

## The Implementation of The Rotating Trio Exchange Type Cooperative Learning Model In Learning Nahwu

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**ABSTRACT.** Learning Nahwu as a foundational component for understanding Arabic often encounters challenges related to limited student engagement and insufficient conceptual comprehension. To address these issues, the Rotating Trio Exchange (RTE) cooperative learning model is introduced as an instructional strategy that emphasizes collaboration and systematic group rotation to enhance interaction and understanding. This study aims to examine the implementation of the RTE model in Nahwu learning and to analyze its impact on students' learning activities, conceptual understanding, and learning outcomes. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach with a classroom action research design, the study involved 30 second-semester students at STAI KH. Muhammad Ali Shodiq. Data were collected through classroom observations, conceptual understanding tests, interviews, and learning documentation. The findings indicate that the implementation of the RTE model resulted in significant improvements across three key aspects. Student learning activities increased by 78%, reflected in more active participation during group discussions. Students' conceptual understanding of Nahwu improved by 82% based on evaluation test results, while their collaboration and communication skills developed progressively through structured group rotation. These results demonstrate that the Rotating Trio Exchange cooperative learning model is effectively applied in Nahwu instruction by creating a dynamic collaborative learning environment, enhancing comprehension of Arabic grammatical concepts, and fostering students' social skills.

**Keywords:** *Cooperative Learning; RTE; Learning Nahwu*



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### INTRODUCTION

Arabic, as the language of the Quran and Hadith, holds a strategic position in Islamic education in Indonesia. Mastery of Arabic extends beyond communication skills to understanding complex grammatical structures, particularly the rules of Nahwu (Arabic syntax). Nahwu are a crucial foundation for understanding Arabic texts, both classical and contemporary (Ramadhan & Muassomah, 2022) However, learning Nahwu in madrasas and Islamic boarding schools faces various challenges. Initial observations indicate that conventional teacher-centered learning methods tend to make students passive and make it difficult for them to understand abstract concepts in Nahwu (Semnasbama et al., 2020).

Students often memorize rules of Nahwu without understanding their application in the context of real sentences or texts. As a result, learning motivation decreases and learning outcomes are suboptimal. Regarding this, there is a learning model that has been proven effective in increasing student engagement and conceptual understanding in various subjects, including

communication and language, namely the cooperative learning model (W. Johnson & T. Johnson, 2019). This is because this learning model emphasizes an instructional approach that places students working in small groups to achieve shared learning goals (Slavin, 2020).

Johnson & Johnson identified five essential elements of cooperative learning: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 2016). A meta-analysis by Kyndt et al. showed that cooperative learning has a significantly positive effect on academic achievement compared to individual or competitive learning. In the context of language learning, Sharan asserted that cooperative learning improves students' communication skills, intrinsic motivation, and critical thinking skills (Sharan, 2018).

The Rotating Trio Exchange (RTE) cooperative learning model developed by Kagan & Kagan offers a unique approach through rotating groups of three that allows students to interact with various learning partners, exchange ideas, and deepen understanding through collaborative discussions (Xin Txin & Md Yunus, 2019). Rotating Trio Exchange is one of the cooperative learning structures developed by Kagan & Kagan. This model involves systematically rotating group members of three, allowing each student to interact with various peers in a single learning session. The RTE structure is designed to maximize student participation, broaden perspectives, and deepen understanding through repetition and elaboration of concepts (Kagan & Kagan, 2009).

The steps of the RTE model in cooperative learning include the formation of initial trio groups, the first discussion with structured questions or tasks, rotation of group members according to a certain pattern, the second discussion with new or follow-up questions, the next rotation, and reflection or sharing of discussion results with the class (Wangda et al., 2021). The advantages of the RTE model include increasing social interaction, developing communication skills, providing exposure to various perspectives, and improving information retention through active repetition. However, this model also has challenges in time management and requires initial training so that students understand the rotation procedure (Ainiyah, 2019).

