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Utilizing Sandy AI to Enhance English Language Teachers' Speaking Instructional Skills In MGMP Madrasah Aliyah Under The Ministry of Religious in Soppeng Regency

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Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in language education offers a promising pathway to enhance teacher competence, particularly in speaking instruction. Despite its potential, some English teachers in the MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran) Madrasah Aliyah under the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Soppeng Regency continue to face difficulties in effectively utilizing AI tools and delivering CEFR B1-level speaking materials, particularly expressions of suggestion and offering help. This study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of Sandy AI in improving teachers' speaking instructional skills and to explore the integration of AI within professional development programs. Employing a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, the research was conducted over two cycles and involved ten English teachers. Each cycle followed the stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In Cycle 1, teachers received initial training on Sandy AI and lesson development using the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) method. Following the first cycle, additional interventions were implemented in Cycle 2, including targeted CEFR B1 training, peer mentoring by high-performing teachers, and workshops on AI troubleshooting. Data collection was conducted through structured observation using a rubric that assessed instructional clarity, AI usage, CEFR explanation, and student engagement. The results demonstrated significant improvement in teacher performance, with a 32% increase in average scores and 90% of participants achieving the success criteria by Cycle 2. Teachers showed enhanced confidence, clearer instructional delivery, and more interactive use of Sandy AI in the classroom. The findings indicate that Sandy AI is an effective and practical tool to improve speaking instruction when supported by a structured, iterative professional development framework. This model is particularly applicable to religious-based educational contexts seeking to modernize language teaching through AI integration.

Keywords: *Sandy AI, Speaking Instructional Skill, and MGMP Madarash Aliyah English Teacher*

Introduction

Proficiency in the English language—particularly speaking—has become a key skill in 21st-century education, especially in contexts where global communication and digital literacy intersect. In Indonesia, institutions such as Madrasah Aliyah are under

increasing pressure to deliver quality English instruction. However, despite the structural and collaborative support available through Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP), many English teachers in Soppeng Regency continue to face pedagogical and technological barriers that hinder the effectiveness of speaking instruction. The ongoing reliance on traditional methods and minimal use of interactive or student-centered strategies results in low engagement and limited speaking practice among students.

Recent research has emphasized the transition from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches as critical for successful language learning (Richards, 2017). However, findings indicate that many classrooms in Indonesia still rely on lecture-based methods, limiting communicative interaction (Putri et al., 2020; Sariakin, 2022). Moreover, while the integration of ICT has been promoted, practical application among teachers remains limited, especially regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI). Scholars like Liaw and English (2023) and Godwin-Jones (2022) highlight the potential of AI-driven platforms to provide real-time feedback, personalize learning, and support CEFR-aligned instruction. Yet, empirical studies on using such AI tools in religious-based or rural school settings remain scarce.

While AI tools have been explored in the context of student learning, there is a notable gap in research examining how AI can directly support teachers' instructional development. Previous studies tend to overlook how AI tools like Sandy AI can be embedded into reflective teaching practices and professional development frameworks such as Classroom Action Research (CAR). This lack of research is particularly evident in the context of MGMP, where diverse teaching experiences and varying levels of digital literacy require tailored interventions that bridge theory and classroom practice.

This study aims to address that gap by investigating the integration of Sandy AI into the MGMP professional development model for English teachers in Madrasah Aliyah, Soppeng Regency. The research focuses on (1) analyzing the effectiveness of Sandy AI in improving teachers' speaking instruction and (2) evaluating how AI-based tools support professional development. By embedding AI use within a CAR framework that includes Problem-Based Learning and reflective teaching, this study offers a novel approach to empowering educators in under-resourced and religious-based schools with tools for CEFR-aligned speaking instruction.

Method

This study employed a **Classroom Action Research (CAR)** design based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which includes four recursive stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This design was selected because it allows researchers and teacher participants to collaboratively diagnose problems, implement solutions, and iteratively improve instructional practices. The approach was particularly appropriate for investigating how artificial intelligence tools like Sandy AI can be effectively integrated into speaking instruction through a professional development framework.

