DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

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This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Education with Honours (Teaching English as a Second Language)

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The project entitled ‘Disruptive Behaviour in The ESL Classroom’ was prepared by Lee Siaw Ju and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Education with Honours (Teaching English as a Second Language).

It is hereby confirmed that the student has done all necessary amendments of the project for acceptance:

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ABSTRACT

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Students’ disruptive behaviour in the classroom often causes disruption to the teaching and learning process. In many countries, this has become a major concern for educators. The aim of the study was to investigate the types and factors of disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom whereby 420 participants (209 males and 193 females) of Form one students were drawn from three secondary schools in Kuching division. The study was conducted as a survey research in which questionnaires were used in this study for the purpose of data collection. The results showed that Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) occurred more than Conduct Disorder (CD) in the ESL classroom and this was followed by schoolwork was identified as the main factor that contributed to the occurrences of disruptive behaviour. There were also no gender and race differences of disruptive behaviour found in this study. The outcome may imply that teachers should be careful in preparing schoolwork for students since schoolwork may cause or prevent students from displaying disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom.
ABSTRAK

TINGKAH LAKU PELAJAR YANG MENIMBULKAN PENGANGGUAN DALAM KELAS BAHASA INGGERIS

LEE SIAW JU

Tingkah laku pelajar yang menimbulkan gangguan dalam kelas sering mengakibatkan pengangguan dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran. Dalam kebanyakan negara, fenomena ini telah menjadi tumpuan perhatian para pendidik. Matlamat kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat pelbagai jenis dan faktor tingkah laku yang menimbulkan gangguan dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris. Seramai 420 pelajar (209 lelaki dan 193 perempuan) dari Tingkatan satu telah dipilih dari tiga buah sekolah menengah di Daerah Kuching sebagai responden bagi kajian ini. Kajian ini berbentuk tinjauan dan soal selidik digunakan bagi tujuan pengumpulan data. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahawa Tingkah Laku Devian (ODD) berlaku lebih daripada Kecelaruan Kelakuan (CD) dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris, dan ini diikuti dengan hasil analisis yang menunjukkan kerja sekolah adalah faktor utama yang menyumbang kepada berlakunya tingkah laku yang menimbulkan gangguan dalam kelas. Selain itu, hasil analisis juga menunjukkan tidak terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara tingkah laku pelajar dengan jantina dan kaum. Hasil kajian mengimplikasikan bahawa guru-guru harus berhati-hati semasa menyediakan kerja sekolah untuk pelajar sebab kerja sekolah boleh menjadi penyebab atau penghalang kepada berlakunya tingkah laku pelajar yang menimbulkan gangguan dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the background of the study, research problem, aim and objectives of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, operational definition of terms, scope of the study and chapter review of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

The problem of disruptive behaviour happened in every level of educational system. According to American Federation of Teachers (n.d.), discipline problem happened in every school and even in the best schools where employees of the school experience frustration in maintaining conducive learning environment while teacher on the other hand, faces great challenge of students’ disruptive behaviour.

Disruptive behaviour at school affects every student. According to Burn (2002), enormous development has been done in order to understand and develop solution on the issue of disruptive behaviour in school (as cited in Walker, Ramsey and Gresham, 2004).
Based on a study conducted by Miller, Ferguson and Moore (2002), home factors can be seen as the biggest contributory factor to classroom disruptive behaviour. According to Charlton & George (1993), an individual student behaves in such a way is due to the lack of love from parents, instability of the home environment, and control given (as cited in Riding & Fairhurst, 2001). Based on a sequential analysis conducted by Patterson (1992), factors such as poverty, divorce, drug and alcohol problems, and physical abuse are problems that cause great stress to a particular family. These problems will in turns lead the family members to interact negatively through extreme yelling, threat, and even harm to force ones children to behave. The analysis shows that these hostile and aggressive behaviour actually increased the probability of disruptive behaviour in the individual children in the future by 50 percent (as cited in Walker, Ramsey & Gresham, 2004).

Followed by that, Abernthy, Manera and Wright (1985) and Charles and Senter (1995), claimed that disruptive behaviour has become the source of majority teachers’ greatest fears since teachers were considered as poor classroom manager when students demonstrate a high level of disruptive behaviour (as cited in Cangelosi, 2000). Miller, Ferguson and Moore (2002) indicated that teacher’s behaviour is also equally one of the major causes that contribute to the classroom disruptive behaviour in terms of teachers’ unfairness towards individual student. Apart from that, according to Kaplan (2002), the teacher’s way of conducting the lesson such as using competition to motivate students to improve grades is also one of the causes that contribute to students’ disruptive behaviour. (as cited in “Children and Disruptive Behaviour”, 2007).
Student themselves is also seen as one of the factors that causes classroom disruptive behaviour. A student who knowingly or unknowingly, effectively and frequently disrupts his or her own education and the education of others is perceived by a number of educators as the consequence of student’s frustration and the lack of opportunity to fulfill his or her basic needs within the boundaries of the classroom (Dreikurs, 1968; Glasser, 1986 as cited in Geiger, 2002). Consequently, the condition leads the student to misbehave themselves by adopting disruptive attitude such as power or revenge and at the same time giving up trying to meet the so called academic and social expectations (Buck, 1992; Dreikurs, 1986; Glasser, 1986 as cited in Geiger, 2002).

