers valuable insights into the diverse interpretations of Islamic educational history and its contemporary relevance. Exploring these regional disparities serves a dual purpose: preserving the rich heritage of traditional

Muslim communities and facilitating knowledge exchange between them in contemporary times. Such studies contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the development of Islamic education and its ongoing significance in the Muslim world. Arabic grammar studies, which encompass *Nahw* (syntax) and *Sarf* (morphology), are foundational for the analysis of classical Arabic¹. As Islam encourages seeking knowledge from its sources, it is important to have skills in major languages, particularly in Arabic. The influence of grammatical education on regional Islamic knowledge likely extends beyond mere language proficiency, potentially shaping local interpretations of religious texts and legal rulings².

The *Pallidars* learning system in Malabar, India, is a mosque-based residential religious education center that combines Arab-Islamic scholarly traditions with indigenous Indian methodologies which symbolises as the Malabar model of the *Ahlussuffa* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)³. While studying the curriculum of *Pallidars* which is important for cultural preservation, linguistic significance, and understanding traditional Islamic education systems, the lack of extensive academic literature and unavailability potential previous studies makes difficulty to conduct comprehensive literature reviews. Despite the huge local vernacular non- academic books and writings on *Pallidars*, only two academic studies are available in the indexes of scholarly literatures. One among them is the doctoral thesis published by the University of Calicut, on ‘Curriculum of palli dars and its role in the dissemination of Arabic language and literature in Kerala an analytical study’ by Mohamed Abdurahiman C.K.⁴ and the second one is ‘The Traditional Islamic Curriculum of *Pallidars* in Malabar: A Content Analysis of ‘Min Nawabigi Ulama’i Malaibar’ by Hassan Shareef K.P and Shebeeb Khan P,⁵ published in the journal *Al-Jadwa* from Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda'wah Indonesia. Other literatures, including, ‘Modernisation of Islamic Education in Kerala: Tracing the Trajectory’⁶, ‘Educational empowerment of Kerala Muslims: a Socio-Historical

¹ Robert Hetzron, *The Semitic Languages*, Routledge Language Family Descriptions (New York: Routledge, 1997), 46–56.

² Hamidah Hamidah et al., “Developing Arabic Grammar Materials Based on Contextual Learning at Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia,” *Al-Ta’rib : Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab IAIN Palangka Raya* 12, no. 1 (June 2024): 134, <https://doi.org/10.23971/altarib.v12i1.8292>.

³ Hassan Shareef Kp and Shebeeb Khan P, “The Traditional Islamic Curriculum of Pallidars in Malabar: A Content Analysis of ‘Min Nawabigi Ulama’i Malaibar,” *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam* 5, no. 1 (September 2025): 1–3, <https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.3316>.

⁴ Mohamed Abdurahiman C K, “Curriculum of palli dars and its role in the dissemination of arabic language and literature in Kerala an analytical study” (Phd Thesis, University of Calicut, 2024), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/475196>.

⁵ Kp and P, “The Traditional Islamic Curriculum of Pallidars in Malabar.”

⁶ Mohammed Salih T and Mansy M, “Modernisation Of Islamic Education In Kerala: Tracing The

Perspective',⁷ 'Quality Enhancement in Madrasa Education: An Exploratory Study',⁸ 'The Relevance of Tafsīr al-Jalālayn among the Muslims of Malabar',⁹ 'A Proposed frame work for the Curriculum of Islamic education; Implication on the curriculum of Islamic religious Higher Education Institutions in Kerala, India',¹⁰ are scholarly efforts to get attention towards the missed history of traditional Islamic education in Malabar, however, those works only present an overview of *Pallidars* instead of addressing characteristics of its divergent curriculum and texts.

Previous study of Hassan and Shebeeb, basically, is a content analysis of Sayyid Abdu-Rahman Al Azhari's book, '*Min Nawabigi Ulama'i Malaibar*', to explore the historical evolution of the curriculum of *Pallidars*. A key finding of the study is the identification of three distinct curricula—Ma'bari, Fakhriya, and Nizamiya—which existed at different historical periods of *Pallidars* education in Malabar¹¹. It highlights the traditional *Pallidars* system's unique features, such as its accessibility, flexibility, and learner-centric pedagogy, where education was free and students progressed at their own pace. Finally, their study uses the analysis of Al Azhari's work to uncover these historical curricula and generate new research questions, emphasizing the need for further scholarly investigation on *Pallidars*' educational history. Notably, the present study is inspired by research questions proposed in prior work. Therefore, by focusing on a specific segment of the expansive and evolving research topics associated with the *Pallidars* curriculum in Malabar, this study investigates the Arabic texts used for grammar studies within the *Pallidars* system, focusing on Nahw (syntax) and Sarf (morphology).

This study is outlined through a qualitative research approach, centering on the research question: "How does the *Pallidars* curriculum for Arabic grammar education in Malabar integrate traditional Islamic texts with local adaptations to effectively teach Arabic grammar and linguistic structures?" By examining specific texts and teaching practices in *Pallidars*, this study seeks to identify pedagogical strategies that enhance the

Trajectory," *Journal of Positive School Psychology* 06, no. 06 (2022): 5817–28, <https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/8486>.

⁷ U. Mohammed, *Educational Empowerment of Kerala Muslims: A Socio-Historical Perspective* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 2007).

⁸ K. Mohammed Basheer, *Quality Enhancement in Madrasa Education: An Exploratory Study*, 1st ed (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).

⁹ Muhammed Unais Kunnakkadan, Nadzrah Ahmad, and Nashwan Abdo Khaled, "The Relevance of Tafsīr Al-Jalālayn among the Muslims of Malabar," *IJUM Press, International Islamic University Malaysia* 4, no. 1 (February 2020): 11–30.

¹⁰ Shafeeq Hussain Vazhathodi, "A Proposed frame work for the Curriculum of islamic education; Implication on the curricula of islamic religious Higher Education InstitutionS in Kerala , India" (Phd Thesis, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2011).

¹¹ Kp and P, "The Traditional Islamic Curriculum of Pallidars in Malabar," 17–20.

comprehension of Arabic linguistic knowledge. This study structured around three primary objectives. First, it aims to identify the peculiarities of the textbooks by analyzing the content and methodology of each text. Second, it evaluates the effectiveness of these textbooks in facilitating the study of Arabic grammar. Third, it explores a concise biography of the authors, who are largely unfamiliar to the public. By achieving these objectives, this research will offer a valuable contribution to educational scholars in Malabar and, more broadly, to Islamic educational researchers worldwide.

The key findings of the study can be summarized as follows: The *Pallidars* curriculum for Arabic grammar education demonstrates a systematic progression from basic verb conjugation to complex linguistic structures, emphasizing key texts such as *Mizan*, *Zanjan*, and *Alfiyya* at various levels. The curriculum incorporates a strong focus on memorization, especially at advanced levels, to internalize grammatical rules while also integrating commentaries and works by local scholars alongside classical Arabic texts. Effective teaching methods, such as using texts like *Awamil Mi'ah* as starting points for grasping key grammatical concepts, are employed, and the curriculum successfully adapts Islamic educational traditions to the local Malabar context while preserving core Arabic grammar knowledge. This study highlights regional differences in Islamic educational curricula and their impact on interpreting and applying Islamic knowledge, providing valuable insights for educators, students, and researchers in traditional religious education.

