


Implementation of the Cambridge Curriculum-Based English Learning in Developing the Four Language Skills of High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Kemampuan bahasa Inggris merupakan kompetensi penting bagi siswa SMA di era globalisasi, namun pembelajaran masih sering berfokus pada tata bahasa dan hafalan sehingga kurang komunikatif. Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris berbasis Kurikulum Cambridge dirancang untuk mengembangkan keterampilan bahasa secara seimbang. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan implementasi Kurikulum Cambridge dalam mengembangkan empat keterampilan berbahasa—menyimak, berbicara, membaca, dan menulis—pada siswa SMA Boarding School Jabal Rahmah Mulia. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan subjek 21 siswa kelas XII dan 5 guru bahasa Inggris. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, serta dianalisis melalui reduksi, penyajian, dan penarikan kesimpulan dengan keabsahan melalui triangulasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Kurikulum Cambridge diimplementasikan secara sistematis dan terintegrasi dengan Kurikulum Merdeka dan program Tahfidz Al-Qur'an melalui pendekatan komunikatif, pembiasaan English Area, interaksi dengan penutur asli, serta evaluasi berstandar internasional. Implementasi ini didukung oleh lingkungan belajar yang kondusif, sarana prasarana memadai, serta target sertifikasi Cambridge dan skor IELTS, sehingga efektif meningkatkan kompetensi bahasa Inggris dan kesiapan akademik siswa di boarding school.

English language proficiency is an important competency for high school students in the era of globalization, but learning often focuses on grammar and memorization, resulting in a lack of communication skills. English learning based on the Cambridge Curriculum is designed to develop balanced language skills. This study aims to describe the implementation of the Cambridge Curriculum in developing four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—in high school students at Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding School. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with 21 grade 12 students and 5 English teachers as subjects. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed through reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions with validity through triangulation. The results show that the Cambridge Curriculum is implemented systematically and integrated with the Merdeka Curriculum and the Tahfidz Al-Qur'an program through a communicative approach, English Area familiarization, interaction with native speakers, and internationally standardized evaluation. This implementation is supported by a conducive learning environment, adequate facilities and infrastructure, as well as Cambridge certification targets and IELTS scores, thus effectively improving English language competency and academic readiness of students at boarding schools.



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INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency is an important competency for high school students in the era of globalization, as English serves as an international language across global education, technology, and communication (Ramadianti, 2023). However, in practice, many high school students still face challenges in mastering English fully, especially in oral communication and contextual comprehension, because learning still focuses on grammar and memorization rather than on the communicative use of language in real life (Nurjati et al., n.d.).

This condition demands English language learning that not only emphasizes mastery of language structures, but also trains students to use language actively and meaningfully (Putri et al., 2025). Communicative learning aligned with international standards is needed so that students can develop language skills in a balanced manner, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as a unit of interrelated language competencies (Brown, 2014).

One approach to English language learning that emphasizes the balance of all four language skills is the Cambridge Curriculum (Zumaruddin et al., 2024). The curriculum is designed to develop language skills through communication-based learning, problem-solving, and authentic language use. Assessments in the Cambridge Curriculum are also designed to comprehensively measure students' abilities, so that the learning process is not only oriented toward final results but also toward the continuous development of students' language skills (Sauri et al., 2024).

Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding High School is a boarding school that integrates academic learning with 21st-century character and skill development, including English language instruction (D. P. Sari, 2020). The boarding environment implemented allows students to gain intensive language habituation through the application of the English Area, learning sessions with native speakers, and structured periodic evaluations. This condition creates a learning environment that supports English mastery not only in the classroom, but also in students' daily activities in the dormitory (D. D. Sari et al., 2022).

The implementation of English learning based on the Cambridge Curriculum at Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding High School is also aimed at preparing students for international certifications, including the Cambridge B1 Preliminary Schools (D. P. Sari, 2020). This certification indicates students' achievement of English language competencies at the intermediate level and demonstrates their readiness to use English in academic and social contexts. Therefore, learning does not focus solely on mastering the material but also on developing internationally standardized language skills (Tuanany et al., 2022).

Although the Cambridge Curriculum has been widely implemented across various educational institutions, studies describing its implementation in high school boarding schools for English learning are still relatively limited (Pujiani et al., 2025). Most research focuses more on test results or certification achievements, while the learning process and development of the four language skills in the context of daily habituation have not been examined in depth through a qualitative approach (Silalahi et al., 2022).

