

TEACHER'S STRATEGIES IN MANAGING GRADE 7 STUDENTS' MISBEHAVIORS IN AN EFL CLASSROOM: AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY AT SMP NEGERI 1 KANDANGSERANG

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Abstract Junior high school students frequently face a variety of difficulties that have an impact on their behavior and level of involvement when learning English. The purpose of this study is to investigate the kinds of misbehavior that seventh-grade students in an EFL classroom display as well as the methods the instructor employs to control these behaviors. This study is guided by two primary research questions: What types of misbehavior do seventh-grade students exhibit during English classes? What methods does the English teacher use to deal with these misbehaviors? This study used a qualitative approach, using interviews and classroom observations as the main methods of data gathering. One English instructor and a seventh-grade class at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang during the 2024-2025 school year made up the participants. The results showed that there were four main categories of misbehavior: utilizing Indonesian during English-speaking exercises, talking with friends, using cell phones covertly, and having low learning motivation. The study also found that the teacher employed three ways to deal with these problems, including positive encouragement to boost confidence, repetition of classroom norms, and subtle direct cautions. The results of the interviews also revealed that, in order to preserve a healthy classroom environment, the teacher favored gentle, encouraging methods over harsh ones. These results emphasize the significance of emotionally supportive teaching methods and regular rule enforcement in creating a more productive and stimulating EFL learning environment. Keywords: <i>student misbehaviour, classroom management, EFL classroom, teacher strategies, qualitative research, positive reinforcement.</i>	Article History Received: November 2025 Reviewed: November 2025 Published: November 2025 Plagiarism Checker No 654 Prefix DOI: Prefix DOI: 10.8734/sindoro.v1i2.360 Copyright: Author Publish by: SINDORO  This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.
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Introduction

Effective classroom management is essential to the effectiveness of learning activities, especially when it comes to influencing students' behavior and learning processes. According to a study done in Shomolu Local Government, classroom management strategies have a major and beneficial influence on student achievement (Adeyemo, 2012). Wubbels (2011) goes on to classify classroom management techniques into a number of categories, such as those that prioritize communication, classroom debates, educational programs, interpersonal interactions, and both internal and external discipline.

Students are more likely to give positive comments when teachers use effective teaching strategies. To boost motivation and understanding of the course material, Lewis (2001), for example, used positive reinforcement approaches to increase constructive behavior and student involvement. In their assessment of more than ten years of classroom management research, Freiberg et al. (2020) discovered that encouraging peer interaction greatly raises students' sense of engagement with the learning process. Additionally, they stressed how crucial it is for teachers and students to build social and emotional bonds because these connections have a big impact on classroom management results. As a result, it is imperative that educators use efficient methods to deal with student misbehavior, especially in junior high school, when positive techniques have been found to be among the most effective (Lewis, 2001).

Inappropriate student behavior, however, can interfere with class time and impair teachers' efficacy if it is not appropriately handled. Chang and Taxer (2020) claim that chronic misconduct might lead to feelings of hopelessness, emotional exhaustion, and even the desire to stop teaching. Jacobs and de Wet (2009) further examine the relationship between teacher stress and burnout and student misbehavior, emphasizing the value of effective management strategies and well-defined classroom regulations. It is generally acknowledged that handling misconduct is essential to maintaining a pleasant learning environment, despite the claims of certain scholars, such as Evertsen et al. (2006), that behavioral methods alone may not be sufficient.

Habibi et al. (2018) investigated the difficulties EFL student performance, dealing with multilingual classrooms, time management, teacher performance, teachers' inadequate English proficiency, handling inappropriate behavior with rewards or penalties, and general classroom problems. According to their findings, student misconduct is a prevalent and serious issue that has an impact on the classroom environment and the flow of education. Similar to this, Aloe et al. (2014) analyzed 21 studies with 63 data sets and discovered that teachers who experience recurrent student misconduct may experience emotional exhaustion, lose their excitement, and feel less like they have a clear professional identity. These results demonstrate how important it is to employ effective classroom management strategies, particularly in EFL classes where communication and behavioral difficulties regularly coexist.

Examining the kinds of misbehavior displayed by seventh-grade students and the methods teachers use to control it during offline learning activities at private vocational schools is the goal of the current study. With an emphasis on in-person classroom settings, this study draws from earlier research conducted in a variety of circumstances and backgrounds. Kulinna et al. (2006) state that lying, risky behavior, bullying, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, drug usage, bringing weapons to school, disrupting class, and physical aggressiveness including punching or shoving are examples of regular student misbehavior. The study's conclusions are meant to advance knowledge of classroom management in offline learning environments as opposed to online ones.

Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative methodology to determine the kinds of deviant behaviors exhibited by students and the methods used by teachers to address these behaviors in an EFL class. Debreli & Ishanova, (2019) assert that qualitative research places more

emphasis on the interpretation and comprehension of social phenomena than on the volume of data. This study was conducted in a natural context, namely the classroom, to guarantee that the data gathered accurately reflected the actual circumstances that existed during the learning process.

One English teacher and one class of seventh-graders participated in the study, which was carried out at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang. It is more probable that a range of deviant behaviors will be relevant to the study given the characteristics of the students in this class—who are making the transition from elementary to junior secondary education. The participating teacher is expected to be able to employ a range of strategies to handle a variety of student behaviors because of her more than 10 years of teaching experience.

Direct observation in the classroom for two lesson hours, or roughly 40 minutes, was used to obtain the data. Using tools like tripods and cameras, researchers painstakingly recorded educational activities during the observation period. Additionally, the researcher documented the kinds of aberrant conduct that pupils displayed as well as the teacher's approach to handling them using an observation sheet, commonly known as an observation checklist. After the learning activities were finished, researchers spoke with teachers one-on-one for around an hour in order to corroborate the observation data. This interview is intended to provide a more in-depth description of the teacher's methodology, the justification for its application, and the teacher's experience dealing with unruly children in the classroom.

To provide a comprehensive picture of the events that took place in the classroom, all recorded data was transcribed and subjected to a qualitative descriptive analysis following the completion of the observation and interview processes. The researcher explained any parts of the observation that were unclear to the teacher via direct communication with the WhatsApp app. To make sure the data analysis was accurate and consistent with field reality, this was done.

Prior to the observation, the researcher provided SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang with an official letter of university approval. The purpose of the letter was to request permission to perform the research project and outline its benefits to the school. The researcher provided the instructors with informed consent forms, explained the study's objectives and purpose to the kids, and assured them that their names would be kept private. Since every participant indicated an interest in taking part, the study complies with research ethics.

Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings based on classroom observations and teacher interviews conducted in two English lessons for Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang. The aim of this study was to explore the types of students' misbehaviors in the English classroom and the strategies employed by the English teacher to manage them. Data were collected through naturalistic observation, field notes, photo documentation, and follow-up interviews

with the teacher. The discussion includes theoretical analysis and connections with previous studies.

A. Forms of Student Misbehavior

During two classroom observations, several types of students' misbehaviors were identified. The most frequent behaviors included talking with friends, using mobile phones secretly, showing signs of low motivation, and speaking in Indonesian despite instructions to use English.

The most common misbehavior observed was talking with friends. Several students were seen engaging in off-task conversations during speaking practices or teacher instruction. These conversations often occurred among those seated in the back row and disrupted the focus of the class. This aligns with Sun and Shek (2011), who argue that unpermitted student talk is a common form of disruptive behavior that can hinder classroom learning.

Another frequent misbehavior was secret use of mobile phones. Although the teacher had reminded students not to use their phones during class, some students used them when the teacher was not paying close attention—such as when she was writing on the whiteboard or handing out worksheets. This shows that inconsistent enforcement of rules can create opportunities for students to violate them. Debreli and Ishanova (2019) noted that cell phone use is a significant issue in EFL classroom management, particularly if not consistently addressed.

Lack of motivation was another notable misbehavior. Some students displayed passive attitudes, such as resting their heads on the table, avoiding eye contact, or showing no intention of completing tasks. In one case, a student sat still for nearly the entire session without taking notes or participating. According to Tanaka (2017), low motivation can stem from both internal factors (such as low self-confidence) and external ones (such as an unstimulating learning environment). Falout, Elwood, and Hood (2009) further categorize demotivation sources into environmental factors, learner-internal factors, and emotional reactions—many of which seemed present in this case.

The fourth behavior observed was using the mother tongue (Bahasa Indonesia) during speaking practice, even though students had been instructed to use English. For instance, one student answered a question in Indonesian, to which the teacher responded by gently modeling the English version without reprimanding the student. While previous studies such as Debreli and Ishanova (2019) categorized L1 use as a misbehavior, this study suggests that in certain educational contexts, it may serve as a useful learning strategy. Pavón and Vázquez (2019) support this by stating that L1 use can facilitate comprehension and reduce anxiety in low-proficiency learners.

Interestingly, severe misbehaviors such as bullying, cheating, or violence—often found in larger-scale studies like Kulinna et al. (2006)—were not observed. This may be due to contextual differences, such as smaller class size, local culture, or the nature of the English lesson being more discussion-based than test-oriented.

