

POSTHUMANIST APPLIED LINGUISTICS: A TRANSPARENT ASSIGNMENT FOR WRITING RESEARCH PROPOSAL ABSTRACTS

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Abstract: By harnessing the power of AI and AI chatbot, digital technology is becoming an increasingly essential component in foreign language use and instruction. In posthumanist thought, machines are viewed as integral enhancements that merge with human abilities. Pennycook's concept of Posthumanist Applied Linguistics builds on this notion, challenging us to rethink cognition, language learning, and the interdependence of humans with nonhuman and technological entities. This study aims to discover whether doctoral students are prepared to conduct research within this emerging framework of applied linguistics. As part of the IKU 7 initiative, nineteen doctoral students enrolled in an advanced applied linguistics course were tasked with exploring this new perspective. They were guided through a transparent assignment design to develop research proposal abstracts. Quantitative analysis of the submitted abstracts revealed that students struggled to identify suitable research topics within this novel framework. Their difficulties were compounded by a lack of practical knowledge in research methodology and limited understanding of posthumanist principles. Consequently, many students produced unclear titles and abstracts, with over half omitting the methodology section.

Keywords: *posthumanist applied linguistics, research proposal abstract, title, transparent assignment design, Key Performance Indicator (IKU).*

INTRODUCTION

Today, our daily activities, including those in Indonesia, are profoundly dependent on digital technology, making it an integral part of everyday life. Consequently, it is evident that there has been a dramatic increase in internet use in Indonesia. Society has accepted and benefited from digital technology development. According to press release No. 80/HM/KOMINFO/01/2024 from the Public Relations Bureau of the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (*Biro Humas Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika*), the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) reported that internet penetration in Indonesia reached 79.5% of the total population in early 2024. This is equivalent to 221,563,479 people out of a total population of 278,695,200 in 2023.

This trend has significantly impacted the widespread integration of digital technology into English language instruction in Indonesian classrooms. By harnessing the power of artificial

intelligence, numerous innovative teaching strategies now utilize digital platforms to teach both macro-skills and micro-skills of English as a foreign language at the tertiary level. Platforms such as Nearpod, proposal, Edmodo, and Google Sites have become common tools for instruction as shown by Kweldju et al. (2023). At the high school level, additional tools such as podcasts, Edmodo, Word Cloud, Kahoot, Quizlet, Duolingo, ILI, NOVO, and Baamboozle are employed to enhance English language learning.

As these tools illustrate the growing incorporation of technology in language education, the broader field of applied linguistics anticipates that digital technology will become an increasingly essential component of foreign language instruction. No longer just aiding learning, digital technology now symbolizes a fusion of human and machine, akin to artificial cardiac pacemakers or Elon Musk's Neuralink, which integrates with human biology. This transformation underscores the need for posthumanism, a philosophy that

opposes the exploitation of humans, nonhumans, and the environment, addressing the crises we face (Braidotti, 2013).

This fusion of technology in foreign language instruction, according to Pennycook (2006) is posthumanism in applied linguistics. Posthumanism in applied linguistics highlights how language, people, objects, and places are all interconnected in our understanding of communication and thinking. Language and thinking, once believed to occur exclusively within individuals, are now considered to spread across people, places, and things.

In this context, a cohort of 19 non-native English Language Teaching (ELT) doctoral students enrolled in a course titled Advanced Applied Linguistics were tasked with writing a research proposal paper on posthumanism in English language instruction. These students were also EFL lecturers. A research proposal is a structured, formal document serving two distinct purposes: internal and external. Internally, it compels the researcher to meticulously design and plan the research within appropriate methodological, ontological, and epistemological frameworks. Externally, it aims to convince scholars, readers, and funding agents that the researcher has a significant, novel, relevant, and innovative research idea, supported by a robust methodology, and that it can be executed with realistic time and resource utilization (Peters, 2003).

While this course aims for students to produce a complete research proposal, this paper specifically focuses on their ability to draft the title and abstract, which are subgenres of a research proposal. The title and abstract are the initial impressions or "face" of a research proposal; they must be drafted correctly, accurately, carefully, meticulously, and require significant time and effort (Tullu, 2019). The title should adequately describe the research project with relevant use of words.