Method

The study employs a qualitative content analysis¹² of selected texts of Arabic grammar from the *Pallidars* curriculum prevailed in Malabar. The study also involves library research that collects data from academic databases, scholarly journals, and interviews with experts in the field of *Pallidars*. Unlike the previous study of Hassan and Shabeeb, that focused qualitative content analysis of a single work, this study analyzed multiple local works including ¹³ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor's '*Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam*' (*The history and Impact of Dars Books*)¹⁴, Shaikh Muhammed Bukhari Al-Faizy Al-Malaibari's '*Tarikh al Abrar Min-man Tadarrasa Kutubuhum fi Diyari Malaibar*' (*History of the Pious Scholars Whose Works Are Taught in Malabar*)¹⁵ and

¹² PK MAJUMDAR, *Research Methods In Social Science*, 2nd ed. (Viva Books, 2015).

¹³ {Citation}

¹⁴ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, first (calicut, india: Islamic Sahithya Academy Publication, 2013).

¹⁵ Shaikh Muhammed Bukhari Al-Faizy Al-Malaibari, *History of the Pious Scholars Whose Works Are*

Abdul Latheef Kuttasseri's 'Nahw kithabile Malayali Sanidjyam' (Presence of Malayali Scholars in the Nahw Texts)¹⁶ are major referred works. References from Major libraries including Jamia Markaz, Karanthur utilized for the data collection. In addition to this, data was gathered by conducting teachers of *Pallidars* who expertise in the Arabic grammar studies. Methodologically, the research focuses on addressing the question: "How does the *Pallidars* curriculum for Arabic grammar education in Malabar integrate traditional Islamic texts with local adaptations to effectively teach Arabic grammar and linguistic structures?" aiming to identify pedagogical strategies that enhance the comprehension of Arabic linguistic knowledge. The research is structured around three primary objectives: firstly, *content and methodology analysis* to identify the peculiarities of the textbooks by systematically analyzing their content and methodological approaches. Secondly, *effectiveness of teaching learning process* to Assess the efficacy of these textbooks in facilitating the study of Arabic grammar through a comprehensive review of their pedagogical strategies and outcomes. Finally, *author profiling* was conducted by compiling concise biographies of the textbook authors, who are largely unfamiliar to the public, to provide context for the curriculum development. This methodological approach is designed to yield insights that will contribute to the field of Islamic educational research, particularly in the context of Arabic grammar instruction in non-Arabic-speaking regions.

Result and Discusion

The *Pallidars* curriculum for Arabic grammar education in Malabar integrates traditional Islamic texts with local adaptations through a structured approach using specific textbooks at the primary, middle, secondary, and advanced levels. It emphasizes memorization, recitation, and practical application while incorporating works by renowned scholars and local commentaries to provide a comprehensive understanding of Arabic grammar within the Malabar context.

Comparing the three major findings of previous work by Hassan and Shebeeb; identification of three distinct historical curricula that were prevalent in the *Pallidars* system, Ma'bari, Fakhriyya, and Nizamiya, opening new avenues for historical research into Malabar's traditional education system and highlighting its connection to global

Taught in Malabar, 2nd ed. (Palakkad, Kerala: Lajmath Thwalabath Anar al-Uloom , Al-Jamiah al-Hasaniyya al-Islamiyya, 2010), rightpathfoundation@gmail.com.

¹⁶ Abdul Latheef Kuttasseri, "Nahw kithabile Malayali Sanidjyam(Malabar scholars presence in the Nehw Texts)," *Misbah al Huda student Association*, October 2015, mhsmodeacademy@gmail.com.

Islamic learning centers, the present study is more comprehensive in its approach, examining not only the Arabic grammar texts of the *Pallidars* curriculum in four different levels, but also highlights their impact on contemporary educational practices in the region. Before conducting a detailed discussion, a briefing of the major findings is presented as follows.

The study reveals that at the primary level, the *Pallidars* curriculum for Arabic grammar education in Malabar integrates traditional Islamic texts with local adaptations through a structured approach using three key textbooks: *Mizan* fi Thasreef il Afa'al, *Ajnas as-Şughraa*, and *Ajnas al-Kubra*. These texts, authored by Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri, form a progressive system for teaching Arabic grammar and linguistic structure. The curriculum employs a unique method of instruction emphasizing repeated study and continuous practice. It begins with *Mizan*, which introduces verb patterns in an engaging manner, comparable to multiplication tables in mathematics. This text covers various tenses, voices, and forms of verbs, providing a strong foundation in Arabic morphology. Local adaptations are evident in the teaching methods used in Malabar. Students are encouraged to recite verbs aloud, often accompanied by their Malayalam meanings, demonstrating a blend of traditional Arabic instruction with local language support. This approach helps in firmly embedding the verb forms in students' speech and memory. The curriculum progresses to more advanced concepts with *Ajnas as-Şughraa* and *Ajnas al-Kubra*, which focus on verb classification and conjugation. These texts introduce students to complex grammatical structures while building upon the foundational knowledge gained from *Mizan*. The effectiveness of this curriculum lies in its systematic approach, gradual progression from basic to advanced concepts, and the integration of local language support, making it well-suited for Arabic grammar education in the Malabar context.

The curriculum comprises three main texts at the middle level: *Al-Izzi fi al-Taşrif* (Zanjan) for morphology, *Awamil Mi'ah* for syntax, and *Taqweem al-Lisan* as an introductory manual for Nahw. This curriculum integrates traditional Islamic texts with local adaptations, emphasizing memorization and recitation. The texts are studied in a specific order, with morphology preceding syntax. The curriculum's effectiveness stems from its detailed examination of verb forms, introduction of 100 governing elements of Arabic sentence structure, and concise introduction to Nahw. Pedagogical approaches include a step-by-step learning process, practical application, and the use of Qur'anic

verses to connect grammatical concepts with religious texts. The curriculum also incorporates works by renowned scholars from different periods of Islamic history, providing students with a rich historical perspective on Arabic grammar.

In secondary and advanced level stages, The *Pallidars* curriculum for Arabic grammar integrates traditional Islamic texts with local adaptations through a carefully structured progression of textbooks. In secondary stage, the curriculum begins with foundational texts like *Tuhfatul Wardhiyya* and *Qatr al-Nada*, which introduce essential grammatical concepts. These are supplemented by locally produced commentaries like *Ayn al-Huda bi Sharh Qatr al-Nada*, which adapt the material to the Malabar context. The curriculum culminates with the advanced study of Ibn Malik's *Alfiyya*, accompanied by commentaries from local scholars like Zainuddin Makhdum-I and Sheikh Abdul Aziz Makhdum. This approach combines respected classical Arabic grammar texts with regionally specific explanations and examples, allowing students to master Arabic linguistic structures while relating them to their local context. The curriculum's effectiveness is evident in its longstanding use and the tradition of students being considered competent in Arabic upon completion of the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Malik.

Brief History of *Pallidars* Education in Malabar

Since the spread of Islam in Malabar, South India, a permanent system of religious education was established for imparting basic as well as higher studies in Islamic Studies. The system of *Pallidars* gave importance to higher religious education. In the past, primary religious education was provided through a system called *Othupalli*. The system of mosque-based, residential-based religious education known as *Pallidars* is a Malabar model of the *Ahlussuffa* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Changes and corrections have been made to the curriculum at each stage of this system according to the needs of the times. The syllabuses known specifically as *Fakhriya*, *Mabari*, and *Nizamiya* greatly influenced the scholars of Malabar. When these three curricula are subjected to research, the diversity of subjects in the curriculum of the *Pallidars* of Malabar opens the way for new and distinct studies. Subject diversity refers to the variety of subjects that were covered in *Pallidars* in each period and the textbooks used to refer to and read for study.

