Lecturer's Personal and Social Competence Toward Students' Writing Proficiency in EFL Classroom

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Abstract

The competency of a lecturer is required for a successful learning process that leads to increased student accomplishment. The present study investigates (1) the profile of students' writing skills at the Port Shipping Management Department of Polytechnic of Makassar Merchant Marine (PIP) through a writing test, and (2) the influence of lecturers' personal and social competence on students' writing proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom settings using qualitative data. The study employed purposive sampling to select 3 lecturers and 30 second-semester students from the Port Shipping Management Department of PIP. Quantitative data were collected through a writing test administered to the 30 students, while qualitative data were gathered using semi-structured interviews with the 5 lecturers, focus group discussions with the students, and classroom observations. The findings revealed various levels of writing proficiency among PIP students and highlighted the positive impact of lecturers' personal and social competence on students' writing proficiency. The better the personal influence and social competence of the lecturers, the better the students' writing capabilities are. The study emphasizes the need for continued development of lecturers' personal and social competence to foster a supportive and engaging learning environment in maritime education and training.

Keywords**:** Personal, Social, Writing, Competence

Introduction,

In a world characterized by rapid advancements in science and technology, concerted efforts have been made to enhance the quality of human resources (Blossfeld & Kulic, 2020). Education systems play a crucial role in shaping individuals and equipping them with the necessary skills for success (Baker & Stevenson, 2018). Education is intricately linked to human life and serves as a key driver of development (UNESCO, 2021). In the era of globalization, the quality of human resources has emerged as a fundamental factor in fostering competence (Cohen & Soto, 2019). However, with the increasing population, competition has become

intense. As a result, the education sector faces the imperative of creating highly competitive human resources capable of thriving in a globalized world (OECD, 2018).

Politeknik Ilmu Pelayaran Makassar (Polytechnic of Makassar Merchant Marine (PIP), As an example, PIP would be mentioned. It is one of the Makassar formal education schools that offers a certificate of four degrees in the subject of shipping. It is a college affiliated with the Sea Transportation Human Resources Development Agency, Ministry of Transportation of the Republic of Indonesia, and was founded on October 17, 1921. The education program at PIP strives to equip students, known as cadets, to satisfy the demands of the shipping, marine engineering, and shipping management fields.

Communication is critical in seafaring for the effective and safe operation of a ship at sea. It occurs within the ship itself – known as on-board communication – as well as between the ship and other ships, the ship and shore stations, and, in rare cases, the ship and aircraft – known as external communication. According to Yakusheckina (2000:1), "the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) requires each mariner to have sufficient knowledge in English." The requirement demonstrates the significance of English language skills in marine safety.

In the realm of seafaring, where international interactions and regulatory compliance are paramount, the importance of English as a communication tool cannot be overstated (Sampson & Zhao, 2020). Seafarers, the individuals engaged in this field, rely on English for both oral and written communication (Liu, 2019). The utilization of English becomes crucial during the exchange of messages while they are on voyages, where effective communication is essential for seamless operations and adherence to regulations (Bhatia, 2018).

Concerning what has been mentioned above, the government policy about college or higher education is developing extensively at this present time. It is not only about the curriculum but also about the lecturer. We may take a look at the lecturer certification program, in which the government tries to improve the lecturer's ability by that program. Students' standard value also increases year by year so students must learn harder so that the alumni can compete in this globalization era. But in fact, every university has different quality of students, facilities, and quality of lecturers. Of course, the output must be different from other universities which have better facilities or quality lecturers.

It is not an easy job to be a lecturer. Some professors believe that being a lecturer is the same as being a teacher (Arham & Ariani, 2020). Although both of those professions are educators in which they not only convey information but also ethics or norms for their pupils to have a decent attitude, the main responsibility of a lecturer is greater than that of a teacher based on the legal definition of both professions. The lecturer also teaches students with a high way of thinking, so no wonder if we always see students discuss, share ideas or even debate with their lecturer in university classes which we do not see such activities in school classes. Therefore, the lecturers must have many preparations to support their performance in the classroom. Schunk et al (2012: 457) express that some various elements or

factors affected the lecturers' performance or achievement namely aptitude, attitude, mastering the subject (teaching materials), methodology of teaching or teaching methods, personal characteristics or features, the classroom situation (surroundings), general mental ability, individuality, keeping relations with the students, preparation and designing materials, the effectiveness of presenting subject matters, keep relation with staffs, personal improvement, relation with parents and community, poise, intellect, the techniques of teaching, interact with students, teaching competence demonstrated, motivational skills including self-motivation, equity in grading and lecturers' attitude/gestures to the learners or students.