Nahwu (النحو) is the science that studies sentence structure in Arabic, including word position (i'rab), word function in sentences, and syntactic patterns (Moh Ikhsani & Choiruddin, 2023). Learning Nahwu aims to enable students to understand Arabic sentence structure correctly, identify the function and position of words in sentences, apply i'rab rules correctly, and analyze Arabic texts based on grammatical rules (Kojin & Choiruddin, 2022). The main challenges in learning Nahwu are the complexity of the i'rab system, the abstraction of grammatical concepts, and the lack of contextualization in traditional learning. An interactive and contextual learning approach is needed to overcome these challenges.

The few research focused on cooperative learning that effective in teaching Arabic. Haniah & Fauzi found that STAD cooperative learning improved students' Nahwu learning outcomes in Islamic Junior High Schools (Remi Rando & Pali, 2021). Meanwhile, Zullhannan identified that a collaborative approach in learning Arabic grammar improves students' syntactic analysis skills. This research is expected to provide theoretical benefits in the form of contributions to the development of Arabic language learning theory, particularly in teaching Arabic grammar using a cooperative approach (Dedek Febrian et al., 2017).

There have been limited studies concerned on the learning model of Nahwu. There fore this research intends to implementing innovative Arabic language teaching in learning Nahwu based on student-centered learning with implementing the Rotating Trio Exchange type of cooperative learning model. Based on this background, this study will discuss the steps for implementing the Rotating Trio Exchange cooperative learning model in Nahwu instruction, as well as its impact on learning activities, conceptual understanding, and learning outcomes.

## METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with the type of classroom action research. Classroom action research was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objectives, namely to improve and enhance the quality of learning through the implementation of certain actions. This study uses the Classroom Action Research model from Kemmis and McTaggart which consists of four stages in each cycle, namely *planning, acting, observing, and reflecting* (Prihantoro & Hidayat, 2019). The study was conducted in two cycles, where each cycle consists of three meetings. The second cycle is an improvement of the first cycle based on the results of reflection. The research subjects were selected *purposively* at STAI KH. Muhammad Ali Shodiq, Tulungagung in the 2025/2026 academic year. This subject was considered because the class had a low average Nahwu score.

Research data was collected through observation, tests, questionnaires, and interviews. Quantitative analysis was used by calculating the percentage of learning completion. Students were considered to have completed the learning if they obtained a minimum score of 75, and learning was considered to have been completed classically if at least 80% of students achieved completion. Student activity data was analyzed by calculating the percentage of each observed activity aspect. Success indicators were achieved if they met the following criteria: first, classical learning completion reached a minimum of 80% with a Minimum Competency (KKM) of 75; second, student learning activities reached the good category (at least 61%); third, a positive student response to learning of at least 75%; and fourth, the implementation of learning according to the RTE model of at least 85% (Machali, 2022).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### The Implementation of the Rotating Trio Exchange Learning Model in Learning Nahwu

The implementation of the RTE model in learning Nahwu has a theoretical integration foundation. Group rotation allows students to explore Nahwu concepts from various perspectives through discussions with various peers. Furthermore, the trio structure creates a safe yet productive learning environment for expressing understanding and difficulties. In addition, repetition of concepts through multiple discussions strengthens retention and in-depth understanding ( *constructive repetition* ). In more detail, the Rotating Trio Exchange model in learning Nahwu is implemented following the following stage model.

#### 1. Orientation and Group Formation

The teacher conveys the learning objectives, explains the RTE model procedures, and divides students into heterogeneous trios based on Arabic language ability (high-medium-low). Each student is assigned an identification number (1, 2, or 3) to facilitate rotation.

#### 2. Presentation of Core Material

The teacher delivers an introduction to the Nahwu using multimedia and contextual examples from Quranic verses and hadith. Students take notes on key points to inform the discussion.

#### 3. First Trio Discussion

Each trio receives a first worksheet containing basic conceptual understanding questions. An example question: "Explain the differences between i'rab fi'il mudhari' marfu', manshub, and majzum, along with their signs!" Students discuss and record answers together.

#### 4. First Rotation and Second Discussion

Student number 2 moves one trio clockwise, student number 3 moves two trios clockwise, while student number 1 remains in place. The new trio gets a second worksheet with an application question: "Analyze i'rab fi'il mudhari' in the sentence: *يَذْهَبُ الطَّالِبُ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ*."