Generally, the topics covered in the curriculum of *Pallidars* are as follows: - Quranic studies, the science of Hadith interpretation, the study of Fiqh and its origins, spiritual science, scholastic studies, logic, language grammar, and literature. Specifically,

this study examines the topics and texts used by teachers in Arabic grammar instruction in the *Pallidars* learning system. This study had three specific goals. The first goal was to identify the Arabic texts used for grammar studies in the curriculum, their authors, and their common characteristics. The second goal was to investigate which parts of Arabic grammar these texts present and in what ways. Third, we need to find a way to teach and assess these texts. This study also investigates the general influence of these texts and the reasons for their existence in the first place.

Arabic Grammar Learning in Primary Level

In the initial stage of *Pallidars* education, *Mizan fi Thasreef il Afa'al*, *Mizan*, *al-Ajnas al-Şughra*, and *al-Ajnas al-Kubra* are considered the most important textbooks for learning the morphology of the Arabic language. These three texts are exceptional work authored by Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri (d 1717), a scholar endowed with vast knowledge in various disciplines¹⁷ and is regarded as a distinguished Imam of intellectual independence and profound understanding. He harmonized both rational and transmitted sciences, encompassing the principles as well as the branches of knowledge. He was the son of the eminent scholar Sheikh Sadaqat Allah al-Qahiri, and grandson of Sheikh Salman al-Qahiri. His birth took place in 1070 AH/1670 CE in the town of Qaher, located in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. He pursued his studies in various sciences under the guidance of his father, and his uncle, the eminent scholar Mawlana al-Kabir Şalah al-Din¹⁸. He was well-versed in numerous branches of knowledge and gained distinction as a prolific writer and accomplished linguist, as evidenced by his valuable works that circulated widely in Malabar and beyond. He devoted many years to studying in his hometown of Qaher and in neighbouring lands, and he trained a few notable students. He became a model of learning and a byword among scholars. He passed away on the 6th of Muharram, 1130 AH/1717 CE, and was laid to rest in the town of Palim Kota, Tamil Nadu¹⁹.

¹⁷ Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-Meezan, Al Ajnas As-sugra, Al Ajnas Al-Kubra)*, 1st ed. (Calicut, India: Jamiathl Hind Al-Ialamiyya publication, 2019).

¹⁸ Haris Attiri and Jabir Vadakkumpuram, "Shaikh Muhammed Labba Alim," *Misbahul Hudha Student Association, Madin Model Academy, Malappuram, Kerala*, October 2015, 9, mhsmodelacademy@gmail.com.

¹⁹ Shaikh Muhammed Bukhari Al-Faizy Al-Malaibari, *History of the Pious Scholars Whose Works Are Taught in Malabar*, 230.

The study of this book plays a significant role in shaping the future progress of a *muta'allim* (student). What makes it distinct from other texts is its unique method of instruction, which emphasizes repeated and continuous study.²⁰ *Mizan* is organized in such a way that it easily settles in the minds of students. Sheikh Muhammad Labba introduces the verb patterns of the Arabic language in a manner even more engaging and appealing than the multiplication tables in mathematics²¹. *Mizan* emphasises morphology that mainly focuses on the structure of individual verbs. The book begins by dividing verbs into four tenses: Past, Future, Imperative, and Prohibition.²² Then it introduces the types of past verbs in a very simple manner. First, it explains the form of the Affirmative active past tense. Each verb is shown with first person or second person, or third person, and shown gender: masculine or feminine, and shown number, singular or dual, or plural. These are classified in 14 forms with both clarity and precision. Following this, it explains the Negative active past tense form in the same way²³. Passive voice is usually one of the most challenging aspects of grammar for learners, especially in Arabic grammar; however, the work explains it in a very simple way by introducing both the Affirmative passive past tense and the Negative passive past tense. Through a lesson focused on verb conjugation, students gain familiarity with all forms of the past tense. Then it applies the same pattern to the future tense. As with past tense verbs, the conjugation of future tense verbs also becomes firmly embedded in the thoughts. After that, it introduces the negative particles لم and لن to express future tense verbs. These forms are frequently used in Arabic; this part makes it easier to understand that verb changes rapidly.²⁴

The imperative tense constitutes another significant aspect of Arabic grammar, as it is derived through modifications of the future tense. Understanding these modifications is essential, since a lack of knowledge may lead learners to frequent errors. For this reason, after thoroughly introducing these changes, the scholars of Malabar instruct their students in the first and second forms of the imperative.²⁵ Subsequently, the work

²⁰ Shafeeq Saquafi Munniyur (Mudarris Qazi Muhammed Academy Calicut , “Connecting the Dots (Interview),” October 2, 2025, Question And Answer.

²¹ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 140.

²² Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-Meezan, Al Ajnas As-sugra, Al Ajnas Al-Kubra)*, 16.

²³ Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-Meezan, Al Ajnas As-sugra, Al Ajnas Al-Kubra)*, 20.

²⁴ Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-Meezan, Al Ajnas As-sugra, Al Ajnas Al-Kubra)*, 48.

²⁵ Shafeeq Saquafi Munniyur (Mudarris Qazi Muhammed Academy Calicut , “Connecting the Dots (Interview),” October 2, 2025.

concludes the latter half of the *Mizan* by elucidating the *ṣarf* methodology of the fourth section, namely the intransitive tense. it devotes the latter half of *Mizan* to teaching the forms of both the Heavy *Nun* of Emphasis and the Light *Nun* of Emphasis as they occur in future, imperative, and prohibitive verbs, introducing their new style of conjugation.²⁶

In the final section, *Mizan* explains the Active and Passive Participles, which are indispensable in the Arabic language.²⁷ Although *Mizan* itself employs only the verb فعل, students are not confined to this single verb. Teachers supplemented the lessons with examples of various other verbs and trained the students through oral recitation. This method, widespread in Malabar, is marked by students enthusiastically repeating verbs aloud, often accompanied by their Malayalam meanings.²⁸ An additional point worth noting is that, from early times, manuscripts of the *Mizan* include the *ṣigha* (verb form) rendered in Persian language. This feature was not introduced by Muḥammad Labba rather, some attribute it to Muḥammad ibn Muṣṭafa al-Rumi al-Ḥanafī, while others ascribe it to Imam al-Taftazani. It was later generations of scholars who incorporated this material into the *Mizan*. The Persian section systematically presents the gender, number, person, and case of each verb in the study.²⁹ The most distinctive aspect of this syllabus is that, through months of repetition of each verb along with its meaning, the various verb forms become firmly ingrained in both the speech and memory of the students³⁰.

Ajnas as-Ṣughraa and *Ajnas al-Kubra* are taught at the second and third works of the primary level, both authored by Muḥammad Labba alim. These works focus on the second stage of verb conjugation. Their approach is to classify verbs into four major groups according to their roots and to illustrate each group with specific examples. The main divisions comprise five patterns in *Thulathi Mujarrad*, fourteen in *Thulathi Mazid*, one in *Ruba 'i Mujarrad*, and three in *Ruba 'i Mazid*. Of the two. *Ajnas Ṣughra* employs a straightforward style of conjugation, covering the past, future tenses, *Maṣḍar*, *Ism fa'īl*, *Ism maf'ul*, imperative, and prohibition.³¹ *Ajnas al-Kubra* represents a more advanced

²⁶ Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-Meezan, Al Ajnas As-sugra, Al Ajnas Al-Kubra)*, 100.