The **participants** in this study were ten English teachers affiliated with the Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP) Madrasah Aliyah under the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Soppeng Regency, Indonesia. These teachers varied in educational backgrounds and years of teaching experience, providing a representative cross-section of the MGMP teaching population. They were selected through purposive sampling, as all were active participants in the MGMP forum and expressed willingness to engage in classroom-based innovation and reflection.

Data collection techniques were designed to capture both instructional processes and outcomes. The primary instruments included structured observation sheets and performance scoring rubrics developed based on key indicators: instructional clarity, use of Sandy AI features, ability to explain CEFR B1 expressions (particularly giving suggestions and offering help), and student engagement during speaking tasks. Instrument validation was conducted through expert judgment to ensure content validity and clarity. Additional qualitative data were gathered through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) at the end of each cycle to capture teacher reflections and challenges encountered.

For **data analysis**, a descriptive comparative approach was used. Scores from Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 observations were compared to evaluate improvements in instructional performance. Qualitative data from FGDs were thematically analyzed to support and contextualize quantitative findings. The design ensured that each cycle informed the next through reflection, leading to actionable revisions in instructional practice. This dual-focus methodology—quantitative scoring and qualitative reflection—ensured both measurement accuracy and depth of understanding, making the findings robust, replicable, and grounded in classroom realities.

Findings

This section presents the results from two research cycles conducted to enhance the speaking instructional skills of English language teachers through the integration of Sandy AI within the MGMP Madrasah Aliyah under the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Soppeng Regency. Data were obtained through observations, teacher performance evaluations, and reflective discussions. The results are structured to show progression in instructional competencies, effectiveness of AI integration, and improvements in student engagement.

Cycle 1

Planning Phase

During this phase, the research team and participating teachers engaged in the preparation of teaching materials and training design:

a. Comprehensive lesson plans and training modules incorporating Sandy AI and the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach were developed, targeting CEFR B1-level expressions (suggestions and offers).
b. An introductory workshop on Sandy AI and PBL was conducted to establish foundational knowledge (March 3, 2025).
c. Teachers collaboratively developed modules integrating PBL and Sandy AI.
d. Group presentations facilitated peer learning and clarification of instructional goals.
e. Peer-teaching simulations were conducted to practice AI-supported speaking lessons.

Acting Phase

Classroom implementation took place on March 8, 2025. Teachers conducted lessons using Sandy AI and followed structured speaking instruction aligned with CEFR B1. The teaching session consisted of:

a. Opening: Objectives, context-setting, and activating prior knowledge.
b. Main Activities: Problem orientation, collaborative exploration, interaction with Sandy AI, and peer feedback.

c. Closing: Summary, language reinforcement, and optional homework using Sandy AI.

Observation Phase

Observers used standardized instruments to assess instructional clarity, AI usage, CEFR B1 expression delivery, and student engagement. Ten teachers were evaluated.

Table 1. Score Summary Table - Cycle 1 Observation Results

No	Teacher Code	Instructional Clarity	Use of Sandy AI	Explanation of CEFR B1 Materials	Student Engagement	Total Score (Max 20)	Category
1	T-01	3	3	3	3	12	Average
2	T-02	3	2	2	3	10	Below Average
3	T-03	3	3	3	3	12	Average
4	T-04	2	2	2	2	8	Below Average
5	T-05	3	3	3	3	12	Average
6	T-06	2	3	2	2	9	Below Average
7	T-07	4	3	3	3	13	Average
8	T-08	2	2	2	3	9	Below Average
9	T-09	3	3	3	3	12	Average
10	T-10	4	4	5	5	18	High Performer

Reflection Phase

Based on classroom observations and focus group discussions:

d. **Strengths**: Teachers showed technological readiness and enthusiasm. Some began integrating CEFR B1 expressions effectively. One high-performing teacher (T-10) emerged as a potential peer mentor.
e. **Weaknesses**: Underuse of AI feedback tools, lack of contextual expression usage, and teacher-centered tendencies persisted.
f. **Revisions** for Cycle 2 included targeted microteaching, peer mentoring, technical simulations, and student-centered methodology reinforcement.