1.2 Research Problem

Disruptive behaviour is a chronic problem that teachers tend to face in the classroom nowadays. It is also a barrier to the teaching and learning process of many educational institutes. According to Badger (1985), disruptive behaviour is not simply random within a school but can be influenced by factors such as the ratio of boys to girls, the day of the week (Monday), the period of the day (last period in the afternoon), or particular pupils (five pupils accounting for 11 per cent of referrals to quiet room) (as cited in Gray, 1998). Apart from that, according to Goh (2005), warm weather can cause students to be disruptive in the classroom. This had indirectly given a clear factor that weather can be one of the factor that contribute to students’ disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom since Malaysia is a country with warm weather (“Malaysian Education”, 2008).

Lots of researches have been done on this issue such as solution to disruptive behaviour but the outcome is still remaining unchanged and nowadays it turns out to be more serious and frequent in the classroom.
Positive and productive learning environment is a classroom without or with minimum existence of disruptive behaviour and it is where the classroom activities are being coordinated in order to facilitate teaching and learning. It is also where the learning is taking place successfully. In Malaysia, the number of students in a classroom is usually large which consists of 35 to 40 students. According to Goh (2005), every child is a unique individual with his or her own personality traits. This can be one of the major reasons that cause teacher to be unable to manage the classroom situation in a well manner. Hence, in order to enable teaching and learning to take place, disruptive behaviour must be effectively control by teachers and teachers have to manage their classroom well so that teaching can be effective.

According to McKenzie-Brown (2007), good management creates an environment that assists students’ learning and influences students’ attitude and perceived role. In order to enable teacher to manage the classroom in a well organized manner, teacher have to find out the cause of disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Since disruptive behaviour happened due to several factors, it is crucial to discover the main factors that cause its existence and from there disruptive behaviour can be reduced and eliminated slowly from the classroom so that learning occur. As it is mentioned by Levin (1996) “for effective teaching to take place, teachers must be competent in managing student’s disruptive behaviour so as to maximize the time spent on learning”. Thus, this study aimed to investigate on the types of disruptive behaviour which frequently occur and the main factor that cause disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom.
1.3 Research Objectives:

This study aimed to find out:

1. The types of disruptive behaviour that occurs most in the ESL classroom.
2. The factors that causes disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom.

1.4 Research Questions:

1. What were the types of disruptive behaviour that occurs most in the ESL classroom?
2. What were the factors that cause disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom?
3. What were the gender differences of disruptive behaviour between single-sex and coeducational classroom?
4. What were the race differences of disruptive behaviour between single-sex and coeducational classroom?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Disruptive behaviour will cause interruption to the flow of teaching and learning process in the classroom (Parry-Jones & Gay, 1984) which should not be taken lightly because according to Ayanniyi B. Alhassan (2002), a single chronically disruptive child can actually damage the education of a great number of children. Thus, this study was to find out the factors of disruptive behaviour and types of disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom so that the finding may help teachers to utilize this information to prevent or reduce the frequency of disruptive behaviour that might occur during the teaching and learning process. For instance, when finding shows that students become disruptive during English language lesson is due to the dullness of the lesson this perhaps may alert the
teachers to be aware of the factor and try to make the lesson more interesting to the learner.

As for the school, the finding might be able to make the discipline teacher to perceive the basis for the development of disruptive behaviour within the students. Hence, this study might help discipline teacher to manage student’s disciplinary problem through a more effective ways which is through understanding the students before any punishment is applied on the students. This is because using excessive control and punishment techniques is not an effective ways of managing student’s behaviour and it is unacceptable in this new millennium (Goh, 2005). Furthermore, this finding may also help the principal to better understand the cause of disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom and might organized some useful programs or seminars which are useful for teachers to attend in order to improve the teacher’s teaching skill.