²⁷ Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-Meezan, Al Ajnas As-sugra, Al Ajnas Al-Kubra)*, 104.

²⁸ Shafeeq Saquafi Munniyur (Mudarris Qazi Muhammed Academy Calicut , “Connecting the Dots (Interview),” October 2, 2025.

²⁹ Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-Meezan, Al Ajnas As-sugra, Al Ajnas Al-Kubra)*, 15.

³⁰ Shafeeq Saquafi Munniyur (Mudarris Qazi Muhammed Academy Calicut , “Connecting the Dots (Interview),” October 2, 2025.

³¹ Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-*

stage and can be considered a detailed extension of *Ajnas as-Ṣughra*. Initially, *Ajnas al-Kubra* categorized the verbs into two groups *Lazim* and *Muta'dhi* according to their meanings. Then, four Category of *Thulathi* and *Ruba'i*, and in addition to the basic forms, the *Sarf* (morphological) patterns are integrated with *larf*, *Isml-alat*, *Ism taf'īl*, and other related structures. *Ajnas al-Kubra* covers verbs that are derivatives of basic verbs, independent verbs, and those that do not follow standard patterns.³² Like in every language, the both book's structure allows beginners to easily grasp fundamental expressions such as singular, dual, and plural forms. However, these concepts must be taught gradually and over an extended period rather than rushed through. The contribution of such books to attaining proficiency in the Arabic language is truly substantial³³

Middle Level of Curriculum and Major Texts

Three significant works occupy a central role in the curriculum of middle-level of Arabic grammar of *Pallidars* in Malabar. The foremost among them in the discipline of Morphology is *Al-Izzi fi al-Taṣrif*, popularly known as '*Zanjan*' composed by the prominent scholar Abu Al-Ma'ali Abdul-Wahhab bin Ibrahim bin Abdul-Wahhab bin Abi Al-Ma'ali Al-Kharji Al-Zanjani.³⁴ He was raised in a house of knowledge and virtue, as his father was a Shafi'i jurist and a linguist imam. And morphologically, and that he practiced composition following the example of his father and the historian Ibn Al-Futi mentioned that Al-Zanjani was a scholar, a wise man, who knew what was transmitted and what was reasonable. He was a scholar of language, grammar, morphology, semantics, rhetoric, rhymes, and prosody, and the science of interpretation, readings, and jurisprudence.³⁵ He authored several other notable works, such as *Al-Kafi Sharh al-Hadi fi al-Nahw wal-Sarf*, *Kafiya fi al-Hisab*, and *Naqawat Fath al-Aziz fi Ikhtisar Sharh al-Wajiz*, all of which are regarded as highly significant contributions. Imam Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī composed a commentary on *al-Izz fi al-Taṣrif*, to which he appended valuable insights and enriching additions. Around this commentary, numerous works have been

Meezan, *Al Ajnas As-sugra*, *Al Ajnas Al-Kubra*, 110.

³² Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-Meezan, Al Ajnas As-sugra, Al Ajnas Al-Kubra)*, 126.

³³ Shafeeq Saquafi Munniyur (Mudarris Qazi Muhammed Academy Calicut , "Connecting the Dots (Interview)," October 2, 2025.

³⁴ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 141.

³⁵ Mohammed Hussein Abbas and Prof. Dr. Saadoun Ahmed Ali Al-Rubaie, "Al-Zanjani's (d. 655 AH) Grammatical Views on Accusative Nouns: A Critical Study," *The University of Jordan, through Its Deanship of Scientific Research (DSR)* no. Special Issue (January 2023): 2, <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Saadoun-Ali/publication/376579831>.

produced in the wider field of Arabic grammar³⁶. The esteemed scholar passed away in Baghdad in 655 AH/1258 CE, having completed the composition of *al-Kafi* along with its commentary in the year just prior to his death³⁷.

The text, *Zanjan*, a seminal and authoritative manual of *Sarf*, has attained recognition beyond regional boundaries and is regarded as one of the most rigorous and widely studied works in the ordinary lecture tradition.³⁸ The work, in its pedagogical approach, elucidates numerous critical insights from earlier foundational texts such as *Mizan*, *Ajnas al-Şughra*, and *Ajnas al-Kubra*, which together constitute the cornerstones of Arabic linguistic education. Subsequently, the text engages in a detailed examination of the first form of Arabic verbs and the modifications associated with them.³⁹ This portion of the lesson often presents considerable difficulty for students at the elementary level of religious instruction. The challenge may be attributed to the fact that a highly advanced and sophisticated work is introduced at so early a stage of study.⁴⁰ Within the Mappila community of Malabar, numerous narratives and scholarly opinions concerning the recitation and study of *Zanjan* have circulated since earlier times.⁴¹ The study of *mu'tall* (weak) verbs constitutes one of the most crucial aspects of Arabic grammar. *Zanjan* is among the works that address this complex topic in considerable detail. While texts such as *Mizan*, *Ajnas al-Şughra*, and *Ajnas al-Kubra* include discussions of various verb forms, they do not provide a systematic method for the conjugation of weak verbs. As a result, students gain a deeper and more practical understanding of this verb pattern primarily through *Zanjan*.⁴² Consequently, later Malabar Scholars composed supplementary works such as *Mizan al-Mu'tall*⁴³ and *Ajnas al-Mu'tall*⁴⁴ dedicated specifically to this subject. *Zanjan* holds a central place as the primary foundational text

³⁶ Mustafa bin Abdullah al-Qustantini al-Rumi al-Hanafi, *Kashf al-Zunūn 'an Asāmī al-Kutub wa-l-Funūn*, 1st ed. (Lebanon: Dar El-Fikr publication, 1990), 2:97

³⁷ Haris Attiri and Jabir Vadakkumpuram, "Shaikh Muhammed Labba Alim," 11.

³⁸ Muhammed Ali Saquafi Choorakkod Mudarris Maswalihussunna Dawa Collage Moloor ,Palakkad, "Expert Talk (Interview)," October 1, 2025, Question And Answer.

³⁹ Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-Meezan, Al Ajnas As-sugra, Al Ajnas Al-Kubra)*, 158.

⁴⁰ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 140.

⁴¹ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 141.

⁴² Sheikh Muhammad Labba Alim Al-Qahiri and Izz al-Din Ibrahim Al Zanjani, *Kithab al-Swarf (Al-Meezan, Al Ajnas As-sugra, Al Ajnas Al-Kubra)*, 188.

⁴³ ABDUL RASHEED SA.ADI AYYANGERI, "Mizān al-Mu'tall," Kodagu, Karnataka , India, November 2, 2019, pkarasheedsaadi@gmail.com.