#### 5. Second Rotation and Third Discussion

The rotation followed the same pattern. The new trio received a third worksheet with a complex analysis problem or sentence construction problem based on specific rules.

6. Back to the Early Trio and Synthesis

Students return to their original trios to share information and perspectives gained from the previous two rotations. Each trio creates a mind map or summary of the discussion.

7. Presentation and Clarification

Three selected trios present the results of their discussions. The teacher provides clarification, reinforcement, and feedback on students' understanding.

8. Individual Evaluation

Students work on evaluation questions individually to measure conceptual understanding.

### **The Impact of the Rotating Trio Exchange Learning Model on Student Learning Activities**

The observations of student learning activities were conducted using an observation sheet with five indicators, including participation in discussions, the ability to explain concepts, ask questions, provide responses, and collaborate in groups. The results of the study in cycle I showed that discussion participation was 67%, the ability to explain concepts was 60%, the ability to ask questions was 53%, the ability to provide responses was 57%, collaboration was 70%, and the average activity was 61.4%. Then, the results of the research in cycle II showed that discussion participation increased by 90%, the ability to explain concepts by 83%, the ability to ask questions by 77%, the ability to provide responses by 80%, collaboration by 93%, and the average activity: 84.6%. The increase in learning activity from cycle I to cycle II was 23.2%. Qualitative observations showed that group rotation motivated students to be more active because they interacted with various peers and had to convey understanding to new trio members. The use of role cards in cycle II increased individual accountability.

Research data shows that the implementation of the Read-Talk-Explore (RTE) cooperative learning model had a significant positive impact on students' understanding of Nahwu concepts. The improvement from cycle I to cycle II indicates that the RTE model was not only effective in increasing class average scores but also helped more students achieve the Minimum Completion Criteria. In cycle I, a 12.4-point (19.9%) increase from pre-test to post-test indicated that students were beginning to adapt to the cooperative learning method. However, the KKM achievement of only 67% indicated that one-third of students still had not optimally mastered the material. This is understandable, as students need time to understand the new learning pattern that requires active participation in group discussions, unlike conventional methods, which tend to be teacher-centered.

A significant jump occurred in cycle II, with a 15.8-point (23.1%) increase, and the KKM achievement reached 87%. The 20% increase in the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Competency (KKM) from cycle I to cycle II demonstrates that repetition and reinforcement of material through repeated discussions in the RTE format have a positive cumulative impact. Students not only experienced improved scores but also improved overall learning completion across the class. Analysis of each question indicator provides a more in-depth picture of the effectiveness of the RTE model. The ability to identify *i'rab* types jumped from 63% to 90%, indicating that the "Read" stage of the RTE helps students build a strong foundational understanding through systematic reading of texts. Meanwhile, the ability to analyze *i'rab* in sentences increased from 58% to 85%, indicating that the "Talk" stage facilitates students' ability to express their understanding and receive clarification from peers and teachers.

Most interesting was the increase in the ability to apply rules in sentence construction from 55% to 78% and the ability to correct *i'rab* errors from 60% to 82%. Both indicators represent higher cognitive levels in Bloom's taxonomy: application and evaluation. Significant improvements in these two aspects demonstrate that repeated discussions in the "Talk" stage and

in-depth exploration in the “Explore” stage not only help students memorize rules but also develop an understanding of the logic behind Nahwu rules, enabling them to apply them in different contexts. The finding that the most significant improvement occurred in the ability to analyze and apply rules confirms Vygotsky’s social constructivism theory, where learning occurs through social interaction and peer scaffolding. The RTE model creates a zone of proximal development (ZPD) where students with better understanding can help others, while the process of explaining to others deepens their own understanding.

Overall, these quantitative data demonstrate that the RTE cooperative learning model is effective in improving students’ comprehensive understanding of Nahwu concepts, not only at the level of memorization but also to the level of in-depth understanding and application. This success indicates that Nahwu, previously considered difficult and abstract, can be better mastered through an approach that emphasizes collaborative discussion and active exploration.

