

## TEAM GAMES TOURNAMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' ARABIC VOCABULARY: A LESSON FROM ISLAMIC HIGH SCHOOLS

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### Abstract

Mastery of Arabic vocabulary is a fundamental requirement that supports students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, many learners continue to struggle due to limited instructional variety and teacher-centered practices that reduce engagement and learning motivation. This issue is particularly evident among Grade XI students at MA PPM Tana Toraja, whose low vocabulary mastery negatively affects their ability to comprehend texts and use Arabic actively. While previous studies have emphasized the potential of cooperative learning strategies, limited empirical research focuses on the application of the Team Games Tournament (TGT) method in Arabic vocabulary instruction within boarding school contexts. To address this gap, the present study examines the effectiveness of the TGT method in enhancing students' Arabic vocabulary mastery. Employing a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design, the study involved 17 students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using vocabulary tests, observation sheets, and student perception questionnaires, and analyzed through descriptive statistics, normality testing, and paired-samples *t*-test. The findings show a substantial improvement, with the mean score increasing from 47.06 on the pre-test to 84.41 on the post-test, and the *t*-test indicating a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ). These results demonstrate that the collaborative, game-oriented, and competitive elements of TGT effectively increase students' motivation, participation, and vocabulary retention. Overall, the study concludes that the TGT method is an effective, engaging, and practical approach for improving students' Arabic vocabulary mastery.

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## INTRODUCTION

Arabic is one of the Semitic languages characterized by distinctive forms, meanings, and structures. Its special status as the language of the Qur'an gives it both religious and scholarly significance. In learning Arabic as a foreign language, students are expected to master the four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are closely interconnected and largely dependent on strong vocabulary mastery (Najipa & Zainuddin, 2023) Vocabulary forms the foundation for understanding texts, constructing grammatically correct sentences, and expressing ideas accurately (Zulkarnain et al., 2024)

Moeliono defines vocabulary as a collection of words within a language, while Soemargono emphasizes that vocabulary consists of words actively used by speakers. In Arabic, mufrodat is a crucial linguistic element that enables learners to achieve effective communication (Nengrum dan Arif, 2020). Therefore, vocabulary enrichment becomes a vital component of Arabic instruction for both novice and advanced learners (Muchtar, 2018).

In practice, however, Arabic instruction in many educational institutions still encounters various challenges. Teaching that relies heavily on lecturing tends to make students passive, less motivated, and easily disengaged from the learning process. Limited vocabulary mastery often prevents students from comprehending texts, constructing sentences accurately, and recalling words, meanings, and spellings. These limitations lead to errors in writing, pronunciation, and word choice during speaking or writing activities (Fatimah, 2020; Machfudi, 2022) Students' difficulties are further compounded by inadequate learning media, which often result in monotonous instruction and reduced engagement, ultimately affecting learning outcomes negatively (Darmayanti, 2022)

A similar condition is observed at Muhammadiyah Development Islamic Boarding School Senior High School (MA PPM) Tana Toraja. Although this institution has been established since 1991, the Arabic vocabulary mastery of Grade XI students remains low. Students still struggle to understand texts, construct sentences, and use Arabic actively because of limited vocabulary knowledge. This low proficiency is influenced by the predominance of teacher-centered instructional approaches that create a less interactive and less stimulating learning environment. These challenges underline the need for the implementation of a more effective, engaging, and student-centered method that can promote active participation and meaningful vocabulary learning.

Selecting an appropriate instructional method is essential because the method determines how teaching and learning are carried out. The Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) defines a method as a systematic way to achieve a specific goal, while Djamarah explains that a method is a technique used to accomplish learning objectives (Ramdani et al., 2023) Etymologically, the term method derives from the Greek word *methodos*, meaning a way or path toward achieving a target (Nuryaqli, 2019) Mukrimah further emphasizes that a teaching method consists of procedures used by teachers during instructional interactions, while Sumiati and Asra in (Saadati, 2016) note that the effectiveness of a method depends on its suitability with learning objectives, student characteristics, available facilities, time allocation, and instructional materials. Therefore, a method that can reduce boredom, increase motivation, and involve students actively is urgently needed.

