

## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ENGLISH BRIDGING PROGRAM ADAPTING CAMBRIDGE CURRICULUM FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to explore and describe English bridging program adapting Cambridge curriculum for grade one of primary school at Afkaaruna Islamic School (AIS), Yogyakarta. The bridging program was a program to facilitate new students to improve their English language skills before joining real class. This study used qualitative approach with the case study research design. To collect the data, the researcher used interview, observation, and documentation. The researchers interviewed three English teachers. Then, data were analysed using the theory of Miles and Huberman including data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion/verifying. The results included the implementation of the Bridging Program was carried out for 2 to 3 months with the three focused subjects: Indonesian literacy, English literacy, attitude and character. Activities done included a pre-test conducted to determine students' abilities. The obstacles during the learning process were during online learning and the gap in students' abilities. The solution given was to provide additional classes for students who had not reached the learning target. The benefit of implementing English Bridging Program was to help students prepare themselves in the learning process and improve students' English ability to communicate and interact with others.*

**Key words:** *bridging program, Cambridge curriculum, primary school, English curriculum*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a basic need that people must meet to improve themselves. Education is also a benchmark because it can create competency and quality human resources. Education is not only a science but also about the potential of students. Education can shape a person's morals and character better. The nation and state will prosper in various fields and become developed country. In many countries, the quality of education is paramount. The increase was mainly in teaching staff, school facilities and infrastructures, school management, and curriculum. Various efforts have been made to avoid being left behind by the flow of globalization.

Improving the quality of education is necessary to face the era of globalization. Currently, the development of technology is very rapid. If the quality of education decreases, the community will have been gaps and burdens. What carried out these increases in various countries, including Indonesia. The government plays a role in educating the nation and creating productive educators. Because Indonesia is a multicultural country, the education system implemented in Indonesia adapts to regional developments. The step taken is to create a learning system for students' lesson plans. This system is packaged in the form of a curriculum.

The curriculum is a component of the education system which includes plans and rules to achieve goals that are wanted so that no educational gap in the country and the goals from education can achieve. Every country uses a different curriculum because of its speculation and geographic factors. According to Raharjo (2012), the educational system has to develop according to the needs and improvements at the regional, national, and global levels. That is why there is always a change in the implementation of the curriculum.

Indonesia has many changing factors in the implementation of the curriculum. There are shifts from achieving goals that wanted current development and technological development. Because this curriculum is offered and the schools can create the implementation of the curriculum according students' need. There are combined between international curriculum and national curriculum.

One of Indonesia's schools using the Cambridge curriculum is Afkaaruna Primary School. It was established in Yogyakarta in 2016. In the implementation of the Cambridge curriculum, Afkaaruna Primary School has a program that is applied to the student before they follow the learning process. The program is named the Bridging Program. The Bridging program is a program for new students to adapt to the Cambridge curriculum. This program is such as facilitation preparing for students to follow the learning process. According to McGrath, I., & Bailey, S. (2009), Bridging programs bridge a perceived gap between students' existing English language proficiency and academic level and the level deemed necessary for undergraduate (UG) study through the medium of English. This Program is to strengthen students' English abilities and adapt to the school system implemented in the Cambridge curriculum. This program has seen practical application to students because they could follow the learning process, and their English ability is well. This program can improve their English skills in communication and interaction.

The curriculum is a set of planning and control about learning material used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve education goals (Undang – Undang No. 20 TH. 2003 About National Education System). Ravitch, in Christison and Murray's book (2022), said that curriculum is informed by teachers, students, parents, teacher educators, assessment developers, textbook publishers, technology providers, and others about the goals of instruction. According to Saefudin in Laili and Soedjarwo's Journal (2019), the curriculum is a set of planning and educational setting or learning and education results that students, teaching and learning activities must achieve and empowerment of educational resources in the development of curriculum. The curriculum is essential in the education system because it is a guideline for managing educational activities.

According to Christison & Murray (2022), the curriculum is the name for the broadest instruction organisation, involving planning, teaching, and evaluating any plan for teaching and learning English. Furthermore, the English curriculum has learning materials, lesson plans, and a syllabus. The main objective of the general education of the English language curriculum is to enable students to formulate and develop their communicative competence through practising reading, listening, speaking, reading, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. The theme and

topic should include the need of students to help them meet the level inquired. In level improvement and development, many refer to CEFR.