Disruptive behaviour is happening in every classroom and there is no single best resolution to prevent disruptive behaviour from occurring in the classroom since it involves many factors which are out of the teacher’s control. However, the findings of this study might be able to lessen the number of occurrences of disruptive behaviour in the classroom since this study investigated the issue of disruptive behaviour by examining events related to its occurrence from secondary school’s students’ perspective and in different learning context of Kuching division. The information perhaps might be useful for developing a positive behavioural intervention plan that directly addresses the identified causes of disruptive behaviour. It is believed that the findings of this study might also be applied into other research problems such as discipline problem and aggressive behaviour of student for the purpose of understanding student’s behaviour in different context.
1.6 Operational Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Disruptive Behaviour

Disruptive behaviour here refers to the various unwanted forms of behaviour that can cause interruption to the flow of teaching and learning process in the classroom (Parry-Jones & Gay, 1984). According to McCown, Driscol, Roop (1996), disruptive behaviour in the classroom can be defined as an action made by students that disrupt learning in the classroom (as cited in Geiger, 2002).

Hence, a definition of disruptive behaviour which is used for the purpose of this study is undesirable behaviour that is executed by students whether consciously or unconsciously to disrupt the process of teaching and learning in the ESL classroom and it prevents learning from occur. This disruptive behaviour will in turns ruins the chances for successful schooling since learning does not occur in the classroom.

1.6.2 Disruptive Students

Disruptive students or disruptive child can be described as a child who disrupts one’s own education and others intentionally or unintentionally throughout the learning process in the classroom. (Parry-Jones & Gay, 1984).

According to Ayanniyi B. Alhassan (2002), a disruptive child also can be described as a child who regularly disrupts his own education and the education of others in a conscious or unconscious state. Hence, disruptive students in this study can be described as a child who continuously disrupts the flow of the teaching and learning process in the ESL classroom. For instance, a student who continuously disturbs his or her classmate by pulling his or her friend’s hair during English language class is considered as an act of a disruptive student.
1.6.3 Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

According to Auciello (2006), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) refers to a pattern of negativistic behaviours which include arguing, disobeying rules and requests, intentionally annoying others, being easily annoyed or resentful, and blaming others for one’s mistakes. This types of disruptive behaviour do not seriously violate the rights of others and do not involve aggressive or violence behaviour towards others, destruction of property, stealing, or deceiving others.

Thus, a definition of ODD which is used for the purpose of this study is undesirable behaviours that are less severe than Conduct Disorder (CD) in which ODD involved behaviours that purposely annoyed others, quarrel with others, easily offended, and disobeying rules and procedure in the ESL classroom.

1.6.4 Conduct Disorder (CD)

According to Auciello (2006), Conduct Disorder (CD) refers to the behaviours that has no respect on authority, break major rules, and reveal aggressive behaviour that threatened, harm physically and damage property, dishonesty, stealing, running away from home and often vengeful.

Therefore, CD in this study can be defined as undesirable behaviours that are more severe than Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) in which CD involved behaviours that violet the rights of others such as harm others physically or mentally, break rules, damage property, and lying to others in the ESL classroom.
1.6.5 Home factor

According to Walker, Ramsey, and Gresham (2004), home factor refers to the result from social and personal factors that put great stress on family life (e.g., poverty, divorce, drug and alcohol problems, and physical abuse). These stressors disrupt normal parenting practices.

According to Harmer (2001), home factor refers to the individual student’s experiences in family which have a deep influence on the student’s attitudes towards learning. The occurrence of disruptive behaviour in the classroom can be due to the difficult home situation, home attitudes towards English or to learning in general or even towards teacher which can influence students to misbehave.

Thus, a definition of home factor which is used for the purpose of this study is student’s disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom as a consequence of family circumstances. For example, a student disrupts the classroom because there were fights and arguments at home which affect the individual student’s emotion and later causes the student to conduct disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom.

1.6.6 Student factor

Student factor can be defined as the happening of disruptive behaviour as a result of the individual students’ own behaviour with the purpose to gain extra attention, escape or avoid demanding situations, exert control and to communicate with others (Burke, 1992).

Hence, student factor in this study can be defined as an act of classroom disruption done by student due to the student’s own personality. As an example, a student disrupts the teaching and learning process of the ESL classroom because of the feelings of dislike towards English language subject.
1.6.7 Teacher factor

According to Harmer (2001), teacher factor refers to the result of disruptive behaviour due to the inappropriate selection of topic or activity which causes boredom in the individual students, or teacher’s way of disciplining the students such as unfairness that teacher place upon the student.

Thus, a definition of teacher factor which is used for the purpose of this study is English language teacher is the cause of student’s disruption in the ESL classroom. For instance, student disrupts during the English language lesson due to the reason the English language teacher has been unfair towards the student.

1.6.8 ESL classroom

According to Arends (2004), ESL classroom is a classroom where ESL instruction is the medium of instruction in the class. On the other hand, Richards (2004) pointed out that, communicative competence as a goal to learning should be the main concern of ESL classroom nowadays, which essentially means learner should be involved creatively and independently in the process of discovering the rules of the language (as cited in “The ESL Classroom,” n.d.).