One method that aligns with these needs is the Team Games Tournament (TGT) model. TGT is a cooperative learning approach that integrates teamwork, instructional games, competitive tournaments, and reward systems. Developed by David DeVries and Keith Edwards at Johns Hopkins University, TGT incorporates academic competitions and structured quizzes to enhance student understanding (Sulistio et al., n.d.). In the TGT model, students are placed into heterogeneous groups of three to five members. According to Saco in (Saputri, 2020), the games in TGT involve numbered cards containing material-based questions that students must answer to earn points for their teams. Slavin in (Fuad, 2017) outlines five major components of TGT: class presentation, team study, games, tournaments, and team recognition. Each component contributes to creating a collaborative, enjoyable, and motivating learning environment.

Prior research provides evidence supporting the relevance of TGT for language learning. (Fuad, 2017) found that TGT increased student participation and motivation in Arabic learning, while (Rahmawati, 2023) demonstrated that innovative teaching methods—such as Word Wall media—can enhance Arabic vocabulary mastery. Likewise, Fadila and (Agussalim, 2025) found that digital applications can effectively support vocabulary

development. Although these studies highlight the importance of innovation in vocabulary instruction, the empirical application of TGT specifically within Arabic learning in Indonesian boarding school contexts remains limited. Most existing research focuses on English or general subjects, leaving a clear gap concerning the use of TGT to address Arabic vocabulary-learning challenges among learners in Islamic boarding schools.

Based on this gap, the present study aims to examine the effectiveness of the Team Games Tournament (TGT) method in enhancing the Arabic vocabulary mastery of Grade XI students at MA PPM Tana Toraja. This research seeks to provide empirical evidence on whether TGT can significantly improve vocabulary acquisition within a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design. The findings are expected to contribute meaningful insights into the development of more interactive, engaging, and effective Arabic teaching methods and offer practical implications for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational institutions seeking to improve the quality of Arabic language instruction.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This section presents the detailed procedures undertaken in preparing and executing the study, including data collection techniques, research design, and analytical procedures. The research was conducted chronologically, beginning with the preparation of instructional materials, the organization of the Team Games Tournament (TGT) activities, and the development of research instruments. The implementation of the study aligned with the school's established teaching schedule and involved administering pre-tests and post-tests to measure students' vocabulary improvement. The methods employed in this research were selected to achieve the objective of determining the effectiveness of the TGT method in enhancing Arabic vocabulary mastery among Grade XI students at MA PPM Tana Toraja. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to evaluate changes in students' performance before and after the treatment.

### Research Design

Experimental quantitative research is designed to deliver a treatment within a defined framework to assess its effect on the variables being studied (Sugiyono, 2018). This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental approach using a one-group pre-test–post-test design, as recommended in educational intervention studies (Khaerunnisa et al., 2022). In this design, students first received a pre-test ( $O_1$ ) to assess their baseline Arabic vocabulary abilities. This was followed by the treatment ( $X$ ), consisting of instruction using the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) method. After the treatment, a post-test ( $O_2$ ) of comparable difficulty and structure was administered to evaluate the extent of improvement. The design is illustrated as  $O_1 - X - O_2$ , where  $O_1$  represents the pre-test,  $X$  the intervention, and  $O_2$  the post-test. The independent variable of the study was the TGT learning method, while the dependent variable was students' Arabic vocabulary mastery. This design was chosen because it allows researchers to identify learning gains attributable to the treatment and is appropriate when a control group is not available.

### Population and Sample

The study was conducted at MA PPM Tana Toraja, with the target population consisting of all Grade XI students enrolled in the institution. The entire population of 17 students was taken as the sample, making this study employ a saturated sampling technique. All students were placed into a single treatment group, and no control group was formed, in accordance with the pre-experimental design. This sampling approach was considered appropriate because the students demonstrated similar instructional backgrounds and were all directly involved in the school's Arabic language learning program. The research activities—including pre-tests, TGT implementation, and post-tests—were conducted according to the

school's instructional schedule to ensure that the learning environment remained natural and authentic.