The common European Framework of References (CEFR) is the international standard for language students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities. CEFR has six reference levels to know students' abilities. These six levels are named Proficient user (C2 & C1), Independent user (B2 & B1), and Basic user (A2 & A1).

In addition to Indonesian also used Cambridge Curriculum in teaching and learning process. Cambridge curriculum is an educational program that best prepares students for life, helping them develop the skills they need to achieve school and work in the Cambridge Assessment International Education document (2019).

According to Elizabeth, in Najah & Setiati's journal (2020) said that the implementation of CIC affects students' learning and achievement. The learning objectives provide a structure for teaching and learning and a reference against which learners' ability and understanding can be checked. The implementation of CIC is that the students are free to choose subjects according to their ability and interests to explore their abilities.

Cambridge curriculum is catered for students aged 5-19 years and comprises four levels. The levels are Cambridge Primary, Cambridge Lower Secondary, Cambridge Upper Secondary, and Cambridge Advanced. Cambridge's educational program consists of four qualifications;

- a. Cambridge Primary Level: 5-11 years. It was developed for the first six years of schooling- typically for 5 to 11-year-olds. They learn academic English, mathematics, and science through stages based on natural ability.
- b. Cambridge Lower Secondary: 11-14 years. They were developed for the next three years of study- typically for 11 to 14-year-olds. Forward the lessons from the field of basic subjects include English, mathematics, and science. This level prepares children to take the IGCSE or O Level.
- c. Cambridge Upper Secondary: 14 until 16 year olds. This year is famous for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) or O Level. O Level qualification is primarily designed for students whose primary language is not English. The Students can choose subjects of interest in preparation for A-Level and equip their ability to work later.
- d. Cambridge Advanced: 16 until 19-year-olds. International A-Level qualification is required to continue their education at universities worldwide. A-Level exams, as well as proof of academic ability to continue their studies at university, receive the Cambridge system. At least it takes approximately two weeks to prepare students to complete the level A-Level. The students can choose subjects following their interests and capabilities at this level.

Cambridge primary level starts learners on an exciting educational journey, helping them to become confident, responsible, reflective, innovative, and engaged. It is typically for students

aged 5 to 11 years. Basic subjects in the Cambridge curriculum include English, Mathematics, and Science, with a set of objectives for teaching and learning. All Cambridge Primary subjects include a set of learning objectives that provide a structure for teaching and learning and a reference for you to check learners' attainment and skills.

Bridging Program is a program to address gaps in students' English abilities, according to McGrath and Bailey. S (2009) Bridging programs have served to bridge a perceived gap between students' existing English language proficiency and/or academic level and the level deemed necessary for undergraduate (UG) study through the medium of English. The Bridging Program is a preparation for students to follow the learning process.

According to Trudell, Nannyombi & Teera (2019) said that the Bridging Program has three aims: raising children's English fluency, particularly oral English, teaching reading and writing in a language that the children speak, and enhancing mathematics skills in a context that will build children's academic vocabulary in English. The Bridging program is not focused on English skills but on improving mathematics skills.

McGrath & Stepen (2009) said that the Bridging program is a series of 3×4 weeks end-on courses starting in July and finishing in September, just before the beginning of the academic year, with entry points being determined by the student's English proficiency level.

Trudell, Nannyombi & Teera (2019) also said that the purpose of the Bridging program includes: (1) building English skills allows learners to communicate fluently with their teachers and begin learning subject content in the English medium classroom (2) building learners' literacy skills in a language that the learners understand, and (3) building and strengthening learners' math skills and facilitating the acquisition of academic language in English. The teaching and learning material will be based on the primary grade's national mathematics subject.

Based on the explanation above, the Bridging Program can be implemented in all subjects in the classroom to improve the student's vocabulary in English.

Referred to problems having been stated above, this study aimed to investigate and describe the implementation of a bridging program, the obstacles during the process of teaching the bridging program, the solution offered to overcome the obstacles during the process of teaching the bridging program, and the advantages of the implementation of the Bridging Program for new students at Primary School at Afkaaruna Islamic School.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design. The case study focused on one unit to be researched in depth. This research explored the implementation of English Bridging Program in Afkaaruna Primary school. The researcher wanted to know the learning process in the implementation of the Bridging Program, the obstacles, and the solution. This research was conducted in Afkaaruna Islamic School, focusing at Afkaaruna Primary school. Afkaaruna Primary applied Cambridge Curriculum. This school used the English language to communicate and interact. So that there was no gap between students in language use, the school implementation of the Bridging Program to improve students' English ability.