⁴⁴ Muhammed Baqavi Pookottur, *Ajnas al-Mu'tall ma Thahleel al-Usool*, first (Mariyad, Manjeri: Abjad Publishing House, 2013).

for studying Arabic grammar in Malabar. Since ancient times, students have followed the tradition of reciting and memorizing the book step by step at the very beginning of their studies a practice that continues even today, This method greatly enhances their command of the Arabic language and enables them to grasp the meaning of each word with clarity and depth.⁴⁵

The second book studied at this level is *Awamil Mi'ah*, considered the starting point of the *Nahw* texts. The *Nahw* books are introduced in the curriculum after completing the *Sarf* texts. This concise work explains the 100 most significant governing elements (*Awamil*) of Arabic sentence structure.⁴⁶ The *Awamil* are presented in an order that helps beginners easily commit them to memory. Authored by Imam Abd al-Qahir Abu Bakr ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad al-Jurjani, who was among the foremost scholars of Arabic grammar. He is more accurately characterized as a theologian, philosopher, and master of the Arabic linguistic sciences, holding a distinguished position in the classical tradition. He studied grammar under Abu al-Husayn Muhammad ibn Ali al-Farisi and belonged to the people of Jurjan.⁴⁷ He was born and passed away in Jurjan, a city situated between Tabaristan and Khurasan in Iran. Little is recorded about his ancestry, as his family was not of notable lineage, apart from mention of his grandfather, Muhammad. Most sources agree that al-Jurjani died in 471 AH (1078 CE), though some accounts place his death in 474 AH (1081 CE). As a child, al-Jurjani grew up in Jurjan, where he pursued the study of Arabic and Islamic sciences, much like his contemporaries. Among the works that greatly influenced his intellectual development was *al-Idah* by Abu Ali al-Farisi. He studied this text under Abu al-Husayn Muhammad ibn al-Husayn ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Waris al-Farisa, a grammarian and the author's nephew. Al-Jurjani's *al-Mughni*, a thirty-volume commentary on *al-Idah*, was later condensed into the three-volume *al-Muqtasad*. Thus, while he never studied directly with Abu Ali al-Farisi, he learned through one of his foremost students. Al-Jurjani's ideas in Arabic linguistics remain highly influential. He first gained fame as a grammarian before becoming a leading figure in *balaghah* (rhetoric). Historians often call him *al-Imam* in

⁴⁵ Muhammed Ali Saquafi Choorakkod Mudarris Maswalihussunna Dawa Collage Moloor ,Palakkad, "Expert Talk (Interview)," October 1, 2025.

⁴⁶ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*.

⁴⁷ Dr. Hassan Obeid Alfadly and Dr. Atef Abdel Aziz Moawad, "Transformational - Generative Theory: A Study on Al-Jurjani's Linguistic Theory," *International Journal of Linguistics and Communication*, American Research Institute for Policy Development 06, no. 01 (June 2018): 25, <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijlc.v6n1a3>.

recognition of his learning and piety. Besides *Dala'il al-I'jaz* and *Asrar al-Balaghah*, his works include *al-Madkhal fi Dala'il al-I'jaz*, *Ara' al-Jurjani*, *al-I'jaz*, *al-Mughni*, *al-Muqtashad*, and *al-Jumal*.⁴⁸ He is remembered as one of the greatest grammarians and masters of Arabic eloquence, as well as a follower of the *Shafi'i* School in law and the *Ash'ari* School in theology.⁴⁹

The book begins with a definition of *Nahw* and then introduces 107 elements divided into 22 categories, of which two are *Ma'nawi* (semantic) while the rest are *Lafliy* (Literal).⁵⁰ The text serves as an entryway for students to grasp *Nahw* quickly and effectively. In some later curricula, such as that of Jamiatul Hind Al-Islamia, this book is placed alongside the study of *Mizan*.⁵¹ Al-Jurjani introduced a new approach to language study, criticizing the narrow scope of traditional grammar, which focused mainly on *awamil* (governors) and *ilal* (causes) in sentence analysis. He emphasized that in Arabic, as an inflectional language, each word carries meaning based on these factors.⁵² *Awamil* is a highly valued text among Kerala's religious scholars and is taught to students pursuing Arabic studies with great emphasis. It serves as the foundation for accurate reading and comprehension of the Arabic language. By memorizing its rules, students develop the ability to use and understand Arabic with greater ease.⁵³

The final book at this stage is *Taqweem al-Lisan*, authored by Zayn al-Mashayikh Abu al-Fadl Muhammad ibn Abi al-Qasim ibn Babjuk, al-Khwarizmi al-Baqqali al-Nahwi.⁵⁴ He carried the epithet *al-Adami* for memorizing the grammar book *al-Adami*. He was a distinguished authority in Arabic, studying under al-Zamakhshari and later succeeding him in his teaching circle. Among his works are a Qur'anic commentary, *Kitab Miftah al-Tanzil* ("The Key to Revelation"), a commentary on the Divine Names *Sharh Asma' Allah al-Husna*, along with other writings. He passed away in Jumada al-

⁴⁸ Abdullah Ridlo, "ABDUL QĀHIR AL-JURJĀNĪ AND HIS THOUGHT," *Shautul a'rab: Journal of Language Education* 04, no. 02 (April 2025): 338, <http://jurnal.iuqibogor.ac.id/>.

⁴⁹ Shihāb al-Dīn Abī al-Falāḥ 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥanbalī al-Dimashqī, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār man Dhahab*, 1st ed. (damuscus: Dar-Ibn Kathir Publication, 1989), 05:308.

⁵⁰ Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani and Abil Qasim al-Baqali, *Kithab An-Nahw (Awamil Mi'ah, Taqweem al-Lisan)*, 01 ed. (Calicut, India: Jamiathl Hind Al-Ialamiyya publication, 2019), 27.

⁵¹ committee of Jamiathl Hind Al-Ialamiyya, "Revision of the Jamia al-Hind syllabus," PDF File, Calicut, India, 2021, 3, info@jamiathulhind.com.

⁵² Fahad Alqurashi, "Aljurjani Revisited: Creativity Explained through the Theory of Nazm (Construction)," *International Journal of Language and Literature*, American Research Institute for Policy Development 5, no. 2 (December 2017): 53, <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijll.v5n2a5>.

⁵³ Muhammed Rafeeq Saquafi (Mudarris furqan hifz dawa college Eranakulam), "Wisdom Talk (Interview)," October 4, 2025, Question And Answer.

⁵⁴ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 142.

Akhirah of 562 AH/1166 CE, at the age of a little over seventy.⁵⁵ Mahmud ibn Muhammad al-Hafiz al-Khwarizmi, in his History of Khwarazm, described him as a leading figure in literature and a recognized authority on the Arabic language. He was distinguished by his vast knowledge, valuable insights, virtuous character, piety, agreeable companionship, generosity, and integrity. He dedicated his life to teaching and the composition of scholarly works. Among his authored works are: *Asrar al-Adab wa Iftikhar al-Arab*, *Umm al-Faḍa'il*, *al-Targhib fi al-'Ilm*, *al-Kafi fi al-Tarajim bi-Lisan al-A'ajim*, *al-Asma fi Sard al-Asma*, *Adhkar al-Ṣalah*,⁵⁶

It serves as an introductory manual for students embarking on the study of *Nahw*. Designed as a gateway for learners to advance in grammar with keen interest, the work is structured into 53 brief chapters. Each chapter is supported by Qur'anic verses, which is the book's most distinctive quality. The text opens with discussions on *Kalimat*, *I'rab*, and *Bina*, and concludes with the chapter on *Hikayat*. Key topics of grammar such as *Tawaabi'*, *Mubtada'* and *Khabar*, *Ishtighal*, *Idhafat*, and *Maḥa'il* are presented in a succinct and accessible manner, making the content approachable for readers at the intermediate level⁵⁷. The book *Taqweem al-Lisan*, meaning "Correction of the Tongue," truly lives up to its title. A student who carefully studies it word by word gains a strong foundation in Arabic language learning. This book has been an integral part of the Arabic language curriculum in Kerala for several decades⁵⁸.

