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SOURCE-CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ZIYĀʾ AD-DĪN AL-MAKKĪ AL-KHWARAZMĪ'S KIFĀYAT AN-NAḤW FĪ ʿILM AL-IʿRĀB

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a source-critical and philological analysis of Kifāyat an-Naḥw fī ʿIlm al-Iʿrāb, a classical Arabic grammatical manual attributed to the Khwarazmian scholar Ziyāʾ ad-Dīn al-Makkī al-Khwarazmī. Although Central Asian scholars made major contributions to Arabic linguistic thought, many instructional works from the region remain insufficiently examined as manuscript traditions. The study therefore investigates the textual transmission, codicological profile, structural organization, theoretical affiliations, and pedagogical function of Kifāyat an-Naḥw. It applies a four-part methodology combining codicological description, textual criticism, structural and terminological mapping, and intertextual source analysis across manuscript exemplars and relevant grammatical works. The findings indicate that the treatise organizes Arabic grammar through a concise tripartite framework of noun, verb, and particle, while emphasizing the concepts of iʿrāb and ʿāmil. Its terminology and organization reflect a predominantly Basran orientation, alongside identifiable affinities with al-Jurjānī and al-Zamakhsharī. Codicological evidence, including compact formats, multilingual glosses, marginal commentary, and ownership or reading marks, further suggests sustained use in madrasa instruction. The study concludes that Kifāyat an-Naḥw represents a significant Khwarazmian adaptation of classical Arabic grammatical theory for non-native learners in medieval Central Asia and contributes to understanding regional traditions of Arabic philology within broader histories of manuscript-based linguistic education and transmission.

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Introduction

The intellectual history of medieval Central Asia is inseparable from the development of Arabic philology and grammatical scholarship. Between the eighth and thirteenth centuries, scholars working in Khwarazm and Transoxiana participated actively in the production, transmission, and teaching of Arabic linguistic knowledge. Although modern scholarship often emphasizes prominent figures such as al-Zamakhsharī and al-Sakkākī, the region also produced specialized instructional manuals that supported madrasa education and the acquisition of Arabic by non-native speakers (Buzurgzoda, 1997; Versteegh, 1993). Within this broader scholarly environment, Ziyāʾ ad-Dīn al-Makkī al-Khwarazmī is noteworthy for his contribution to the study of Arabic syntax (*naḥw*) and inflectional analysis (*iʿrāb*).

Al-Makkī al-Khwarazmī's *Kifāyat an-Naḥw fī ʿIlm al-Iʿrāb* (hereafter *Kifāyat an-Naḥw*) belongs to a period in which Arabic grammar had become both a highly developed scholarly discipline and a practical educational necessity across non-Arabic-speaking Islamic societies. Grammatical instruction therefore had to preserve the analytical categories of the classical tradition while presenting them in forms suitable for systematic learning (Suleiman, 1999; Wright, 1896). The organization of *Kifāyat an-Naḥw* reflects this pedagogical requirement through concise definitions, categorical sequencing, and sustained attention to the relationship between the governing agent (*ʿāmil*) and syntactic inflection.

Despite the historical and linguistic value of *Kifāyat an-Naḥw*, the work has received limited source-critical and codicological treatment. Bio-bibliographical surveys record the title and its place within the Arabic manuscript tradition, but such references do not by themselves provide a detailed account of the work's textual transmission, structural organization, or pedagogical reception (Brockelmann, 1943–1949; Sezgin, 1967–2015). This study addresses that gap by examining the treatise as both a grammatical text and a manuscript-based educational artifact.

Research Questions and Objectives

The study is organized around three research questions:

1. What manuscript sources, textual traditions, and codicological characteristics are represented by the extant copies of Kifāyat an-Naḥw?
2. What theoretical framework, pedagogical method, and linguistic sources did Ziyāʾ ad-Dīn al-Makkī al-Khwarazmī synthesize in structuring the treatise?
3. What historical and regional significance can be assigned to Kifāyat an-Naḥw within the development of Arabic grammatical scholarship in Central Asia?

By addressing these questions, the study seeks to clarify the textual identity of the treatise, situate its grammatical method within the classical tradition, and assess the extent to which local educational conditions in Khwarazm and Transoxiana shaped its organization and use.