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language, and it must be hard to be taught or learn by educators. Consequently, English requires some skills to be taught it is because the lecturer's expertise is required for the successful learning process, which leads to increased student accomplishment. Lecturers must be dynamic and creative in developing the learning process so the students do not get bored which can decrease students' achievement. Being taught by professional educators or lecturers, they are expected to understand and master the material that is to be taught by English Lecturers and they have better English skills when they are taught it.

Teaching writing is crucial at all colleges in Indonesia, as well as in all countries throughout the world. It is one of the four English language skills, and it is one of the most popular activities among students at the Polytechnic of Makassar Merchant Marine (PIP). When assigned writing projects, students are required to explain or express their thoughts, reply to other ideas, tell tales, and transmit information, as well as produce well-organized prose. Students who have special skills in writing can be a good ticket for their education at a higher level (university level) and can carve greater academic achievement. Furthermore, some students struggle when asked to write because they do not know where to begin or what topic to choose. In addition, dull themes and ineffective teaching methods might undermine students' motivation to write in English.

To solve the problem, English professors or lecturers must be innovative in selecting instructional lessons and resources, as well as teaching approaches that make the writing class more fascinating, thrilling, and pleasurable. This can be done by choosing materials and techniques that are appropriate to the level of students and the background of the students which materials and techniques they like, are fun, and can achieve the goal of education.

Previous research has examined various aspects of language learning and teaching, including the impact of instructional strategies, curricula, and materials (Liu & Zhang, 2021). However, limited attention has been given to the influence of lecturers' personal and social competence on students' writing proficiency in EFL classrooms within maritime education and training contexts (Chen & Chen, 2019). Personal competence encompasses lecturers' self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation, while social competence involves their social awareness and relationship management (Paes de Barros & Pimenta, 2020). These competencies

contribute to creating a supportive and engaging learning environment, which is crucial for improving students' writing skills (Liu & Zhang, 2021).

Therefore, this study aims to fill the existing research gap by investigating the influence of lecturers' personal and social competence on students' writing proficiency at the Port Shipping Management Department of PIP. The research objectives include (1) profiling students' writing skills, and (2) exploring the impact of lecturers' personal and social competence on students' writing proficiency through qualitative data analysis.

Research Methodology,

This mixed-method study combined quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives. The population was the second-semester students of the Port Shipping Management Department of Polytechnic of Makassar Merchant Marine (PIP) who registered in the academic year 2018/2019. The study utilized purposive sampling to select 5 lecturers and 30 students from the Port Shipping Management Department of Polytechnic of Makassar Merchant Marine (PIP).

To address the first research objective, a writing test was administered to the 40 students. The test was designed to evaluate students' writing proficiency in various aspects, such as grammar, vocabulary, organization, and coherence. The students' scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to establish the profile of students' writing skills and examine the relationship between their proficiency levels and the qualitative findings. For the second research objective, data collection methods included semi-structured interviews with the 5 lecturers, focus group discussions with the students, and classroom observations. Because they participated in the writing teaching process at Maritime Education and Training, the five lecturers were selected. These qualitative data collection methods aim to explore the influence of lecturers' personal and social competence on students' writing proficiency in the EFL classroom. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, and the findings were triangulated to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. The process of data analysis involves several steps, namely data collection, data familiarization, coding initiation, theme generation, theme review and refinement, theme definition and naming, data coding, data extraction for each theme, theme analysis and interpretation, and findings reporting.   This procedure entails collecting, acquainting oneself with, categorizing, scrutinizing, and interpreting the data to offer a thorough comprehension of the study inquiries and their consequences.

Findings and Discussion,

Findings

Finding 1: Description of Students' Writing Capability

The quantitative analysis of the writing test results revealed a diverse range of writing skills among students at the Port Shipping Management Department of PIP. The frequency of students' writing proficiency for each category is shown in table 1 below:

Table 1. The Frequency Distribution of the Students' Writing Capability

Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Category
91 - 100	2	6.67	Very good
81-90	2	6.67	Good
66-80	19	63.33	Moderate
56-66	4	13.33	Poor
≤55	3	10	Very poor
Total	30	100	

Table 1 shows data about students' writing capability. The result showed that there were 2 students (6,67%) categorized as very good category, there were 2 students (6.67%) categorized as good category, there were 19 students (63,33%) categorized as moderate category, there were 4 students (13.33 %) categorized as poor category, and there were 3 students (10%) categorized as very poor category. In line with the examination of Table 1, the scores were grouped into three categories: low proficiency (very poor & and poor), intermediate proficiency (moderate), and high proficiency (good & and very good).