The data sources in this research consisted of two forms: primary and secondary data. The primary data was from interview and secondary data was from documentation and observation. This research was conducted in a structured interview process, which conducted interviews based on items, the question arranged and planned. The researchers interviewed three English teachers and Bridging Program team. An interview was a conversation between two persons or more to get information. The data analysis included data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing/ verification.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this reseach the data got from interview, observation dan documentation. the interview got from Mrs. Sindy as Principle at Afkaaruna Primary School, the resercher asked about background, purpose, advantage, and target of implementation of the Bridging Program. Mrs. Puppis as bridging program team at Afkaaruna Primary School. The researcher had given question about curriculum, syllabus, and modul were used on the teachin and learning in implementation of the Bridging Program. Mrs. Ani and Mrs. Febri as bridging program teacher, the researcher asked about obstacles and solution offered, and teaching and learning according method, media, and material. Mr. Fatchan as English teacher, the researcher asked about advantage, obstacles and solution offered.

### ***The Implementation of Bridging Program Learning for New Students at Afkaaruna Primary School***

Bridging program was a program to bridge students' English ability. The Bridging Program was first applied in Afkaaruna Primary School in 2016. The purpose of the Bridging Program was to bridge new students and improve their English skills as supplies to the following teaching and learning in Afkaaruna Primary School, as the informant said.

Mrs. Puppis said:

*“Bridging program does for students in the first semester when the students still first grade about July after the orientation period.”*

Mrs. Sindy said:

*“The implementation of bridging program depended on students' needs. If 50 percent of students can speak English, it can be accelerated. But it did average about two until three months to English literacy, Indonesian literacy, attitude, and character.”*

Based on the explanation above, Afkaaruna Primary school did Bridging Program because the English language was not the first qualification to register at Afkaaruna Primary school, and new students not only for Afkaaruna Kindy but also from other schools. There are new students from other schools that had been unable to speak English. This Bridging program to all new students in Afkaaruna Primary School. If some students could speak English, they would

continue the following program to improve their English skills. So, the Bridging Program was a program to bridge students to deepen and enhance their English skills and use the English language following teaching and learning. According to Ngwruh's research (2014:713) that the implementation of the Bridging Program was achieved through medium English.

The implementation of the Bridging Program not just focused on English but packing all aspects. The aspects included in the learning The Bridging Program were attitudes and characters or school culture. There are rules in the implementation of the Bridging Program; Indonesian language literacy – English language literacy – attitude and character. It was combined in the Bridging Program and packed using English. Trudell, Nannyombi & Teera (2019:2) said that the Bridging Program would focus on building learners' literacy skills in a language that learners understand.

Mrs. Puppis had stated that:

*“The curriculum to teaching and learning bridging program using modification from Cambridge and Afkaaruna curricula. It was adapted the curriculum to student needs who registered at new academic years in Afkaaruna Primary School,”*

In the learning process of the Bridging Program blended curriculum was used. The blended curriculum combined two curricula. The curriculum is the Afkaaruna curriculum and the Cambridge curriculum. Afkaaruna curriculum was curriculum to learning students' attitude and character bridging. While the Cambridge curriculum was curriculum to develop language literacy and all aspects in bridging program used medium of English. The descriptions followed the Cambridge Primary that the English as a second language in the Cambridge curriculum primary to develop a solid foundation for further study of English as a Second Language and study through the medium of English. The curriculum was used according to student needs because the students had different abilities.

Mrs. Puppis said:

*. “The school used the MFEA module to learn the Bridging Program. This module was a guidebook for the bridging learning process licensed from Thailand. In bridging program learning just used basic material from the module.”*

Afkaaruna Primary School used MFEA (My first English Adventure) licensed from Thailand as a module in the Bridging Program learning process. The module used just primary material like instruction and greeting.

*“There is one team in the bridging program to set curriculum, lesson plan, and daily journal. Before the learning process, the teacher would notify of the goals of each meeting. Next, the teacher writes about the material delivered to students at each meeting. The teacher can continue to the next material,”* said Mrs. Ani

Based on the explanation from Mrs. Puppis and Mrs. Ani above, there is a bridging team in the implementation of the Bridging Program. The bridging team designed the curriculum, determining the material, syllabus, lesson plan, and daily journal for teachers. The syllabus contains the learning component of the lesson plan that includes the main points of the learning material with specific them. The syllabus determined the topic from the first meeting until the last meeting. The syllabus was simplified to a lesson plan. It was determined by students' needs and contained the method, lesson material, what the student needed to learn, and how to make the class more effective during the learning process. The daily journal created a report about learning material taught to students. The journal aims to avoid overlapping the material presented to students.