Method

Research Design and Materials

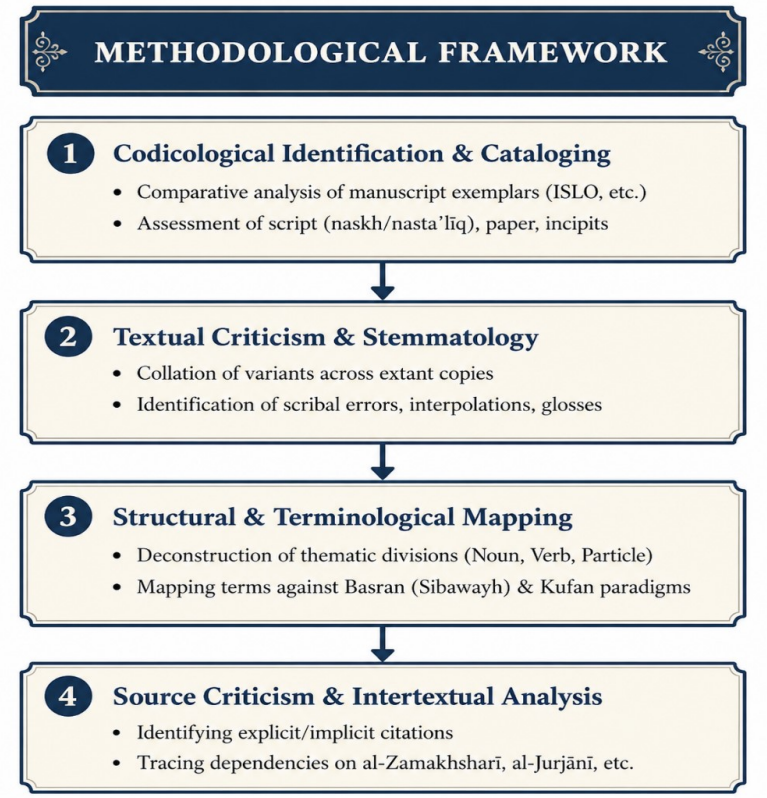
The study adopts an interdisciplinary manuscript-centered approach that combines classical philological procedures with codicological description and structural textual analysis. The primary object of investigation is *Kifāyat an-Naḥw* itself (Al-Makkī al-Khwarazmī, n.d.), examined through physical or digitized manuscript exemplars and repository descriptions. Primary attention is given to holdings associated with the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, with comparative reference to cataloged materials in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul and the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg.

The analytical procedure consists of four related stages: codicological identification and cataloging; textual criticism and comparison of manuscript variants; structural and terminological mapping; and source-critical intertextual analysis. This sequence allows physical features, textual organization, and intellectual dependencies to be considered within a single framework.

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Figure 1

Methodological Framework for the Source-Critical Investigation of Kifāyat an-Naḥw fī ʿIlm al-Iʿrāb



Codicological Analysis

Each manuscript exemplar was evaluated according to the codicological features reported or observable in the study materials. Particular attention was given to script type, writing support, physical layout, marginalia, ownership evidence, and colophon information. The analysis distinguishes Naskh, Taʿlīq, and regional Nastaʿlīq hands; considers paper characteristics and visible evidence of ink use; and records interlinear or marginal glosses in Persian and Chagatai Turkic. Reader annotations, ownership seals, waqf attributions, and reading certificates were treated as evidence for the reception and educational use of the text.

Philological and Source-Critical Analysis

The grammatical and terminological structure of *Kifāyat an-Naḥw* was compared with major works that shaped the Arabic grammatical tradition and circulated in eastern Islamic scholarly contexts. The principal comparanda were al-Zamakhsharī's *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Ṣināʿat al-Iʿrāb* (1993), ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's *Al-ʿAwāmil al-Miʾah fī al-Naḥw* (1982), and Ibn al-Ḥājib's *Al-Kāfiya* (n.d.), the latter being used for comparative structural typology. Terminological choices were categorized to assess the relative prominence of Basran principles, possible Kufan elements, and features that may reflect an eastern or Khwarazmian pedagogical synthesis.

Results

The combined codicological and philological analysis yields findings concerning the authorial context, manuscript transmission, internal structure, and intellectual lineage of the treatise.

Biographical and Bio-Bibliographical Context

Bio-bibliographical evidence places Ziyāʾ ad-Dīn al-Makkī al-Khwarazmī within the scholarly milieu of Khwarazm, while the nisbah *al-Makkī* may indicate an association with Mecca and *al-Khwarazmī* identifies a connection with the Khwarazm region. The surviving evidence does not permit a fully detailed biography; however, catalog traditions and the internal language of *Kifāyat an-Naḥw* are consistent with a late twelfth- to early thirteenth-century scholarly context (Brockelmann, 1943–1949; Haji Khalifa [Kātib

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Çelebi], 2008; Sezgin, 1967–2015). The honorific formulas, technical vocabulary, and didactic organization further align the work with the educational priorities of the late Khwarazmshah period.