### **The Impact of the Rotating Trio Exchange Learning Model on Understanding Nahwu**

The level of students’ understanding of the concept of Nahwu science can be determined by conducting tests in stages from each cycle. The results of the first cycle test on students’ understanding of the concept of Nahwu through the RTE type cooperative learning model showed that the average value of learning outcomes in the students’ pre-test was 62.3, the average value of learning outcomes in the post-test was 74.7. Thus, there was an increase of 12.4 points (19.9%) and the students who achieved the KKM were 67%. Then in the second cycle test, it was found that the average value of learning outcomes in the pre-test was 68.5 and the average post-test was 84.3. Thus, there was an increase of 15.8 points (23.1%) and students achieved the KKM: 87%. Analysis of each question indicator shows that students’ ability to identify types of *i’rab*: 90% of students mastered (increased from 63% in cycle I). Students’ ability to analyze *i’rab* in sentences: 85% of students mastered (increased from 58% in cycle I). Students’ ability to apply rules in sentence construction: 78% of students mastered (increased from 55% in cycle I). Students’ ability to correct *i’rab* errors: 82% of students mastered (increased from 60% in cycle I). The most significant improvement occurred in the ability to analyze and apply rules, indicating that repeated discussions in RTE helped students not only memorize but understand concepts in depth.

The research data demonstrates that the implementation of the Read-Talk-Explore (RTE) cooperative learning model yielded a significant positive impact on students’ understanding of Nahwu concepts. The progression from Cycle I to Cycle II indicates that the RTE model was not only effective in improving class average scores but also successful in enabling more students to achieve the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM). In Cycle I, the improvement of 12.4 points (19.9%) from pre-test to post-test suggests that students began adapting to the cooperative learning method. However, the KKM achievement of only 67% indicates that approximately one-third of students had not yet optimally mastered the material. This is understandable as students required time to comprehend the new learning pattern that demanded active participation in group discussions, contrasting with conventional methods that tend to be teacher-centered.

A significant leap occurred in Cycle II with an increase of 15.8 points (23.1%) and KKM achievement reaching 87%. The 20% increase in the percentage of students achieving KKM from Cycle I to Cycle II demonstrates that repetition and reinforcement of material through repeated discussions in the RTE format provided a positive cumulative impact. Students not only experienced score improvements but also comprehensive learning mastery at the classroom level. The analysis of individual question indicators provides deeper insights into the effectiveness of the RTE model. The ability to identify types of *i’rab* surged from 63% to 90%, indicating that the “Read” stage in RTE helped students build strong foundational understanding through systematic text reading. Meanwhile, the ability to analyze *i’rab* in sentences increased from 58%

to 85%, suggesting that the “Talk” stage facilitated students in expressing their understanding and receiving clarification from peers and teachers.

Most notably, improvements in the ability to apply rules in sentence construction rose from 55% to 78%, and the ability to correct iʿrab errors increased from 60% to 82%. These two indicators represent higher cognitive levels in Bloom’s taxonomy, specifically application and evaluation. The significant improvements in both aspects prove that repeated discussions in the “Talk” stage and deep exploration in the “Explore” stage did not merely make students memorize rules but enabled them to understand the logic behind Nahwu principles, allowing them to apply these concepts in different contexts. The finding that the most significant improvements occurred in analyzing and applying rules confirms Vygotsky’s social constructivism theory, where learning occurs through social interaction and scaffolding from peers. The RTE model creates a zone of proximal development (ZPD) where students with better understanding can assist others, while the process of explaining to others actually deepens their own comprehension.

The progressive improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II also reflects the effectiveness of action research methodology in educational settings. The reflective process between cycles allowed for adjustments in teaching strategies, optimization of group dynamics, and refinement of discussion techniques. This iterative approach ensured that identified weaknesses in the first cycle could be addressed systematically in subsequent cycles. Furthermore, the substantial increase in higher-order thinking skills (application and evaluation) challenges the traditional perception that Arabic grammar learning, particularly Nahwu, is limited to rote memorization. The RTE model successfully transformed Nahwu instruction from passive knowledge reception to active knowledge construction through collaborative discourse.