The course duration was four months, and writing a research proposal was not their only assignment. This proposal writing project was part of the implementation of the "*Indikator Kinerja Utama Perguruan Tinggi No.7*" (IKU 7) (Kemdikbudristek, 2020). The IKU guidelines provide Key Performance Indicators for tertiary education in Indonesia, with IKU 7 emphasizing collaborative and participatory classes through methodologies such as case-based learning and team-based projects. Within this framework, the doctoral students shared the responsibility of

producing high-quality proposals, ensuring that their research would be insightful and enlightening for learners, practicing teachers, and researchers in the field of applied linguistics.

Prior to enrolling in this course, students had limited exposure to the concept of posthumanism, both in general and specifically within applied linguistics. The aims of the assignment were twofold: to enhance students' understanding of posthumanist applied linguistics and to advance their academic and research skills within this subfield. Given that posthumanist philosophy was entirely new to the students, the assignment was designed to be implemented in a step-by-step manner to facilitate their comprehension of the concepts and their integration into the research proposal abstract. Additionally, the assignment was also geared to improve the students' proposal writing skills in humanist applied linguistics.

During the process of writing the abstract, guidance is provided to foster understanding and promote active, meaningful learning. This guidance helps optimize students' writing processes and ensures their seriousness, accuracy, and rigor in preparing proposals.

The aim of this study is three-fold: first, to develop and implement a transparent assignment for writing the abstract of a research proposal in post-humanistic applied linguistics; second, to investigate whether transparent assessment can enable all students to produce quality abstracts in this field; and third, to understand the real problems students face when writing the abstract of a research proposal in post-humanistic applied linguistics. Based on the aims, the research problem is formulated as follows: What problems do students encounter when writing the abstracts of research proposals using a post-humanistic applied linguistics perspective?

Posthumanism is a philosophical framework, intellectual school, intellectual perspective, and intellectual movement that challenges the principles of humanism, which emphasizes the primacy of the human being. While both frameworks aim to understand human existence, posthumanism critiques humanism for its perceived limitations and inherent biases. Humanism asserts that only humans possess will and reason. However, the rise of cybernetics and digital technologies has underscored the theoretical and ethical limitations of humanism. Scientific advancements and advanced technologies suggest the potential to reconfigure human nature and create beings that surpass present-day *Homo sapiens* biologically and technologically. This

concept, known as Genhumanism or generative humanism. It is a concept that accelerates innovations aimed at transforming human identity. AI and technology are opening up new possibilities for redefining what it means to be human (Brusseau, 2023), as the human-machine divide has been rapidly fading, along with the hierarchy that once placed humans above machines.

Posthumanism and transhumanism are often used interchangeably, but they may have different focuses. Posthumanism typically focuses the integration of humans with technology to enhance physical and cognitive performance, emphasizing the rejection of biological, ethical, and ontological anthropocentrism. In contrast, transhumanism aims to enhance and transform natural human characteristics through the use of biological, technological, and cognitive advancements (Merzlyakov, 2022).

Posthumanism offers a new perspective and ethos to the humanities, envisioning a promising future. In today's era, characterized by a crisis of ethos involving issues like fake news and the suppression of academic voices, human qualities are often reduced to psychological and sociological narratives. This is a time for a reassessment of human habitus, considering the where, the how and with whom they live. While it is crucial for humans to care for themselves, this care should extend beyond their own physical well-being to encompass ecological and technocultural concerns (Baumlin, 2020). Ethical issues arise in our schools, such as why we welcome dead animal bodies for food in school lunches but not live ones in educational settings (Rowe & Rocha, 2015; Mustola, 2019).

Reevaluating and redefining what it means to be human, Braidotti (2013, pp. 1-2) argues that humans should reconsider their relationships with other species and objects. She also advocates for exploring ways to enhance human capabilities. Similarly, Barad (2007, p. 136) challenges the old idea that the body separates the inner self from the outside world. She does not see that the body could make that boundary, because of the strength of the outside in influencing and shaping our thoughts and language. When the boundary between the inner self and the outer world is blurred, the traits of thinking, actions, language, and understanding are not specifically humans', but those traits are spread out among people, places, and things.