Type of Misbehavior	Description
Talking with friends	Students chatted during activities and instruction
Using cell phones secretly	Phones used when teacher was distracted
Lack of motivation	Students were passive, sleepy, or uninterested
Speaking Indonesian in class	Students used L1 despite instructions to speak English

B. Teachers' Strategies in Handling Misbehavior

To manage classroom misbehavior, the English teacher implemented three main strategies: direct yet subtle warnings, reiteration of classroom rules, and positive reinforcement.

The first and most frequently used strategy was direct but subtle correction. Rather than scolding students harshly, the teacher called their names or redirected their attention gently. For instance, when students were talking or using phones, she would simply say their names or ask a related question to bring them back on task. During the interview, she explained:

“I usually don’t yell. I call their name or just remind them kindly. Most of them understand and stop. I prefer to stay calm.”

This approach reflects a non-confrontational classroom control strategy, aiming to avoid public embarrassment while maintaining authority. It aligns with Lewis (2001), who emphasizes that low-aggression responses are often more effective in maintaining classroom order and preserving student dignity.

The second strategy was reminding students of the classroom rules, particularly the prohibition against phone use. At the beginning of each lesson, the teacher stated that mobile phones should not be used. However, observations showed that enforcement was inconsistent. Several students continued to use phones throughout the lesson without immediate consequence. As Pedota (2007) notes, rules must be applied consistently and fairly to be effective; otherwise, students may test boundaries and repeat misbehavior.

The third strategy employed was a positive reinforcement approach. Instead of criticizing students who used Indonesian or seemed unmotivated, the teacher provided supportive feedback or modeled appropriate behavior. For example, when a student answered in Indonesian, the teacher responded in English and encouraged the student to repeat. She explained in the interview:

“Most of them are shy. They don’t feel confident speaking English, so I let them try in Indonesian first, then guide them step-by-step.”

This approach corresponds with the principles of Positive Behavioral Support (PBS), which emphasizes building positive relationships and supporting emotional well-being (Luiselli et al.,

2005). Faulconer et al. (2022) also found that positive feedback can significantly boost student engagement and performance, especially in emotionally safe learning environments.

Despite these efforts, the teacher acknowledged that some students repeatedly broke the rules, especially regarding mobile phone use. This suggests that while the strategies were partially effective, they might not fully prevent recurrence of misbehavior. This finding echoes Virtanen et al. (2015), who assert that student engagement is closely tied to classroom quality—including emotional support, instructional variety, and clear organization.

Teacher Strategy	Implementation	Notes
Direct but subtle warning	Calling names, giving tasks calmly	May be ineffective for persistent misbehavior
Reinforcing classroom rules	Stated at beginning, reminded during lessons	Inconsistently enforced
Positive reinforcement approach	Encouraging words, modeling correct usage	Builds student confidence and participation

Overall, this study confirms that student misbehavior in the EFL classroom can take many forms, from distraction and demotivation to noncompliance with language use expectations. While the teacher applied reasonable and context-sensitive strategies, a consistent and engaging classroom environment is essential to maintaining student discipline. Additionally, teachers must adapt their classroom management techniques to students' emotional and cultural backgrounds in order to effectively guide behavior and support learning.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to determine the kinds of deviant behaviors that students exhibit in the seventh grade English class at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang, as well as the methods that the instructor uses to deal with them. Deviant behaviors such talking to friends, using cell phones covertly, lacking enthusiasm to study, and speaking Indonesian during English-language exercises were discovered through classroom observations and interviews with English teachers. These actions interfere with the learning process and are typically brought on by low student participation, erratic classroom management, and a lack of confidence in one's ability to use English.

In order to address the behavior, the teacher employed three primary strategies: a friendly approach, a gentle, direct rebuke, and a reminder of the class regulations. The most common tactics are addressing pupils by name or quietly assigning homework. However, due to teachers' inconsistent application of the rules and their failure to completely engage pupils in the learning process, the effectiveness of these tactics is still limited.

Additionally, this study demonstrates that not all aberrant conduct is generalizable across different situations. For instance, using Indonesian, which is deemed abnormal in some research, serves as a learning tool for kids who still struggle with English. Therefore, in order to comprehend and control student conduct, cultural and local context must be taken into account.

In conclusion, a combination of emotionally supportive teaching strategies, engaging learning techniques, and consistent rule application is needed to manage students' deviant conduct. When handling violations, teachers must take into account both the behavioral and emotional characteristics of their pupils. They should also work to establish a welcoming and inspiring learning atmosphere. To improve knowledge of successful classroom management techniques in various EFL contexts, more extensive study with repeated observations is advised.

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