Hence, ESL classroom in Malaysia context can be defined as the teaching of English to pupils who may come from communities or homes that practice a completely different pattern of language habits, language, and culture (Norrizan Razali, 2001).
1.6.9 Race

According to Evelyn (1992), race is a group of people who considered oneself or being considered by other group of people as being different due to the physical characteristic which can not be change. These characteristic are believed to have strong influence in the attitude, behaviour, moral and intellectual ability of an individual which can not be physically seen.

Hence, a definition of race which is used for the purpose of this study is individuals who are identified as belong to particular race may have rather similar types of attitude and behaviour in the classroom.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Previous studies (Miller, Ferguson & Moore, 2002; Fortin, 2003; Bru, 2006) showed factors associated with disruptive behaviour in the classroom whereas other studies (Fortin, 2003; Auciello, 2006) demonstrated the different types of disruptive behaviour that occurred in the classroom.

In the present study, the aspects focused on the types of disruptive behaviour and the factors that cause students to be disruptive in the ESL classroom. This study investigated student’s disruptive behaviour in the context of ESL classroom in secondary schools instead of primary school because according to Goh (2005), secondary school students are more mature and critical as students at this level are becoming increasingly problematic due to the reason students are exposed to the influences outside school, mass media, internet and students are also the younger generation whom received the affluence and indulgence of parents. Hence, this study focused on the disruptive behaviour of secondary school students.

In this study, the variables chosen were only limited to types of disruptive behaviour and factors of disruptive behaviour. This is due to the reason that the participants for this study only involved students and not teachers. In other words,
this study obtained data from students’ point of view instead of teachers’ point of view. Hence, the participant selected had indirectly prevented this study from looking into variable such as strategies used to overcome the occurrences of disruptive behaviour in the ESL classroom.

1.8 Chapter Review

Disruptive behaviour has been a routine in the everyday school life and it is becoming more serious nowadays. Various studies have been conducted in this field to manage this problem in order to reduce the happening of disruptive behaviour in the classroom so that major class time is spend for teaching and learning process instead of managing student’s behaviour.

As a summary this chapter reviewed the background of the study, research problem, research objective, research question, significance of the study, operational definition of terms, and scope of the study.

In the next chapter, a range of studies regarding disruptive behaviour will be discussed and the literature reviews involve studies which are conducted in different educational setting.
2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter reviewed the related literature on disruptive behaviour among the primary and secondary school students worldwide. In order to expand the comprehension of the study, the discussion was divided into four sub-titles which consist of theories of disruptive behaviour, types of disruptive behaviour, factors contribute to disruptive behaviour, and disruptive behaviour in single-sex versus coeducational school.

2.1 Theories of disruptive behaviour

Disruptive behaviour can be seen as part of the discipline problem and can be looked at from different discipline models which are developed by many behavioural psychologists, educators and practitioners. The discipline models to be discussed on in this research are the behaviour modification model by Skinner (1953), assertive discipline by Canter (1996), and reality therapy by Glasser (1990).
According to Khine, Lourdusamy, Quek, and Angela (2005), Skinner’s behaviour modification model is used to shape desired behaviour. It consists of the restructuring of the environment so that undesired behaviour is eliminated. Behaviour modification uses the principle of reinforcement whereby reinforcers are stimulus event which may be used to increase the likelihood of the desired behaviour being displayed. It is therefore believed that one should reinforce the desired behaviour rather than punish the inappropriate or wrong behaviour. There are strengths and weaknesses involved in this model. For example, the reward system tends to promote extrinsic motivation and at the same time may cause the loss of interest in actual learning due to the lack of intrinsic motivation.

On the other hand, Gray and Ayers (1998) claimed that assertive discipline model by Canter suggested that assertive discipline has its fundamental premise on the reinforcement of appropriate behaviour and students’ acceptance of the result of their actions. Canter suggested that a classroom discipline enable the teacher to clarify behaviours which are expected from the students whereby ones will receive positive recognition if ones follow the rules and will face the consequences of their action if one did not follow the rules. Assertive discipline model in some ways is similar with Skinner’s behaviour modification model but it involves establishing rules and strictly follows reward and punishment as consequences of one’s action.

Glasser suggested Choice Theory which is based on the concept that human behaviour is directed towards meeting four basic psychological needs. Glasser believed that all living creatures are driven by four basic needs in an attempt to stay alive. The four basic needs are (1) to belong and love, (2) to have sufficient power and control, (3) to be free, and (4) to have fun. Thus, when student’s needs are not fulfilled, students turn to be disruptive and misbehave in school. According to Glasser, misbehaviour is irresponsible behaviour and which should not be tolerated. Thus, according to reality therapy, teachers are to correct misbehaviour not only for the purpose of maintaining a conducive learning