Students in the low proficiency category (30%) exhibited a limited understanding of grammatical rules, often making errors with tenses, subject-verb agreement, and sentence structure. Their vocabulary was relatively basic, with a tendency to use simple, everyday words and phrases. These students struggled with organizing their ideas effectively, resulting in disjointed and fragmented writing that lacked a clear structure. Coherence was also an issue, as low-proficiency students frequently veered off-topic or presented unrelated ideas, making it difficult for readers to follow their arguments.

Intermediate proficiency students (50%) demonstrated a moderate grasp of grammatical rules and were generally able to use tenses, subject-verb agreement, and sentence structure correctly, although they still made occasional errors. Their vocabulary was more varied, but still limited compared to high-proficiency students. The organization was stronger in this group, with students able to present their ideas logically, using clear topic sentences and appropriate paragraphing. Coherence was also better among intermediate proficiency students, as they were able to maintain a consistent focus on the topic and present relevant ideas, although some minor lapses in coherence were still present.

High proficiency students (20%) exhibited a strong understanding of grammatical rules, using complex structures such as conditional sentences and passive voice accurately. They have an extensive vocabulary, employing precise and sophisticated language to convey their ideas. These students demonstrated exceptional organizational skills, with well-structured essays that followed a logical

progression of ideas, clear topic sentences, smooth transitions, and appropriate paragraphing. Coherence was also excellent in this group, as high-proficiency students maintained a clear and consistent focus on the topic throughout their writing.

These diverse writing proficiency levels suggest that the Port Shipping Management Department of PIP encompasses a wide range of student abilities. This diversity presents a challenge for lecturers, as they must adapt their teaching methods to accommodate the varying needs of their students to effectively improve their writing proficiency. The findings of this study underscore the importance of addressing these diverse needs through the development of lecturers' personal and social competence in maritime education and training.

Findings 2: Influence of Lecturers' Personal and Social Competence on Students' Writing Proficiency

The study identified several key themes that highlighted the positive impact of lecturers' personal and social competence on students' writing proficiency in the EFL classroom.

Self-Awareness

In my capacity as a lecturer, I think that serving the various requirements of our students requires self-awareness. For example, I firmly believe in the importance of routinely reviewing my pedagogy and aggressively seeking out student input. I've been able to better understand my areas of strength and growth because of this exercise (Lecturer 1).

Grammar instruction is one particular area where my self-awareness has had a good effect on my teaching. I saw, based on both student feedback and my self-reflection, that certain students were having difficulty understanding complicated sentence constructions. In response, I modified my teaching strategy to more effectively meet the unique requirements of those students by offering more support and direction in grammar. This boosted not only their comprehension but also the classroom learning environment as a whole (Lecturer 2).

To sum up, my commitment to self-awareness allows me to modify my teaching methods to meet each student's specific needs and make sure they receive the finest education possible (Lecturer 3).

Lecturers' self-awareness played a crucial role in identifying students' needs and adjusting teaching strategies accordingly. For example, one lecturer noted that they consistently reflected on their teaching practices and sought feedback from

students to better understand their strengths and weaknesses. This self-awareness allowed the lecturer to make necessary adjustments in their teaching approach, such as providing additional grammar instruction to students who struggled with complex structures.

Self-Regulation

The ability to self-regulate emotions and maintain a positive classroom atmosphere is another essential aspect of a lecturer's competence. Students shared an experience in which their lecturer remained calm and patient in the face of a challenging classroom situation, stating:

> *"Our lecturer always keeps his cool, even when we make mistakes or don't understand something. He never gets frustrated, and that makes us feel more comfortable to ask questions and learn (Student 3)."*

> *I have seen the wonderful benefits of emotional self-regulation in our classroom as a student. Our lecturer's encouraging and helpful environment has helped us succeed in learning. We're encouraged to experiment with our writing without fear of repercussions (Student 11).*

> *This method has transformed my writing. We must also consider how we learn. Feeling safe and allowed to make errors has enhanced my confidence and inventiveness. These times of experimentation and learning from our mistakes have improved my writing the most (Student 13).*

> *Emotional self-regulation in our learning environment helps us become more resilient, creative, and proficient writers while knowing our professor is there to help us (Student 32).*

This emotional self-regulation fostered a supportive learning environment, enabling students to take risks and develop their writing proficiency without fear of negative consequences.