Mrs. Febri's statements that:

*"The first material in the first grade was more introduction to reading and writing literacy. The first month was Indonesia literacy, and the next month was the English language. The English material was the introduction, greeting, instruction, and given vocab. Because the students did not understand, we repeated words like sit down, how are you? For the first three months, they didn't have any lesson at all, so they still focused on Bridging Program."*

Based on the explanation above, in the bridging program learning for three months, the students were not yet in the subject and focused on the Bridging Program learning. In the Bridging Program, there are teaching steps. The first month was Indonesia literacy when students were introduced to reading and writing, especially reading. Next month was the English language. The students were given basic material but lots of practice in this section. The material is instruction, greeting, and voices about things around. The students used bilinguals to interact in the teaching and learning process.

Based on the explanation above, the implementation of the Bridging Program at Afkaaruna Primary School as Follows:

1. Bridging Program is a program to new students at Afkaaruma Primary School to improve their English skills. The program also prepared the students to follow the learning process in the subject. The implementation of the Bridging Program is about two until three months in the first semester;
2. The implementation of the Bridging Program there are three aspects, namely Indonesia language literacy, English language literacy, attitude and aspect. But this reseach focused on English language literacy;
3. The implemetation of the Bridging Program was used blended curriculum. It is combain between Afkaaruna curriculum and Cambridge curriculum. The module was used MFEA (My First English Adventure);
4. Before teaching and learning process, every students given pretest to know their ability because the students had different English skill;

5. In the implementation of the Bridging Program, there was a bridging program team. It was designed the curriculum, determining the material, syllabus, lesson plan, and daily journal for teachers.

### ***The Obstacles during the Process of Teaching the Bridging Program for Students First Grade at Afkaaruna Primary School***

During the implementation of the Bridging Program, there were obstacles in the teaching and learning process. It had come from the students or the learning system. The researcher found barriers in the teaching and learning process of the Bridging Program.

Mrs. Ani was also given a statement that:

*“The obstacles from the learning process was online learning because it was hard to condition the students and get them to focus. When the offline learning was limited”.*

That statement, according to Mrs. Febri’s report:

*“Online was one of all the obstacles from the learning process because the teaching and learning process less effective and the students’ ability be a bit slow.”*

Based on the explanation above, the Covid-19 pandemic was a main obstacle in the Bridging Program teaching and learning process. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the teaching and learning process was done online. Consequently, the teacher can’t condition the students thoroughly. The students have not been able to focus on the material.

Mrs. Ani also stated that:

*“In the Bridging Program, the learning process was still a gap between students. There are already two students whose start was still far from their friends. Of course, the material is not conveyed properly”.*

Based on the explanation above, the obstacles during process of teaching the Bridging Program as follows:

1. Online learning become obstacles during the Bridging Program because the students have not able to focus on the material. Furthermore, the teacher can’t also to condition the students thoroughly;
2. Gap between students was one of obtacles because the learning can be slower. The students who have not been able to participate in bridging lesson need special attention.

### ***The Solution Offered to Overcome the Obstacles during the Process of Teaching the Bridging Program for Students First Grade at Afkaaruna Primary School***

Based on the description above, there have been obstacles in implementing the Bridging Program for new students at Afkaaruna Primary School. There should be a solution to solve the



problem that has occurred. Resource persons delivered it through interviews that have been conducted with researchers.

Mrs. Febri, Mrs. Puppis and Mr. Fatchan have also given statements that:

*“If students still needed more effort, there were additional hours after learning. Then we were given special attention and we have taken advantage of students who were able to teach their friends who have not been able to follow the lesson,”* said Mrs. Febri.

*“To overcome the gaps in children, we have given special attention, approached and provided what assistance was needed,”* said Mr. Fatchan

*“There have been still some students who do not complete the language during the stay, but there is an extra hour. Extra hours we usually did in the afternoon after attending lessons. So there has been one focus on students to catch up and also communicated to parents of students,”* said Mrs. Puppis.