Codicological Profile of the Manuscript Exemplars

The surveyed exemplars display recurrent physical features associated with compact educational manuscripts. The dimensions, script types, annotations, and colophon evidence summarized in Table 1 indicate that *Kifāyat an-Naḥw* circulated in formats suitable for consultation, memorization, and annotation.

Table 1

Codicological Characteristics of Surveyed Manuscript Exemplars

Codicological feature	Description / empirical finding
Average leaf dimensions	18.5 cm × 13.0 cm; compact student format
Written area	12.5 cm × 7.5 cm; approximately 13–17 lines per page
Script style	Predominantly clear Central Asian Naskh with dense Nastaʿlīq glosses
Incipit (khuṭbah)	Typically begins with a conventional praise formula, followed by a statement identifying the work as a concise treatise on iʿrāb
Marginal annotations	Extensive marginal commentary and interlinear translation notes in Chagatai Turkic and Persian
Colophon data	Copying dates range from the 14th to the 18th centuries, indicating prolonged manuscript use

Note. The table summarizes the empirical features reported in the source manuscript and its surveyed exemplars.

Taken together, these characteristics support the interpretation of the surviving copies as working educational manuscripts rather than purely ceremonial or luxury productions. Dense marginalia and interlinear glosses, in particular, point to sustained reader interaction across multiple linguistic communities.

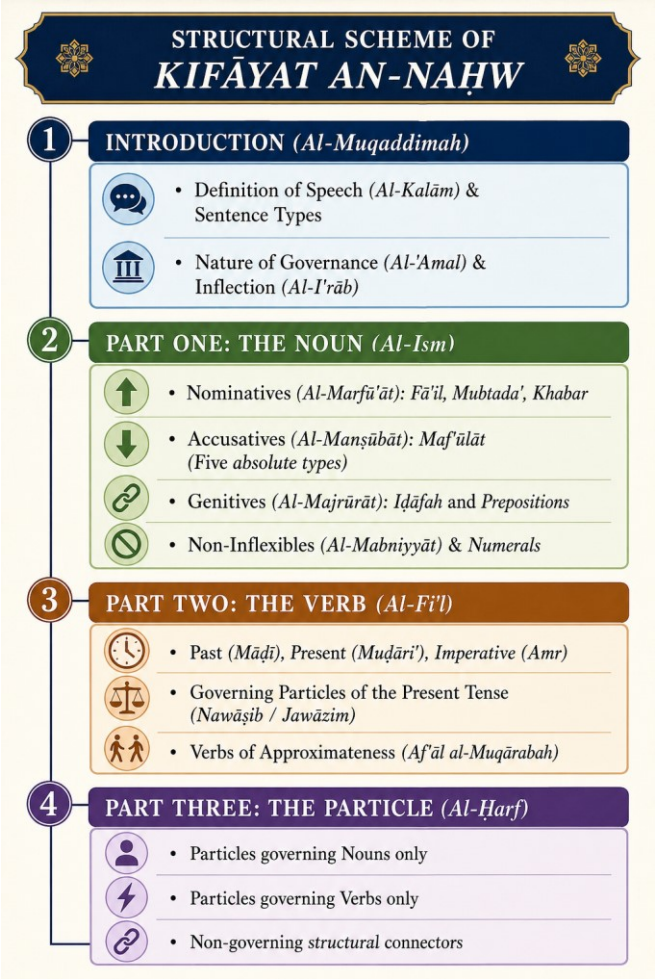
Structural Typology and Textual Architecture

The treatise is organized according to the classical tripartite division of the parts of speech, preceded by a concise theoretical introduction. The opening section defines speech and introduces the relationship between syntactic inflection (*iʿrāb*) and the governing agent (*ʿāmil*). The main body then proceeds through the noun, the verb, and the particle. This arrangement enables the text to move from foundational principles to increasingly specific categories of grammatical government.

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Figure 2

Overall Structural Framework of Kifāyat an-Naḥw



The thematic distribution reported in the study assigns approximately 50% of the text to the noun, 30% to the verb, and 20% to the particle. This distribution places nominal governance and inflection at the center of the treatise while retaining a concise treatment of verbal and particle-based government.

Source Analysis and Intellectual Lineage

Intertextual comparison suggests that al-Makkī al-Khwarazmī worked within a predominantly Basran conceptual framework while adapting established grammatical material for concise instruction. Three lines of affinity are particularly visible.