Based on this description, this Research is important for providing a comprehensive overview of the implementation of English learning using the Cambridge Curriculum to develop the four language skills of Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding High School students. This study aims to describe the learning process, the form of language skill development, and the supporting context that influence the implementation of English learning based on the Cambridge Curriculum in the boarding school environment (Creswell, 2014).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research approach to understand in depth the process, experience, and meaning of implementing English learning based on the Cambridge Curriculum to develop the four language skills of high school students. The selection of a qualitative descriptive approach is based on the characteristics of the Research that focuses on depicting learning practices as they occur naturally in the school environment, without conducting statistical measurements or hypothesis testing, but rather describing the implementation of learning and the development of students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

This Research was conducted at Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding High School, a boarding high school that implements the Cambridge Curriculum in English language instruction. The selection of the

Research location is based on the characteristics of schools that support intensive language learning, such as the use of English Areas, the implementation of learning sessions with native speakers, and the evaluation of international-standard learning. The Research was carried out during a specific semester of the current school year, aligned with the English learning implementation schedule based on the school's Cambridge Curriculum.

The Research subjects in this study consisted of 21 grade XII students at Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding High School who participated in English learning based on the Cambridge Curriculum at the high school level, and 5 English teachers who served as teachers and facilitators of Cambridge learning at the school. Students who were the subjects of the study were selected because they were actively involved in the English learning process in the classroom, English Area activities, and the Cambridge Standard Evaluation Program, including preparation for the Cambridge B1 Preliminary Schools certification.

Data collection in this study was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly examine the English learning process in the classroom, the implementation of English Area activities, and the practice of developing students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. In-depth interviews were conducted with Cambridge English teachers and students to obtain information about learning experiences, learning strategies, and perceptions of the development of the four language skills. Documentation is used to collect supporting data, including lesson plans based on the Cambridge Curriculum, English Area schedules, photos of learning activities, and Cambridge B1 Preliminary Schools evaluation and certification documents.

The Research instrument in this study is the researcher himself, who plays a role in planning, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting Research data. To assist in the data collection process, the researcher used tools such as observation sheets, interview guidelines, and supporting documents relevant to the implementation of English learning based on the Cambridge Curriculum.

The data analysis technique is carried out using a qualitative data analysis model that includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved sorting and selecting data relevant to the research focus, particularly the implementation of learning and the development of the four language skills. Furthermore, the reduced data is presented in a descriptive narrative format to make it easy to understand. The last stage concludes by interpreting the data to answer the Research objectives.

The validity of the data in this study is maintained through source triangulation and triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing data from teachers and students, while technical triangulation is achieved by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, ensuring the data obtained is trustworthy and has an adequate level of validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the Cambridge program at Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding School High School is part of an integrated curriculum that combines the National Curriculum (Merdeka), the Cambridge Curriculum, and the Tahfidz Al-Qur'an program (Adilah et al., 2023). The implementation of the Cambridge curriculum is focused on improving students' English skills through the development of four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as a provision for global communication and preparation for further studies, both at home and abroad (Rita et al., 2022).

The focus of English learning under the Cambridge Curriculum is on mastering the four language skills in a balanced manner. In practice, listening and speaking skills are trained through daily English conversation activities, class discussions, conversation simulations, and interaction sessions with native speakers. Meanwhile, reading and writing skills are developed through understanding English texts, structured writing exercises, and drafting texts in accordance with Cambridge standards (Istri et al., 2026). This approach encourages students to use English actively and contextually in a variety of learning situations.

The Cambridge program at this school also has a clear academic achievement target: to prepare students to take the Cambridge English certification and achieve IELTS scores in the range of 5.0–6.5 as part of their international study preparation (Salsabila et al., 2025). The target is aligned with the abilities of high school students and is implemented in stages through continuous learning, English

language habituation, and periodic evaluation. These certifications and score targets not only serve as benchmarks of language proficiency but also motivate students' learning and improve their English language competencies (Dalle et al., 2025).

In terms of curriculum integration, Cambridge learning does not stand alone, but is aligned with the Independent Curriculum and the Tahfidz Al-Qur'an program (Fadillah et al., 2024). This integration allows students to develop academic, religious, and character abilities simultaneously. English learning is arranged so as not to interfere with tahfidz activities, but to complement each other in the formation of students' character, including discipline, responsibility, and time management, in the boarding school environment (Man, 2022).