Grammar Texts in Secondary Level Curriculum

This stage represents the most crucial phase in the study of Arabic grammar. The *Nahw* text *Tuhfatul Wardhiyya*, which was traditionally studied after *Taqweem al-Lisan* in the *Pallidars* curriculum, has in recent times been omitted from most institutions as part of the effort to shorten the course of study. Today, only a few *Pallidars* still retain it in their syllabus.⁵⁹ *Tuhfatul Wardhiyya* is an elegant and concise didactic poem that encapsulates the principles of Arabic grammar in 153 lines. In earlier times, the practice

⁵⁵ al-Hāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn Abī al-Faḍl 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī al-Shāfi'ī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn*, 1st ed. (Kuwait: Sharikath Dar-Annawadir Al-Kuwaitiyya, 2010), 117.

⁵⁶ Alī ibn Anjab, known as Ibn al-Sā'ī, *al-Durr al-Thamīn fī Asmā' al-Muṣannifīn*, 01 ed. (Tunisia: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī Publication, 2009), 131.

⁵⁷ Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani and Abil Qasim al-Baqali, *Kithab An-Nahw (Awamil Mi'ah, Taqweem al-Lisan)*, 78.

⁵⁸ Muhammed Rafeeq Saquafi (Mudarris furqan hifz dawa college Eranakulam), "Wisdom Talk (Interview)," October 4, 2025.

⁵⁹ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 143.

of memorizing its verses was widespread in Malabar. The work follows the style of Ibn Malik's *Alfiya* and begins by highlighting the importance of learning *Nahw*.⁶⁰ Its complete title is *Tuhfatul Wardh fi Mushkilat al-I'rab*, authored by Zayn al-Din 'Umar ibn Mulaffar ibn Wardhi. He widely recognized as Ibn al-Wardi, is a distinguished scholar, writer, and poet. He was a sixteenth-generation descendant of Sayyidu Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (RA) and an accomplished scholar of Shafi jurisprudence. Born in Egypt in 691 AH (1292 CE), he devoted his life to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. Ibn al-Wardi travelled extensively, studying under many prominent scholars and mastering various branches of learning. His early education was under Sheikh Abu Isa al-Sahrawi, after which he continued his studies under Sheikh Sharaf al-Din al-Barisi, a noted authority in Fiqh.⁶¹ Among his other distinguished teachers were Sheikh Sadr al-Din Ibn Murahhal, Sheikh Shihab al-Din al-Mardawi, and Sheikh Fakhr al-Din Ibn Khatib Jibrin Breen. Upon completing his education, Ibn al-Wardi dedicated himself to teaching and writing. He founded institutions such as al-Madrasah al-Shafi'iyyah and al-Jami'al-'Aqeeda in his homeland to promote Islamic scholarship. Later, he moved to Aleppo, where he served as an assistant *qadi* (judge) and continued his scholarly contributions. Throughout his life, he authored numerous works in both prose and poetry, many of which remain significant in the study of Arabic and Islamic sciences, *Tuhfat al-Wardiyyah Mukhtasar Khulasat al-Alfiyyah*, *Bahjat al-Wardiyyah*, *Rasa'il al-Muhannabah fi Masa'il al-Mulaqqabah*, *Tadhkirat al-'Arīb*, and *al-Lubab fi 'Ilm al-I'rab*. *al-Kawakib al-Sariyah*, *al-Shihāb al-Thaqib fi Ahwal al-Qiyamah*, and *al-Mulaqqabat al-Wardiyyah*.⁶²

The text covers 53 essential chapters of *Nahw*. *Tuhfatul Wardiyya* begins with the statement that "one who does not have a proper understanding of *Nahw* (Arabic grammar) is an insignificant person." It is a work that conveys deep meanings through very concise expressions. It was Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdom I who first introduced Ibn Wardhi's work to Kerala. He composed a commentary on *Tuhfatul Wardhiyya* and incorporated it into the *Pallidars* syllabus. In Malabar, the book has generally been studied along with Makhdom's commentary.⁶³ In Malabar's traditional learning system,

⁶⁰ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 144.

⁶¹ Haris Attiri. and Jabir Vadakkumpuram, "Shaikh Umar bn al-Wardhi," *Misbahul Hudha Student Association, Madin Model Academy, Malappuram, Kerala*, October 2015, 15, mhsmodelacademy@gmail.com.

⁶² Haris Attiri. and Jabir Vadakkumpuram, "Shaikh Umar bn al-Wardhi," 16.

⁶³ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars*

the teaching method adopted involves first presenting each verse and then explaining its meaning. Because the text is written in verse form, students find it easy to memorize quickly and to grasp grammatical rules with clarity.⁶⁴

The second important grammar text in this level is *Qatr al-Nada wa Ball al-Sada*. It is a renowned work by the celebrated Arabic grammarian Abdullah ibn Yusuf ibn Ahmad ibn Abdullah ibn Hisham al-Ansari Jamal al-Din al-Hanbali. He was a distinguished grammarian and an eminent scholar. According to al-Durar, he was born in Dhu al-Qi'dah, 708AH/1308 CE AH. He pursued his studies under prominent teachers such as al-Shihab Abd al-Latif ibn al-Marhal, Ibn al-Sarraj, and al-Taj al-Tabrizi, and also studied the commentary of al-Taj al-Fakihani on *al-Isharah*. Initially trained in the *Shafi'i* school, he later adopted the *Hanbali* madhhab. Remarkably, he memorized *al-Kharqi's Mukhtasar* in less than four months, five years before his death. Ibn Hisham achieved exceptional mastery in Arabic grammar, excelling beyond his contemporaries and even surpassing some of his teachers. He studied under Ibn Jama'ah, and many students from Egypt and other regions benefited from his instruction. Among his most celebrated works are his Commentary on Ibn Malik's *Alfiyyah* and *Mughni al-Labib An Kutub al-A'arib*, both of which gained widespread fame during his lifetime. He dedicated his life to teaching and guiding students in the pursuit of knowledge.⁶⁵

Since the content of *Qatr al-Nada* is considered as the main text (*matn*) of nahv, it has attracted numerous commentaries from different scholars of traditional Muslim world. Among these, *Ayn al-Huda bi Sharh Qatr al-Nada* stands out as a distinctive commentary produced in Malabar. This text has become a widely studied manual for students at this stage of their education in the region. Authored by Sheikh Usman Makhdoom was born in Ponnani, Malappuram in 910 AH (1504 CE), the son of Jamaluddin Maabari. He married Fatima, the daughter of Makhdoom I. From a young age, he demonstrated exceptional skill in Arabic grammar and literature, studying primarily under Zainuddin Makhdoom I. He played a crucial role in the final battle against the Portuguese at Chaliyam, where he, alongside Sheikh Abdul Aziz Makhdoom his brother-in-law and the son of Makhdoom I led and inspired the Muslim forces. Sheikh Usman's legacy continued

curriculum books), 144.

⁶⁴ Asif Ahsani Karnataka Mudarris Maljea Dawa Educational centre ujire Karnataka, "Knowledge with Scholar (Interview)," October 4, 2025, Question And Answer.