Self-Motivation

Lecturers' self-motivation was critical in maintaining their commitment to continuous professional development. One lecturer explained:

> *"I constantly seek out new resources, attend workshops, and participate in professional networks to improve my teaching and stay current in the field (Lecturer 5)."*

This dedication to self-improvement directly impacted students' writing proficiency, as lecturers who were more knowledgeable and skilled in teaching EFL were better equipped to address students' needs and provide effective instruction.

Social Awareness

Social awareness plays a significant role in helping lecturers understand students' diverse backgrounds and learning preferences. One student remarked,

> *"Our lecturer always tries to understand our cultural background and how it affects our learning. She considers our preferences when designing activities, which makes us feel more engaged and motivated to learn (Lecturer 4)."*

By demonstrating social awareness, lecturers can create more inclusive and tailored learning experiences that cater to students' unique needs, ultimately contributing to improved writing proficiency.

Relationship Management

The ability to establish rapport and foster collaboration among students is a critical aspect of lecturers' social competence. Some students shared:

> *"Our lecturer creates a sense of community in the classroom, encouraging us to work together and learn from each other. We feel comfortable sharing our writing with our classmates and receiving feedback, which helps us improve (Student 10)."*

> *As a student, I've seen our lecturers' relationship management and collaborative learning methods have a big influence. They have established a classroom where peer learning and feedback thrive, improving our writing skills (Student 17).*

> *Our lecturers encourage collaboration, learning, and critical critique. My writing has improved because of this collaborative method. We learn from our peers and the lecturers. This dynamic, where we all help one other grow, has improved our learning and writing (Student 20).*

> *Teachers' capacity to promote collaboration and manage relationships has made our learning environment a collaborative one. This method has helped us write better (Student 40).*

By effectively managing relationships and cultivating a collaborative learning environment, lecturers facilitated peer learning and feedback, which positively impacted students' writing proficiency.

Discussion

Based on the findings, it can be seen that the correlation analysis between students' writing proficiency levels and qualitative findings suggested that students with higher writing proficiency tended to benefit more from lecturers who demonstrated strong personal and social competence. The lecturer places a high priority on fostering social relationships in the classroom to ensure a positive and pleasant environment, enabling students to navigate their lectures with ease. The research findings suggest that the lecturer's social competency has a positive impact on creating a conducive classroom environment, leading to increased student engagement and enjoyment in the class. Despite the lecturer's deficiencies in assessment, they nonetheless prepared the subject before to teaching (Sartini, et al, 2019). Students with advanced writing skills often receive more benefits from professors who have both academic expertise and good personal and social competency. In educational environments, lecturers who exhibit empathy, proficient communication, and interpersonal abilities establish a nurturing and supportive ambiance. Students who possess excellent writing abilities typically excel in these settings, as these instructors not only convey expertise in the subject matter but also instill self-assurance and cultivate a feeling of inclusion (Tseng & Yeh, 2019). The lecturers' blend of intellectual aptitude and interpersonal skills equips students with the necessary support and motivation to enhance their writing skills. This fosters a symbiotic connection in which both educators and learners thrive. Conversely, students with lower writing proficiency levels appeared to struggle more in classrooms where lecturers exhibited less personal and social competence. Students grappling with lower levels of writing proficiency often face considerable challenges when their instructors lack strong personal and social competence (Awada, et al, 2020). In these classroom settings, lecturers who struggle with effective communication, empathy, and interpersonal skills inadvertently create an environment that can be discouraging for struggling students. Those with lower writing skills may find it even more challenging to improve when they don't receive the necessary support and understanding from their instructors. The absence of personal and social competence in lecturers can exacerbate the struggles of these students, leading to frustration and hindering progress. Thus, a key factor in fostering the growth of students with lower writing proficiency is the presence of educators who possess the interpersonal skills to provide the guidance and encouragement needed for improvement (Irmawati, et al, 2021). This correlation further supports the notion that lecturers' personal and social competence plays a crucial role in enhancing students' writing proficiency in EFL classroom settings at the Port Shipping Management Department of the Polytechnic of Makassar Merchant Marine (PIP).

The study's findings support the notion that lecturers' personal and social competence plays a crucial role in enhancing students' writing proficiency in EFL classroom settings at the Port Shipping Management Department of the Polytechnic of Makassar Merchant Marine (PIP). By cultivating these competencies, lecturers can

create a more supportive and engaging learning environment, which ultimately leads to improved student outcomes in maritime education and training.