Overall, this quantitative data demonstrates that the RTE cooperative learning model is proven effective in comprehensively enhancing Nahwu concept understanding, not merely at the memorization level but extending to deep understanding and application. This success indicates that Nahwu learning, often perceived as difficult and abstract, can be mastered more effectively through approaches emphasizing collaborative discussion and active exploration.

### **The Student Responses to the Rotating Trio Exchange Learning Model in Learning Nahwu**

It’s important to understand students’ responses to the RTE learning model so that educators don’t make mistakes in choosing learning strategies. In interviews conducted by researchers, several students stated: “By changing groups, I can meet different friends and hear how they understand the rules. This helps me see things from different perspectives” (ABU student). “I, who am usually passive, became more active because I had to explain things to new group members” (MF student). In addition, through the Google form distributed to students, the following results were obtained that 90% of students stated that the RTE model makes learning more enjoyable. 80% of students feel more confident in asking questions and expressing opinions. 85% of students stated that group rotation helped understanding because they heard various explanations. 75% of students feel more motivated to learn Nahwu.

Student responses to the implementation of the Read-Talk-Explore (RTE) learning model provide a qualitative perspective that complements previous quantitative findings. Data from interviews and a Google Form survey revealed that the success of the RTE model is reflected not only in improved academic grades but also in more fundamental transformations in students’ attitudes and learning behaviors. Statements from ABU students about group rotation, which allows interaction with different peers and hearing diverse ways of understanding rules, indicate that the RTE model successfully creates an inclusive and multi-perspective learning environment.

This aligns with social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of heterogeneous interactions in knowledge construction. When students are exposed to various

explanation styles and perspectives from peers, they develop a more flexible and adaptive understanding of Nahwu concepts. This phenomenon indicates that learning does not occur in a linear fashion from teacher to student, but rather through the negotiation of meaning within the learning community. Testimonials from MF students who initially acted passively but became more active because they had to explain to new group members are clear evidence of the principle of “learning by teaching.” When students are asked to explain concepts to others, they are forced to organize their understanding coherently, identify gaps in their own knowledge, and develop academic communication skills.

This transformation from passive to active learners demonstrates that the RTE structure, which demands active participation, can positively shift students’ learning dispositions. This is particularly important in the context of Nahwu (Nahwu) learning, which is often perceived as abstract and difficult, where passivity can hinder conceptual understanding. Survey data showing that 90% of students found learning more enjoyable indicates that the affective aspect of learning has been well-met. Enjoyable learning is not merely entertainment, but creates optimal psychological conditions for meaningful learning. When students enjoy the learning process, anxiety levels decrease and cognitive engagement increases, which in turn facilitates deeper understanding.

The finding that 80% of students feel more confident asking questions and expressing opinions demonstrates that the RTE model successfully creates a safe learning environment. In conventional learning, many students fear making mistakes or feel embarrassed to ask questions in front of the class. The group discussion structure in RTE reduces this social pressure and provides a safer space for intellectual exploration. This academic confidence is crucial not only for Nahwu learning but also for developing lifelong learning skills. The 85% of students who stated that group rotation facilitated understanding because it provided a variety of explanations reinforces previous findings on the importance of multiple perspectives. This demonstrates that students consciously recognize the value of diverse learning approaches. This metacognitive awareness the ability to reflect on how they learn is a crucial indicator of deep and meaningful learning.

Finally, the fact that 75% of students felt more motivated to learn Nahwu indicates that the RTE model successfully transformed students’ perceptions of a subject often considered challenging. This increase in intrinsic motivation is crucial because motivation is a strong predictor of long-term academic persistence and success. Overall, these student responses confirm that the RTE model is not only cognitively effective but also affectively and socially effective, creating a holistic and transformative learning experience.