Language culture is one of the important findings in the implementation of the Cambridge program at Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding School High School (Hidayatullah et al., 2020). The school implements English Area policies at specific times and zones, which encourage students to use English in their daily communication. In addition, native speaker sessions provide students with an authentic experience in understanding pronunciation, intonation, and using English naturally. This bilingual environment fosters a learning environment that helps students build confidence in communicating in English.

Learning evaluation is carried out periodically through various forms of assessment, including the Cambridge English Mid-Semester Exam. This evaluation is used to monitor students' English skills across all four language skills and to provide a basis for teachers to improve their learning strategies. The evaluation results showed that students experienced gradual improvement in English language skills, especially in speaking and listening, which was supported by the habituation to using English in the school environment.



Figure 1. Implementation of the Cambridge English Qualification Teacher

In addition to being intended for students, the Cambridge Curriculum at Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding School also includes the Cambridge English Qualification Test for employees and teachers. Based on the activity documentation, the school held an English competency test for teachers and education staff to improve the quality of human resources. This test aims to map teachers' English language skills against Cambridge's international standards and to assess their readiness to support learning across four language skills. The implementation of the Cambridge test for teachers demonstrates the school's commitment to building a sustainable, professional English learning ecosystem, where the quality of learning is determined not only by the curriculum but also by the linguistic competence of educators directly involved in the learning process.

The implementation of the Cambridge program at SMA Boarding School Jabal Rahmah Mulia is also supported by the availability of adequate facilities, such as computer laboratories, internet access (WiFi), and digital learning facilities. The facility is used to support technology-based English learning,

Cambridge practice questions, and access to authentic learning materials. The support of these facilities and infrastructure enhances the effectiveness of implementing the Cambridge Curriculum in developing students' English language skills (No & Afgani, 2023).

The implementation of the Cambridge Program at Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding School High School shows that the international curriculum can be effectively integrated within an integrated curriculum framework that includes the Independent Curriculum and the Tahfidz Al-Qur'an program. This approach strengthens students' mastery of English as an international language without neglecting the strengthening of religious character and values. This aligns with the view that integrating national and international curricula can enhance students' global readiness while preserving the school's local identity and cultural values (Bray & Yamato, 2003).

The application of Daily English Conversation as part of intensive English learning has been proven to support the sustainable development of students' communication competencies. Boarding school environments that implement English Areas allow students to use English in both formal and informal contexts, thereby accelerating second-language acquisition. This communicative approach aligns with the theory of Communicative Language Teaching, which emphasizes the use of language as a real communication tool in daily life (Ekowijayanto et al., n.d.).

The target of achieving IELTS scores of 5.0–6.5 in the Cambridge program at SMA Jabal Rahmah Mulia reflects a learning orientation that focuses on international academic readiness. Listening, reading, writing, and speaking exercises structured according to Cambridge English standards help students develop the academic language competencies needed for further study abroad. Research shows that learning English in line with international standards significantly improves students' readiness for global language tests such as IELTS.

The integration of the Cambridge Curriculum with the Independent Curriculum and the Tahfidz Al-Qur'an program shows that English learning can be harmonized with the strengthening of cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects. This integrated curriculum model supports the holistic development of students, as it has been argued that effective education must integrate academic, character, and moral values in a balanced manner.

The presence of supporting facilities, such as air-conditioned classrooms, projectors, and a conducive boarding environment, also enhances the effectiveness of the Cambridge Program's implementation. In addition, tutoring support for the preparation of PTN/PTS, official schools, and study abroad shows that this program is not only oriented to the learning process but also to students' future readiness. A well-planned and well-facilitated learning environment has been shown to positively contribute to the quality of learning outcomes and student motivation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the Research and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of English learning based on the Cambridge Curriculum at SMA Boarding School Jabal Rahmah Mulia is systematic and integrated with the Independent Curriculum and the Tahfidz Al-Qur'an program. Learning is designed to develop students' four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, through a communicative approach, English language habituation in the boarding school environment, and international standard evaluations. A conducive learning environment, the implementation of English Areas, and interaction with native speakers are the main factors supporting increased students' confidence and English language competence.

In addition, the Cambridge program at SMA Boarding School Jabal Rahmah Mulia is not only focused on classroom learning but also on students' academic readiness for further study, both at home and abroad. Cambridge certification target-setting and IELTS scores of 5.0–6.5 encourage measurable, continuous learning. The integration of international, national, and religious curricula demonstrates that the development of global-standard English language skills can be balanced with the formation of students' character, religious values, and future readiness.

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