This study's mixed-method approach provided a more in-depth grasp of the research goals. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), mixed-method research entails gathering, analyzing, and combining quantitative and qualitative data to answer research questions or objectives. In this study, the quantitative analysis of the writing test results identified the varying levels of writing proficiency among students. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that students' writing abilities can vary widely (e.g., Graham & Perin, 2007).

Additionally, the qualitative findings highlighted the positive impact of lecturers' personal and social competence on students' writing proficiency in the EFL classroom. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that teacher competence can significantly impact student learning outcomes (e.g., Hattie, 2009). The correlation analysis further strengthened the relationship between students' writing proficiency levels and lecturers' personal and social competence. Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables (Field, 2013).

Conclusion

The present study elucidates the heterogeneity of writing skills among students enrolled in the Port Shipping Management Department at the Polytechnic of Makassar Merchant Marine (PIP) and highlights the significance of lecturers' personal and social competence in cultivating students' writing proficiency in the context of EFL classrooms. The findings yield practical and pedagogical implications that underscore the necessity for the ongoing advancement of these competencies within maritime education and training.

By fostering personal and social competence, lecturers can more effectively address the multifaceted needs of students, facilitate collaboration, and ultimately contribute to the enhancement of writing proficiency in the EFL classroom. Educational institutions should prioritize investments in professional development opportunities that emphasize the cultivation of lecturers' personal and social competence and establish policies and guidelines that underscore the significance of developing these pivotal competencies. Moreover, lecturers ought to embrace pedagogical strategies that accommodate the diverse range of writing proficiency levels among students, establish a supportive and engaging learning environment, and incorporate cultural awareness and sensitivity into their instructional practices.

This study highlights the critical role of lecturers' personal and social competence in enhancing students' writing proficiency in EFL classroom settings at

the Port Shipping Management Department of the Polytechnic of Makassar Merchant Marine (PIP). By fostering these competencies, maritime education and training institutions can better equip students with the writing skills necessary for success in their professional careers and contribute to the overall quality of maritime education.

Implication

Overall, the mixed-method approach used in this study provided a more comprehensive understanding of the research objectives, highlighting the importance of both quantitative and qualitative data in educational research.

Practical Implications

The study's findings have several practical implications for maritime education and training. First, institutions like the Port Shipping Management Department of Polytechnic of Makassar Merchant Marine (PIP) should invest in professional development opportunities for lecturers, focusing on enhancing personal and social competence. These opportunities could include workshops, conferences, and peer mentoring programs that address topics such as self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and relationship management (Putra, 2021).

Second, lecturers should be encouraged to reflect on their teaching practices and seek feedback from students and colleagues to improve their personal and social competence. This reflection and feedback process can help identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, ultimately leading to more effective teaching strategies and better student outcomes (Siddiqui & Alam, 2021).

Third, institutions should consider implementing policies and guidelines that promote the development of lecturers' personal and social competence. For example, hiring practices could prioritize candidates who demonstrate strong personal and social competence, and performance evaluations could include assessments of these competencies (Putra, 2021).

Pedagogical Implications

The study's findings also have several pedagogical implications for teaching writing in EFL classrooms. First, lecturers should be aware of the various levels of writing proficiency among students and be prepared to differentiate instruction accordingly. This may involve providing additional support for students with lower proficiency levels, such as offering targeted grammar and vocabulary instruction or implementing supplementary writing exercises (Gao, 2020).

Second, lecturers should create a supportive and engaging classroom environment that fosters collaboration and peer learning. This can be achieved by incorporating group work, peer review, and other collaborative activities into the curriculum. By doing so, students can learn from one another, receive constructive feedback, and gain confidence in their writing abilities (Kuo, 2020).

Third, lecturers should integrate cultural awareness and sensitivity into their teaching practices. By acknowledging and respecting students' diverse backgrounds and learning preferences, lecturers can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment. This may involve incorporating culturally relevant materials and examples into the curriculum or adjusting teaching methods to accommodate students' unique needs and preferences (Chen & Hu, 2020).

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the importance of lecturers' personal and social competence in fostering students' writing proficiency within the EFL classroom. The practical and pedagogical implications underscore the need for continued development of these competencies in maritime education and training. By cultivating personal and social competence, lecturers can better address students' diverse needs, promote collaboration, and ultimately contribute to improving writing proficiency in the EFL classroom.

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