Cycle 2

Planning Phase

Enhancements included:

g. In-depth CEFR B1-focused training.
h. Peer mentoring led by high performers from Cycle 1.
i. Troubleshooting workshops to improve technical fluency.

Acting Phase

Teachers applied revised modules with improvements:

j. Broader use of Sandy AI features.
k. Integration of pair/group activities.
l. CEFR B1-aligned instruction with contextualized scenarios.

Observation Phase

The observation recorded noticeable improvements:

m. Teachers structured lessons more logically and fluently.
n. Technical issues were minimized.
o. Students were more engaged and confident.

Table 2. Score Summary Table – Cycle 2 Observation Results

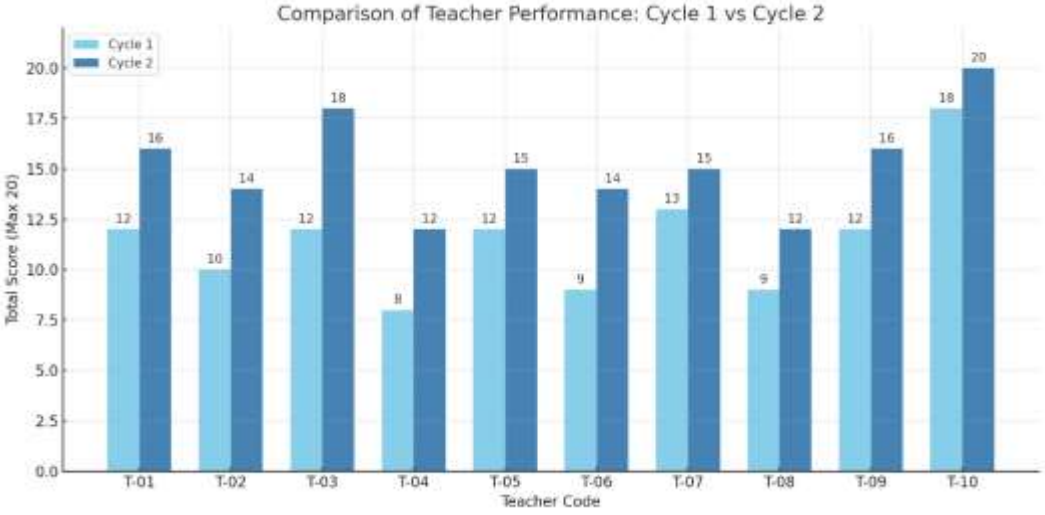
No	Teacher Code	Instructional Clarity	Use of Sandy AI	Explanation of CEFR B1 Materials	Student Engagement	Total Score (Max 20)	Category
1	T-01	4	4	4	4	16	Good
2	T-02	3	4	3	4	14	Good
3	T-03	4	5	4	5	18	Very Good
4	T-04	3	3	3	3	12	Average
5	T-05	4	3	4	4	15	Good
6	T-06	3	4	4	3	14	Good
7	T-07	4	4	3	4	15	Good
8	T-08	3	3	3	3	12	Average
9	T-09	4	4	4	4	16	Good
10	T-10	5	5	5	5	20	Excellent

Reflecting Phase

Teachers demonstrated substantial growth in instructional quality and technology integration:

p. The average score rose to 3.87 out of 5, with 90% of teachers surpassing the success indicator threshold of 3.5.
q. This reflects a 32% improvement from Cycle 1, confirming the effectiveness of the interventions.

These improvements are further illustrated in a comparative chart highlighting upward trends for all teachers, with notable progress among previous low scorers. Teachers T-02, T-04, and T-06 showed the most significant gains.