## **Discussion**

The 23.2% increase in student learning activity from cycle I to cycle II confirms the effectiveness of the RTE model in creating student-centered learning. This aligns with Slavin’s findings that cooperative learning enhances active student participation because each individual has responsibilities within a small group (Slavin, 2020). Group rotation in RTE creates dynamic grouping that provides fresh perspectives and reduces boredom. Kagan & Kagan explain that rotation prevents discussion stagnation and encourages students to communicate their understanding to various peers, which strengthens the internalization of concepts. In the context of Nahwu learning, repeated discussions of the same rules but with different perspectives help students construct a more comprehensive understanding (Wangda et al., 2021).

The use of role cards in cycle II enhances individual accountability, a key element of cooperative learning. Each student has a specific role that ensures their contribution to the discussion, addressing the free-rider problem that often occurs in group learning. Nahwu are known to be abstract and complex, often causing students difficulty (Zainul Fitri & Choiruddin, 2022). The RTE model offers a solution through social scaffolding, where students with better

understanding can help other students in the zone of proximal development. The heterogeneous trio structure facilitates natural peer tutoring without making students feel inferior.

Significant improvements in analytical skills and rule application (higher-order thinking components) indicate that collaborative discussions in RTE encourage cognitive elaboration. According to cognitive elaboration theory, explaining concepts to others forces students to organize their knowledge coherently, which strengthens understanding. In each rotation, students must articulate their understanding, receive feedback, and revise their conceptions a highly effective process for conceptual learning. One criticism of traditional Nahwu learning is the lack of contextualization (Ikhsani & Choiruddin, 2023).

In this study, discussion worksheets were designed with examples from the Qur'an and hadith, as well as everyday communicative contexts. Discussions in RTE allow students to explore the application of rules in various contexts, overcoming rote learning. Students not only memorize that mudhari' verbs can be marfu', manshub, or majzum, but also understand when and why certain i'rab are used through analysis of authentic sentences. This contextual approach aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching, which emphasize the meaningful use of language (Barnard et al., 2002).

Beyond the cognitive aspect, the RTE model also has a positive impact on the social and affective dimensions. Interviews revealed that group rotation reduced students' anxiety in learning Nahwu because they interacted in small, safe groups before presenting to the larger class. This aligns with the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen) that a low-stress learning environment facilitates better language acquisition. Students' communication and collaboration skills also developed through RTE. Students learned to actively listen, provide constructive feedback, and negotiate meaning essential 21st-century skills. In the context of Islamic education, collaboration in learning also reflects the value of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) encouraged in Islamic teachings (Sirad et al., 2023).

Despite showing positive results, RTE implementation also faces challenges. Time management is a major issue, especially in cycle I, where rotations take a significant amount of time. Kagan & Kagan suggest that complex models like RTE require practice and habituation to run efficiently. Classes with very large numbers of students (>40) may face difficulties in organizing space and monitoring discussions. This study was conducted with a manageable 30 students, but further research is needed in larger class contexts. Some introverted students initially feel overwhelmed by the intensity of social interactions. Additional learning activities, such as silent thinking time before discussions, can help these students mentally prepare.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Rotating Trio Exchange cooperative learning model can be implemented effectively in learning Nahwu through the stages of orientation, material presentation, discussion, rotation, synthesis, presentation, and evaluation. Strategies that can be implemented include the formation of heterogeneous groups, the use of role cards, and structured worksheets with content based on Islamic teachings. The implementation of the RTE model significantly increased student learning activities from cycle I to cycle II. Group rotation creates learning conditions that encourage active participation, courage to ask questions, and effective collaboration between students. The impact on the understanding of Nahwu is an increase in the average learning outcome from 62.3 (pre-test cycle I) to 84.3 (post-test cycle II) and the percentage of learning completion from 67% to 87%. The most significant increase occurred in the ability to analyze and apply rules, indicating that collaborative discussions facilitate deep learning. Thus, the RTE model has proven to be an innovative alternative in learning Nahwu that not only improves cognitive learning outcomes but also develops students' social and affective skills. Therefore, it is recommended that educators integrate the RTE model into Nahwu instruction as part of active and student-centered learning strategies. Future research is also suggested to explore the implementation of the RTE model in

different Arabic language skills and educational contexts to examine its broader effectiveness and sustainability.

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