### Instruments

Data were collected using three instruments: (1) a written Arabic vocabulary test, (2) an observation sheet, and (3) a student perception questionnaire. The primary research instrument was the vocabulary test, administered as both pre-test and post-test. It was constructed based on learning indicators and aligned with the principles of validity and measurability as outlined by (Creswell, 2012). The items measured students' ability to understand word meanings, apply vocabulary in context, and recognize correct Arabic spellings. Before implementation, the instrument underwent expert review to ensure content validity. The observation sheet was used to record student engagement, participation, and interaction during TGT activities, capturing qualitative aspects of the learning process. The perception questionnaire, presented in a Likert-scale format, measured students' motivation, enjoyment, and attitudes toward the TGT method. These instruments together provided comprehensive data on both learning outcomes and learning experiences.

### Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were used to present the mean, lowest score, highest score, and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test results. Before conducting hypothesis testing, a normality test was performed to ensure that the data met the assumptions required for parametric analysis. After the data were confirmed to be normally distributed, the paired-samples t-test was applied to determine whether a significant difference existed between pre-test and post-test scores. The paired t-test was performed to statistically assess the effectiveness of the TGT method in improving students' Arabic vocabulary mastery. Through this analytical approach, the study sought to determine whether the application of the TGT method resulted in a measurable and significant enhancement in students' learning outcomes.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

This section presents the results of the research based on the procedures described in the previous method section. The findings emphasize the improvement of students' Arabic vocabulary mastery after receiving treatment using the Team Games Tournament (TGT) method. Data were obtained from pre-test and post-test scores and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The results are displayed chronologically and supported with tables and figures to clarify changes in students' performance.

The pre-test was administered to determine the students' initial Arabic vocabulary mastery before the TGT treatment. The scores ranged from low to moderate, with most students scoring below the minimum mastery criteria. The descriptive statistics for the pre-test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Pre-Test Score Distribution*

No	Interval	Frequency	%	Category
1	80–100	0	0.00	Very Good
2	65–79	2	11.76	Good
3	55–64	3	17.65	Fair
4	0–54	12	70.59	Poor
Total		17	100.00	

Table 1 shows that the students' pre test performance was generally low. Out of 17 students, none reached the very good category with scores between 80 and 100, which means

no student demonstrated a high level of mastery before the treatment or instructional intervention was given. Only 2 students, or 11.76%, were in the Good category, indicating that a very small proportion of the class had relatively satisfactory prior knowledge or skill. Furthermore, 3 students, or 17.65%, were classified in the Fair category, showing that only a limited number of students had a moderate level of achievement. The largest proportion of students, namely 12 out of 17 students or 70.59%, fell into the Poor category with scores ranging from 0 to 54. This dominant percentage clearly indicates that most students had serious difficulties or insufficient competence in the assessed material before the implementation of the learning treatment. Overall, the table suggests that the students' initial ability was still weak and below the expected standard. Since the majority of students were in the poor category and none achieved the very good level, the pre test results reflect a strong need for improvement through appropriate teaching strategies or learning interventions. These findings also provide an important baseline for comparing students' progress in the post test.

After the implementation of the TGT method, a post-test was administered to measure the improvement in students' Arabic vocabulary mastery. The descriptive results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2  
Post-Test Score Distribution

No	Interval	Frequency	%	Category
1	85–100	6	35.29	Very Good
2	75–84	7	41.18	Good
3	65–74	3	17.65	Fair
4	0–64	1	5.88	Poor
Total		17	100.00	

Table 2 shows that the students' post test results improved considerably after the learning process or treatment was implemented. Out of 17 students, 6 students, or 35.29%, achieved scores in the Very Good category with intervals ranging from 85 to 100. This indicates that more than one third of the students were able to demonstrate a high level of mastery of the material after the intervention. In addition, 7 students, or 41.18%, were classified in the Good category with scores between 75 and 84. This percentage is the highest among all categories, showing that the majority of students reached a satisfactory and above average level of achievement. Meanwhile, 3 students, or 17.65%, fell into the Fair category, which means that only a small number of students were still at a moderate level of performance. Only 1 student, or 5.88%, remained in the Poor category with a score between 0 and 64. This very small percentage suggests that almost all students showed meaningful progress in their learning outcomes. Overall, the post test score distribution reflects a substantial improvement in students' achievement, as most of them were concentrated in the good and very good categories. These results indicate that the treatment or instructional strategy used was effective in improving students' learning performance.

### Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test

The comparative results clearly show the effectiveness of the TGT method. The improvement can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3  
Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean Scores

Test Type	Mean Score	Description
Pre-Test	47.06	Low vocabulary mastery
Post-Test	84.41	High vocabulary mastery

Table 3 shows a clear difference between the students' mean scores in the pre test and post test. The mean score in the pre test was 47.06, which is categorized as low vocabulary mastery. This result indicates that before the treatment or learning intervention was implemented, the students generally had limited understanding and control of vocabulary. Their initial performance suggests that many of them still experienced difficulties in recognizing, understanding, and using vocabulary appropriately. After the treatment, the mean score increased significantly to 84.41, which falls into the category of high vocabulary mastery. This substantial increase indicates that the students achieved much better vocabulary performance in the post test. The improvement reflects that the instructional strategy or treatment given during the learning process was effective in helping students expand their vocabulary knowledge and use it more successfully. Overall, the comparison between the pre test and post test mean scores demonstrates a remarkable improvement in students' vocabulary mastery. The increase from 47.06 to 84.41 shows that the students moved from a low to a high level of achievement. This finding strongly suggests that the learning intervention had a positive impact on students' vocabulary development and contributed significantly to improving their learning outcomes.

The inferential analysis using the paired sample t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores ( $p < 0.001$ ). This confirms that the TGT method had a significant impact on students' Arabic vocabulary mastery.

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Team Games Tournament (TGT) learning model is highly effective in enhancing the Arabic vocabulary mastery of eleventh-grade students at MA PPM Tana Toraja. This result directly answers the main research question: whether TGT can improve students' vocabulary mastery more effectively than conventional teacher-centered instruction. The substantial rise in students' scores from the pretest (47.06) to the posttest (84.41) provides clear evidence of the model's strong positive impact. This improvement aligns with initial observations that students previously struggled with vocabulary due to monotonous learning activities and fluctuating motivation, highlighting the need for an engaging and interactive instructional method.

The first major finding indicates a highly significant improvement in vocabulary achievement following the application of TGT. This occurred because TGT intentionally incorporates elements of games, tournaments, and team collaboration—components that effectively address boredom commonly observed in traditional Arabic learning. These features increase student engagement and motivation, prompting them to review and internalize vocabulary more thoroughly. This outcome is consistent with studies affirming the benefits of TGT. For example, (Raflī Husaeri & Munawaroh, 2025) showed that TGT combined with a pre–post testing system increased students' vocabulary scores from 62.70 to 85.84 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, (Muflihah dan Ramdani, 2022) also demonstrated the effectiveness of TGT in improving Arabic vocabulary mastery. These results support the argument that the combination of motivation, social interaction, and competitive elements within TGT produces a dynamic and effective learning process.

The second finding relates to the distribution of students' abilities before and after the intervention. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test ( $\text{sig} = 0.081$ ) confirmed that the data were normally distributed, allowing the use of parametric statistical analyses. More importantly, the normal distribution suggests that the improvement was not limited to students with high initial scores but was experienced across nearly all participants. This aligns with Vygotsky's social learning theory, which posits that social interaction—particularly with peers—enables students with lower initial abilities to progress within their zone of proximal development. In the TGT context, peer collaboration and group discussions allowed weaker students to learn from more proficient peers, while higher-achieving students reinforced their

understanding through peer tutoring. This balance helped create a more even distribution of learning gains. Supporting studies, such as (Zulkarnain et al., 2024), also show that TGT can promote more evenly distributed vocabulary improvement, with significant differences compared to control groups ( $p = 0.000$ ). Although the findings are promising, this study acknowledges limitations concerning the influence of individual student motivation and classroom dynamics, which were not measured explicitly.