Cycle 2 confirms the effectiveness of targeted professional development and peer support strategies. The integration of Sandy AI significantly improved instructional practices and student speaking engagement, indicating its potential as a scalable model for other MGMP contexts.

Discussion

The findings from this classroom action research underscore the transformative potential of integrating Sandy AI into English language instruction within MGMP Madrasah Aliyah in Soppeng Regency. The two research cycles provided a structured platform to observe the progression of teachers' instructional skills, specifically in designing and delivering speaking lessons aligned with CEFR B1-level communicative competencies.

In Cycle 1, teachers showed foundational awareness of Sandy AI but encountered notable challenges in operationalizing its features effectively in the classroom. Many struggled to leverage the platform's interactive feedback mechanisms, particularly in areas such as pronunciation support and contextual application of CEFR B1 expressions. These early implementation issues are consistent with commonly reported barriers in educational technology integration, where initial stages are marked by technical uncertainty and pedagogical hesitation (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Ghounane, 2021).

The structured interventions implemented in Cycle 2—comprising targeted training, peer mentoring, and increased opportunities for guided AI use—resulted in a significant improvement in instructional practice. Observation data demonstrated greater teacher confidence, enhanced clarity in instruction, and improved student engagement. These advancements affirm the role of sustained professional development and collaborative learning in facilitating meaningful technology adoption in educational settings (Desimone & Garet, 2015; Salehi & Salehi, 2020).

By the second cycle, Sandy AI had become a more integral component of instruction. Teachers utilized it to facilitate student-centered speaking tasks, creating an environment that promoted learner autonomy and interactive communication. This pedagogical shift aligns with contemporary language teaching approaches that emphasize communicative competence, authentic language use, and learner agency (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Zhang & Liu, 2021).

The iterative nature of action research allowed for continuous reflection and refinement. Teacher feedback, observation results, and focused discussions contributed to a dynamic intervention model that adapted to the evolving needs of the participants. The peer mentoring mechanism was especially effective, enabling proficient teachers to guide their peers through both technical challenges and pedagogical application (Jalilifar & Hashemian, 2022).

Quantitative results further supported these developments. The average performance scores across key indicators—instructional clarity, AI integration, CEFR B1 explanation, and student engagement—rose by 32% from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. By the end of the second cycle, 90% of participating teachers had met or exceeded the success benchmark, confirming the overall effectiveness of the training model and AI-supported methodology (Luo, 2023).

In conclusion, the findings strongly suggest that the integration of AI tools like Sandy AI, when supported by structured professional development and collaborative learning environments, can substantially enhance the instructional capabilities of English language teachers. The improvement in teacher performance and student participation observed in this study illustrates the potential of AI to enrich language education practices, particularly within the MGMP context and similar institutional settings. These results position Sandy AI as not only a technological innovation but also a pedagogical asset in efforts to modernize English language teaching (Hockly, 2018; Sari & Wahyudin, 2020).

Conclusion

This study concludes that the strategic integration of Sandy AI into speaking instruction significantly enhanced the instructional skills of English language teachers within the MGMP community at Madrasah Aliyah in Soppeng Regency. Teachers demonstrated marked improvement in delivering CEFR B1-aligned expressions, particularly in giving suggestions and offering help. Supported by a 32% increase in average instructional competence from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2, and with 90% of participants meeting or surpassing the success threshold, the intervention successfully advanced the professional teaching capacity within the target context.

The combination of Sandy AI and structured professional development—encompassing targeted training, peer mentoring, and hands-on classroom practice—resulted in substantial gains in lesson clarity, AI-assisted instruction, and student engagement. The findings provide empirical support for the use of AI tools in teacher training, reinforcing their value as part of a reflective and collaborative instructional model.

However, the study also acknowledges several limitations. First, the intervention was confined to a single regency and a specific cohort of teachers, limiting generalizability. Second, variations in digital literacy among participants may have influenced the pace and effectiveness of AI integration. Finally, the study focused primarily on speaking instruction and did not extend to other language skills.

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