There were stages to the solution offered to overcome the gap in ability between Afkaaruna Primary School students during the learning process of the Bridging Program. The first stage was always observing and evaluating students during the Bridging Program learning process. In the second stage, if the results of observations and evaluations have shown no improvement, students have been made into different groups to get special attention. The third stage was communicating with parents to provide support and help to learn when at home. Lastly, if students have not reached the target, there are additional classes in the afternoon after the learning process to catch up.

Based on the explanation above, the solution offered to overcome the obstacles during process of teaching the Bridging Program as follows;

1. From the data, Afkaaruna Primary School didn't have proposed solution and evaluation to overcome the obstacles on online learning;
2. There were four stages to overcome for gap between students. They were observing and evaluating, making group for students, communicating with parent, and additionaling classes.

### ***The Advantages of the Implementation of Bridging Program Learning for Students First Grade at Afkaaruna Primary School***

After the implementation of the Bridging Program, the benefits have been identified. The implementation of the Bridging Program has helped for teachers and students especially. The following was data from researchers from resource persons regarding the benefits of implementation of the Bridging Program. The resource person was Mrs. Ani, Mr. Fatchan, and Mrs. Febri.

*“This program has been beneficial because it could be an adaptation before entering into subject learning, so children are used to using English in learning. Besides that, it has also been a screening of children before an assessment was carried out long before they entered, so there was a time about five months until they entered learning,”* said Mrs. Ani.

Mrs. Fatchan and Mrs. Febri also gave statements that:

*“After participating in the Bridging Program learning, subject learning has been said to be effective and the children have understood and understood but the achievement is not 100 percent. In addition, the application of the bridging program was also beneficial, especially for those of us who speak English. With the application of the bridging program, it can be a provision to enter subject learning,”* said Mr. Fatchan.

*“This program was very effective to implement because not all children had the same skills and provided benefits as a first step for them to learn English before entering into subject learning,”* said Mrs. Febri.

Based on the information above, the implementation of the bridging program was very beneficial for Afkaaruna Primary School students. After participating in the bridging learning program, Afkaaruna Primary School students had the provision to participate in subject learning. The data above shows about 80 percent of the benefits from the implementation of the bridging program. Aside from being a provision for Afkaaruna Primary School students, it also made learning more effective. Students could take lessons in all subjects because they already had English language skills from learning the bridging program.

Based on the observational data obtained by researchers, almost all students had been able to communicate and interact using English after participating in the bridging program. They were also able to follow subject learning. Although some students still had difficulties, they have been adjusting to it.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research focused on the implementation of the Bridging Program to adapt the Cambridge curriculum at Afkaaruna Primary School. Based on the research finding and discussion, the researcher concluded that: The implementation of the Bridging Program in Afkaaruna Primary aimed to bridge new students to deepen and improve their English skills to follow subject learning. The implementation of the Bridging Program took about two to three months. The module was MFEA as a guidebook. There is a bridging team to design syllabus, lesson plan, daily journal, and curriculum. The curriculum used a blended curriculum that combines Cambridge and Afkaaruna. The implementation of the Bridging Program not only focuses on the English Language but also have aspects. The aspects were Indonesia literacy, English literacy, attitude, and character but in this reseach only focused on English literacy. The first month was learning Indonesian literacy, and the second- and third-months combined manner and character with English. Before carrying out the Bridging Program, there is a pre-test to see students' abilities. The pre-test was done by asking students to guess letters and read

words and simple sentences. The obstacles of the Bridging Program were online learning and the gap between students. Online learning becomes an obstacle during the bridging learning process because the teacher cannot fully control the students. Students are less focused on learning and still use Indonesian because they spend more time at home. Consequently, there have student gaps in ability. The students' gap ability became learning to be slow because the students found the difficult to follow the lesson and needed special attention from the teacher. Thus, the Bridging Program was applied at Afkaaruna Primary School to overcome students' ability gap in subject learning. The solution to overcome the obstacles was only in students' gap ability. The online learning was not solustion offered from the school because there is not method that suitable method for learning need. There have been four stages of the solution to overcome the students' gap ability. The first stage was always observing and evaluating students during the Bridging Program learning process. In the second stage, if the results of observations and evaluations have shown no improvement, students have been made into different groups to get special attention. The third stage was to communicate with parents to provide support and help to learn when at home. Lastly, if students have e not reached the target, then there has been an additional class that has been carried out after the learning process during the day to catch up. The advantage of the implementation of the Bridging Program was making learning more effective. Students can take lessons in all subjects because they already have English language skills from learning the bridging program. Almost all students have been able to communicate and interact using English. They were also able to follow subject learning.

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