⁶⁵ Al-Hāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'āt fī Ṭabaqāt al-Lughawīyyīn wa al-Nuḥāt*, 1st ed. (Lebanon: Al-Makthabath al-Asriyya Publication, 2013), 2:68.

through his son, Abdur Rahman (Makhdoom IV), and his descendants, many of whom became notable scholars and Sufis. He passed away in 991AH (1583 CE), and his grave is located on the south side of the Ponnani Grand Jumu'ah Mosque, marked with a distinctive sign commemorating his life.⁶⁶ Among his works are: *I'tiraḍ al-Sharḥ ala al-Sharḥ*, *al-I'rab 'an Qawa'id al-I'rab*, *Iqamat al-Dalil 'ala Ṣiḥḥat al-Tamthil*, *Awḍaḥ al-Masalik ila Alfīyyat Ibn Malik*, *Takhliṣ al-Shawahid wa Talkhiṣ al-Fawa'id*, *al-Jami' al-Ṣaghir*, and *Sharḥ Banat Su'ad*. He passed away on the night of Friday, the 5th of Dhu al-Qi'dah, in the year 761AH/1360 CE, at the age of fifty-three.⁶⁷

Ayn al-Huda, the commentary of Uthman Ibn Jamaluddin, offers a thorough exploration of *Nahw*,⁶⁸ comprising 76 chapters that systematically address all the essential areas of grammar. It begins with the discussion on *I'rab* and *Bina*, and throughout the book, the author cites numerous Arabic verses as textual evidence.⁶⁹ In Malabar, some even hold the view that mastery of this commentary renders further study at advanced levels unnecessary. Typically, the book is completed within a year of lessons.⁷⁰ A noteworthy feature of this work is that, once studied thoroughly, it equips students with the ability to engage directly with Arabic texts beyond the prescribed syllabus and comprehend their meanings independently. To properly understand the main *Nahw* text *Alfīyya* at the final stage, it is essential to study *Ayn al-Huda bi Sharḥ Qatr al-Nada* beforehand⁷¹

Texts for Advanced Studies in Grammar

As far as the Arabic language proficiency of a budding religious scholar is concerned, an advanced level of grammar learning had been included in the traditional curriculum of *Pallidars* in Malabar. For this purpose, the *ulema* of Malabar had chosen one of the celebrated works known as *Alfīyya* of Ibn Malik. Ibn Malik, whose full name was Jamal al-Din Muhammad ibn Abd Allah ibn Malik al-Ta'i al-Jayyani (1203–1274

⁶⁶ Abdul Latheef Kuttasseri, "Nahw kithabile Malayali Sanidjyam (Malabar scholars presence in the Nehw Texts)," 49.

⁶⁷ Zakaria Al Tamim, "The Approach Of Shihab Al-Din Al-Khafaji In His Intakes On Ibn Hisham Al-Ansari In His Book Jokes On Mughni Al-Labib," *I J A Z A R A B I : J o u r n a l o f A r a b i c L e a r n i n g* 07, no. 01 (February 2024): 51, <https://doi.org/10.18860%2520%2520%2520V7i1.26147>.

⁶⁸ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 145.

⁶⁹ Sheikh 'Uthman Makhdoom, *Ayn al-Huda Bi Sharahi Qthari al-Nada*, 01 ed. (Calicut, India: Jamiathl Hind Al-Ialamiyya publication, 2019), 14, info@jamiathulhind.com.

⁷⁰ committee of Jamiathl Hind Al-Ialamiyya, "Revision of the Jamia al-Hind syllabus," 9.

⁷¹ Sayyid Hashir Ali Mudarris Rainge Centre Academy calicut, "Connecting the Scholar," October 3, 2025, Question And Answer.

CE), was a distinguished linguist and grammarian from *al-Andalus*. Born in Jaen (in present-day Spain), he later migrated to Syria, where he rose to prominence as one of the leading authorities in Arabic linguistics. His academic work focused mainly on Arabic grammar (*nahw*) and morphology (*ṣarf*) fields vital to the preservation and codification of the Arabic language. Through his mastery of these disciplines, Ibn Malik produced several influential writings that continue to inform Arabic linguistic scholarship.⁷² He was a distinguished and exceptional scholar who resided in Damascus. He studied under numerous teachers and mastered Arabic with several scholars, including Thabit ibn Abdul-Jabbar al-Jayyani. In Aleppo, he studied alongside Ibn Amrun and others, excelling in the teaching of Arabic. Then he moved to Damascus and stayed there. There, he devoted himself to scholarship and writing, producing many students who benefited from his knowledge.⁷³ Al-Dhahabi described him as having dedicated himself completely to mastering the Arabic language, reaching the highest level of excellence and surpassing his predecessors. He was also an imam in Qur'anic recitations and their interpretations. Among his notable works are: *Tashil al-Fawa'id fī al-Nahw*, *al-Darb fī Ma'rifat Lisan al-'Arab*, *al-Kafiyah al-Shafiyah*, *al-Khulasah*, *al-'Umdah* along with its commentary, *Sabk al-Manzum wa Fakk al-Makhtum*, *Ikmal al-'Alam bi-Tathlith al-Kalam*, *al-Tawdih 'ala ma Waqa' fī al-Sahih*⁷⁴.

The work is regarded as the most authoritative and widely recognized work on Arabic grammar, and in Malabar it is studied at the final stage of the syllabus. For centuries, scholars and students across the world have memorized and relied upon this text to master the rules of the Arabic language.⁷⁵

The poem contains 1002 verses and serves as a concise summary of Ibn Malik's larger work, *Al-Kafīyya al-Shafīyya* (which comprises 2757 lines), intended specifically for easier memorization. Because of this, the text is also referred to as *al-Khulasa*.⁷⁶ Ibn

⁷² Ibnu Fitrianto, Muhammad Rizqi Al-Faruqi, and Nur Aisyah Hanifah, "The Contributions of Ibn Malik to Arabic Language Education: A Historical and Pedagogical Analysis," *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARABIC STUDIES Arabic Teaching Innovation and Arabic Literature*, 02, no. 01 (March 2025): 5, <https://ojs.bustanilmu.com/index.php/IJAS>.

⁷³ Abū Bakr bn Ahmad bn Muhammad bn 'Umar Ibn Qadi Shuhbā ad-Damishqi, *TABAQAT ASH-SHAFI'YYA*, first (Hyderabad, India: THE DAIRATUL-MA'ARIFIL-OSMANIA (OSMANIA ORIENTAL PUBLICATIONS BUREAU) OSMANIA UNIVERSITY, HYDERABAD, 1979), 02:190.

⁷⁴ Abū Bakr bn Ahmad bn Muhammad bn 'Umar Ibn Qadi Shuhbā ad-Damishqi, *TABAQAT ASH-SHAFI'YYA*, 02:191.

⁷⁵ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 145.

⁷⁶ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 147.

Malik himself names his work *Alfiyya* in the third verse and *Khulasa* in the thousandth verse. The structure of the *Alfiyya* follows a rhyming pattern, where the first and second hemistich of each verse conclude with the same letter. Within its framework, Ibn Malik integrates discussions of both *Nahw* and *Sarf*, with the rules of *Sarf* presented in 84 lines, beginning from the chapter *al-Fi'l wa al-Tasrif*.⁷⁷ The work poetically presents the principles of *Nahw* across 77 chapters, arranging his verses in such a way that his work surpasses all other grammatical texts.