1. Basran orientation. The operational definitions in the treatise place sustained emphasis on the formal role of the governing agent (ʿāmil), a feature consistent with the analytical priorities commonly associated with the Basran tradition (Suleiman, 1999; Versteegh, 1993).
2. Affinity with al-Jurjānī. The functional categorization of governing agents parallels the organization found in al-Jurjānī's Al-ʿAwāmil al-Miʾah, especially the distinction between verbal or expressed governance (lafẓī) and abstract governance (maʿnawī) (Al-Jurjānī, 1982).
3. Affinity with al-Zamakhsharī. The treatment of non-inflected nouns and the construct state shows structural correspondence with Al-Mufaṣṣal, but Kifāyat an-Naḥw presents these matters in a more compressed, rule-oriented form suited to memorization and classroom use (Al-Zamakhsharī, 1993).

Discussion

Pedagogical Adaptation for Non-Arabic-Speaking Contexts

The principal significance of *Kifāyat an-Naḥw* lies in the way it recasts classical grammatical material for learners operating outside Arabic-speaking environments. The treatise reduces extended theoretical disputation (*khilāf*) and gives priority to compact definitions, ordered classifications, and illustrative examples. Such a strategy is consistent with the broader need to transform an advanced

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grammatical tradition into an accessible curriculum for Persian- and Turkic-speaking students in Central Asia (Buzurgzoda, 1997; Versteegh, 1993).

Two features are especially important. First, the text favors authoritative definitions over prolonged presentation of competing grammatical positions. Second, it employs relatively short Quranic phrases, prophetic traditions, and straightforward prose examples rather than relying exclusively on lexically difficult pre-Islamic poetic evidence. These choices reduce the vocabulary burden on learners while preserving the analytical categories required for grammatical parsing.

Marginalia and Reception History

The manuscript record also provides evidence for the reception history of *Kifāyat an-Naḥw*. Interlinear translations and marginal glosses show that the text was not merely copied but actively read, explained, and localized. The surviving annotations can be organized into three functional layers: linguistic glossing, grammatical clarification, and institutional or ownership evidence.

Figure 3

Layers of Textual Transmission in the Manuscript Tradition



1. Linguistic glossing. Technical Arabic terms are translated directly into Persian or Chagatai Turkic, often between the lines.
2. Grammatical clarification. Marginal notes expand difficult rules and clarify exceptional or irregular constructions (shawādh).
3. Institutional and ownership evidence. Ownership marks and reading certificates (samāʿāt) indicate supervised reading and circulation in major educational centers, including Khiva, Bukhara, and Samarkand.

These layers of annotation indicate that the manuscript tradition functioned as a dynamic instructional environment. The primary Arabic text supplied the grammatical framework, while interlinear and marginal additions mediated that framework for successive communities of readers.

Position within Khwarazmian Grammatical Scholarship

The evidence supports treating *Kifāyat an-Naḥw* as an important witness to a regional Khwarazmian mode of grammatical pedagogy. Rather than requiring the assumption of a rigidly bounded "school," the treatise demonstrates a recognizable regional pattern: systematic categorization, integration of semantic and syntactic considerations, and emphasis on the practical value of grammatical parsing for exegesis and jurisprudential study. In this sense, the work shows that Khwarazm was not simply a recipient of grammatical theories developed elsewhere; it was also a site in which those theories were reorganized for local pedagogical purposes.

Conclusion

This source-critical analysis establishes *Kifāyat an-Naḥw fī ʿIlm al-Iʿrāb* as a significant instructional text at the intersection of classical Arabic grammatical theory and medieval Central Asian pedagogy. Its textual structure, codicological profile, and intertextual affiliations together indicate a deliberate effort to organize complex grammatical knowledge in a concise and teachable form.

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Three conclusions follow from the analysis. First, the treatise presents a structured synthesis of grammatical doctrine through the tripartite sequence of noun, verb, and particle, supported by an introductory treatment of iʿrāb and ʿāmil. Second, its pedagogical method favors concise rules and accessible examples over extended theoretical controversy, making it particularly suitable for non-native learners. Third, the manuscript tradition—marked by Persian and Chagatai glosses, marginal commentary, ownership marks, and reading evidence—demonstrates prolonged regional use and active scholarly reception.

Accordingly, the study of *Kifāyat an-Naḥw* contributes to a more localized history of Arabic linguistic scholarship. It highlights the role of Khwarazmian scholars and readers not only in preserving Arabic grammatical knowledge but also in restructuring that knowledge for the educational needs of Central Asian institutions.

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