The third finding concerns the statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, as shown by the paired-samples t-test ( $p < 0.001$ ). The mean increase of approximately 37 points confirms that the TGT method produced a measurable positive effect on students' Arabic vocabulary mastery. The competitive and game-based mechanisms within TGT encouraged students to memorize and understand new vocabulary more actively. These mechanisms also enabled learners to repeatedly review vocabulary in meaningful contexts, strengthening both short-term and long-term retention. This conclusion aligns with (Barnaba & Tou, 2014), who found that implementing TGT for English vocabulary learning improved students' mastery of word recognition and understanding, demonstrating the cross-linguistic potential of TGT. Nevertheless, the current study is limited by the relatively short intervention duration, and future research is needed to examine the long-term effects of TGT on vocabulary retention.

The fourth finding highlights the central role of social interaction and group collaboration as key contributors to the success of TGT. Students engaged in discussions, corrected their peers, and competed as teams, fostering a learning environment that was both supportive and challenging. Low-achieving students benefited from peer assistance, while high-achieving students strengthened their own comprehension through tutoring activities. The combination of collaboration and competition created a dynamic classroom environment that motivated students to participate actively and consistently. This supports the notion that cooperative learning structures—when implemented effectively—can enhance vocabulary learning outcomes more optimally compared to traditional methods.

Overall, the integrated findings confirm that the Teams Games Tournament learning model makes a substantial contribution to improving Arabic vocabulary mastery among eleventh-grade students at MA PPM Tana Toraja. The effectiveness of TGT is evidenced not only by the significant increase in vocabulary scores but also by the more evenly distributed learning gains. The dynamic interplay of active engagement, increased motivation, and social interaction throughout the learning process forms the core mechanism behind the model's success. Despite several limitations, such as the short treatment duration and lack of psychological measurements, this study provides strong empirical evidence that TGT holds significant potential as an instructional method for addressing challenges in Arabic vocabulary learning. Future research is recommended to extend the intervention period and explore affective factors to better understand the long-term and holistic impact of TGT on vocabulary acquisition.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study confirm that the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) model is an effective cooperative learning approach for improving the Arabic vocabulary mastery of eleventh-grade students at MA PPM Tana Toraja. The substantial increase in students' post-test scores compared to their pre-test scores demonstrates that TGT positively supports the vocabulary learning process. The combination of games, competitive elements, and teamwork successfully enhanced student motivation and minimized the monotony that often characterizes traditional vocabulary instruction. These components contributed to creating a more engaging learning environment that helped students internalize vocabulary more effectively.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that students' vocabulary proficiency after participating in TGT-based learning is significantly higher than what is typically achieved through conventional teaching methods. The improvement can be attributed to the increased enthusiasm, motivation, and active engagement experienced by students during the TGT activities. The interactive features of this approach foster deeper understanding and better vocabulary retention, supporting more meaningful learning outcomes. The findings highlight that TGT is not only effective in strengthening vocabulary mastery but also capable of making the learning process more enjoyable and student-centered. Given its positive influence on learning achievement, TGT deserves broader implementation in Arabic language classrooms. Future research is encouraged to explore the long-term impact of TGT and to examine possibilities for integrating the model with digital learning media to optimize learning outcomes even further.

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### **INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT**

Participation in this study was fully voluntary, and all participants were informed about the purpose, procedures, possible risks, and expected benefits before taking part. They were assured that their identities would remain confidential and that the information collected would be used only for academic research purposes. Participants also had the right to decline or withdraw at any stage without penalty. Their continued participation indicated informed consent under the stated research conditions.

### **DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

The data generated and analyzed in this study are not publicly available because they contain information that could compromise participant privacy and confidentiality. This restriction is intended to uphold ethical research standards and comply with applicable data protection requirements. Nevertheless, access to the data may be considered upon reasonable request for academic verification or further analysis. Any sharing of data will require prior approval from the relevant institutional ethics authority.

### **AI USAGE STATEMENT**

This study utilized artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, to assist in language editing, grammar checking, and improving the clarity of academic writing. All research ideas, data analysis, and findings are the sole responsibility of the author.

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