Indeed, numerous works have been composed around the *Alfiyya* across the Muslim world. Scholars throughout the centuries have cherished this poetic masterpiece, enriching it with extensive commentaries and interpretations. In the Malabar tradition, the primary commentary used in the *Pallidars* system is that of Zainuddin Makhdum-I and his son Sheikh Abdul Aziz Makhdum. Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdum I was born on 12 Sha'ban 871 AH (18 March 1467 CE) in Kochangadi, Kochi. After the death of his father, Aliyul Ma'bari, during his childhood, he was brought up by his uncle, Zainuddin Ibrahim. His uncle, who served as the Qazi of Ponnani, took young Zainuddin with him to Ponnani and oversaw his early education. Under his uncle's guidance, Makhdum studied and memorized the Qur'an, along with the foundational texts of *Sarf* (morphology), *Nahw* (grammar), and *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). Aspiring to further his studies under distinguished scholars, he later traveled to Calicut, where he became a student of Abubakar Fakhruddin Ibn Ramalan, the Qazi of Calicut and an expert in *Fiqh*. Under his tutelage, Makhdum pursued his studies for seven years.⁷⁸

Unwilling to conclude his studies, he continued his journey to *Mecca* and then to Egypt, where the Shafi'i school held significant influence and where Imam Shafi'i had once resided. There, he enrolled at the renowned Al-Azhar University. Makhdum I is believed to be the first scholar from the Malabar region to study at Al-Azhar. He pursued advanced studies under several distinguished scholars of the institution, including Jamaluddin as-Suyuti, Sayyid Muhammad As-Sumhudi, Sayyid Abu Bakr Al-Aydarusi, Hafil As-Waqawi, Imam As-Zabidi, and Nuruddin Al-Mahalli.⁷⁹ After returning to

⁷⁷ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 147.

⁷⁸ Salman Ayikarappadi, "Arivinte Lokhabhoopadathile keralathinte onnaman (Kerala stands at the forefront of the global map of knowledge)," *Risala Update*, March 2, 2024, <https://share.google/81MqvcO7Qot8vUfjF>.

⁷⁹ Rashid hudawi Othupurakkal, "Shaikh Zanudheen Makhdum 1," *Islam on web The window to islam*, April 25, 2019, <https://islamonline.net/ml/25-April-2019-412>.

Ponnani, Zainuddin Makhdom initiated a revival of Islam in Malabar. He established a center of Islamic learning modeled on Al-Azhar, beginning with the construction of the Grand Mosque. During this period, the Portuguese invasions threatened the local Muslim community and regional prosperity. Zainuddin composed the war poem *Tahriz Ahl Iman ala Jihad Abdat al Sulban al Marghabat fil Jinan al Munqidat min al Niran*, which inspired Muslims to resist under the leadership of the Kunhali Marakkars, primarily rice merchants from Tamil Nadu. He passed away on Friday, 10 July 1522 CE (16 Sh'ban 928 AH), leaving behind three sons and two daughters. Author of twenty-two known works⁸⁰, most for his students. His masterpiece *Hidayat al-Adkiyah* remains a key *Sufi* manual in Malabar. He was succeeded by his son, Abdul Aziz Makhdom.⁸¹ Sheikh Abd al-Aziz ibn al-Makhdom al-Kabir was a distinguished scholar and the son of the renowned Sheikh al-Makhdom al-Kabir al-Mabari, who passed away in 994 AH (1586 CE). Following in his father's intellectual footsteps, he continued and completed his father's commentary on Ibn Malik's *Al-Alfiyya*, maintaining the same scholarly style and precision that characterized his father's work. In addition to this major contribution, Sheikh Abd al-Aziz authored several important works that reflect both his mastery of Islamic sciences and his deep engagement with spiritual and linguistic traditions. Among his well-known writings are: *Maslak al-Atqiya* a comprehensive work on ethics and spiritual refinement, and its concise version *Irshad al-Alba*, *Sharh Hidayat al-Adhkiya* a commentary highlighting the path of intellectual and moral guidance, and a didactic poem entitled *al-Qasam al-Shifa li'l-Asqam*, which deals with spiritual healing and moral correction. Through these works, Sheikh Abd al-Aziz established himself as an influential successor to the scholarly legacy of the Makhdom family of Malabar, continuing their mission of blending rigorous scholarship with spiritual and educational reform in the Malabar region⁸².

Makhdom-I wrote an explanation for the first 412 verses of *Alfiyya* of Ibn Malik, while the remaining portion was completed by his son.⁸³ *Alfiyya* is a text arranged in verse form to help students quickly and effectively internalize the rules of Arabic grammar. In

⁸⁰ P.K. Yasser Arafath, "Malabar Ulema in the Shafiite Cosmopolis: Fitna, Piety and Resistance in the Age of Fasad," *The Medieval History Journal* 21, no. 1 (April 2018): 28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0971945817750506>.

⁸¹ Dr. Hussain Randathani, "Makhdoms of Ponnani," William Logan on Idiologial factors of peasent movments, October 24, 2016, <https://share.google/bEcbZ5IEIWIWqlFJE>.

⁸² Shihab al-Din Abu al-Sa'adat Ahmad Kuya al-Shaliyati, "Asma ul-Muallifeen," Chaliyam ,Kerala, India, 20th century, 12, karshadclt@gmail.com.

⁸³ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 149.

Pallidars learning system, it is the final text taught in the study of grammar.⁸⁴ Beyond these, many Malabar scholars have also contributed marginal notes (*hawashi*) and glosses (*ta'liqat*) on the text. The custom of memorizing the entire *Alfiyya* has long been widespread in Malabar's *Pallidars* circles. When grammatical questions arose, earlier scholars would often recite the relevant verses of the poem as a way of addressing and clarifying them. Completing the *Alfiyya* marked a significant milestone for students, symbolizing their readiness to engage with Islamic texts and Arabic literature with accuracy and understanding. In earlier generations, it was not uncommon for students, upon finishing the *Alfiyya*, to immediately enter religious service without pursuing further studies, such was the depth of knowledge and competence they acquired from this text and its lessons.⁸⁵

Conclusion

The *Pallidars* curriculum for Arabic grammar education in Malabar demonstrates a systematic progression from basic verb conjugation to complex linguistic structures. This study has achieved its three primary objectives, providing valuable insights into Arabic grammar education in Malabar's *Pallidars* system. Firstly, the analysis revealed the unique characteristics of key textbooks used at different levels. At the primary level, works like *Mizan*, *Ajnas as-Şughra* and *Ajnas al-Kubra* introduce fundamental morphological concepts through repetition and systematic categorization. The middle level texts - *Al-Izzi fi al-Taşrif*, *Awamil Mi'ah*, and *Taqweem al-Lisan* - build on this foundation to develop more advanced grammatical understanding. At the secondary and advanced levels, works like *Qatr al-Nada* and the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Malik provide comprehensive coverage of Arabic grammar rules.

Secondly, the study evaluated the effectiveness of these textbooks in facilitating Arabic grammar learning. The structured progression from basic to complex concepts, emphasis on memorization and recitation, and integration of Quranic verses and poetry were found to be pedagogically sound approaches. The texts' concise yet comprehensive nature allows students to gain proficiency in grammar rules and their application. Thirdly, the research provided biographical information on the authors of these influential works,

⁸⁴ Shamee Babu Mudarris Makhdumiyya Dawa Collage Thrisur Saquafi, "Connecting the Dots (Interview)," 02 Octobar, Question And Answer.

⁸⁵ PA. Swadiq Faizy Thanoor, *Dars Kithabukal Charithram Swadeenam (The history and impact of Dars curriculum books)*, 149.

shedding light on scholars like Sheikh Muhammad Labba, al-Jurjani, Ibn al-Wardi, Ibn Hisham, and Ibn Malik. Their scholarly backgrounds and contributions to Arabic linguistics are highlighted, demonstrating the rich intellectual tradition behind these texts.

The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of Islamic educational practices in the region and may inform broader research on Arabic language pedagogy. Future studies could explore how this traditional system adapts to modern educational needs while preserving its core strengths. Finally, the study opens avenues for comparative research on Islamic educational practices in different cultural contexts and their impact on local Islamic traditions. This research contributes significantly to our understanding of traditional Islamic education in Malabar and provides valuable insights for educators, students, and researchers in the field of Islamic studies and Arabic language education.

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