This perspective eliminates the rigid divide between humans and non-humans, nature, and society (Latour, 2004). Consequently, posthumanism raises significant questions for

applied linguistics, particularly regarding our understanding of language, cognition, human, objects, and agency; that is, issues central to applied linguistics: language, cognition, and the human subject (Pennycook, 2016).

Posthumanism is in the contrary with the contemporary understanding of applied linguistics. The latter sees that linguistic ability is innately human, completely separate from animal communication. Chomsky (1972) in *Language and Mind* states clearly that language is exclusively a human attribute, innate only to humans. He persistently argues that animal communication cannot develop into language, or language could not evolve from animal communication. Similarly, Steven Pinker (1994), who is a cognitive linguist, sees that language is an innate, biological ability in humans, although it is the result of evolution for solving the problem of communication and social interaction.

However, with the emergence of AI chatbots, a new applied linguistics theory about language, cognition, and the human subject seems to be emerging. It requires applied linguists to understand the role of machine learning in language learning. Although digital devices are inanimate objects, they can engage in communication-like interactions with humans, making them seem like an "other" or a "quasi-other" (Ihde, 1990). These devices prompt users to interact with them as if they were autonomous or intelligent beings, even though they are not (Buzato, 2023). Applied linguists investigate the extent to which this quasi-alterity impacts users' language choices and performances. For instance, how the machines make the speakers talk in a certain way to make them understand the message, even though this understanding is unreal (Wittkower, 2022, p. 261).

Although we are still in the early stages of AI development, machines today can serve as interviewers, interviewees, translators, automated speech transcribers, news anchors, short story writers, poets, movie scriptwriters, essayists, and more. It is believed that AI has the potential to perform nearly all tasks that humans can, until proven otherwise (McShane & Nirenburg, 2021, p. 1). The primary challenge for AI lies in handling ambiguity, which occurs when a word or phrase can have multiple meanings, such as morphological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and referential ambiguity.

Due to its versatility, people have begun to question whether a machine can be considered a qualified speaker and how humans and AI chatbots

are intertwined. For instance, Casal and Kessler (2023) discovered that experienced reviewers and linguists had limited ability to distinguish AI-generated writing from human writing. Despite this, there remains controversy regarding the ethical use of AI tools in facilitating the research process.

Posthumanism encourages us to reconsider language and agency, both human and non-human, by exploring how language shapes our world in new ways (Pennycook 2018). Machines can influence the development of human language and may even create new languages independently. They are not just tools for reproducing, translating, transcribing, and teaching human languages; they actively change language development and could potentially create languages that do not involve humans at all.

Casal and Kessler (2023) questioned whether linguists can distinguish between ChatGPT/AI and human writing. Building on this, Demuro and Gurney (2023) posed additional questions: How can we rethink language to transcend human perspectives? What misconceptions about humanity does language perpetuate? How must language evolve for us to consider nonhuman life? Addressing these questions will shape the future of posthumanist applied linguistics and deepen our understanding of language.

Machine learning is used to address various challenges in proficiency test creation, automated scoring, and content assessments for exams like the GRE and TOEFL. It is also employed in language learning support applications, such as Duolingo for developing second language skills, and in tools like Grammarly for language analysis. Additionally, machine learning has many other applications, such as in machine translation systems (Vajjala, 2018).

AI can serve as a reviewer, aiding in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. It can also function as an applied linguistics professor and manuscript reviewer. Therefore, research methodology scholars in applied linguistics should continue to explore, evaluate, discuss, and refine the potential uses of these novel tools to enhance research processes ethically and positively. Pack and Maloney (2023) found that AI feedback was often superior in quality and quantity, when it is compared to some human reviewers', raising important questions about authorship, originality, and ethics. For example, De Costa et al. (2021) suggested that researchers should disclose the use of any AI tools to ensure transparency in the research process. Journals should also include clear

guidelines for authors on the use and disclosure of generative AI.

According to Pennycook (2016, 2018) posthuman thought does not only value communication but also reassesses where social meaning-making happens. Human beings are not the only ones to create and ensure meaning. Language is not only a tool of the mind, but a part of our whole experience that involves our bodies, objects, places, and senses. Humans use language, symbols, and various forms of communication to interpret and convey shared understandings, values, and norms in their interactions with one another. Different materialities always interact and influence each other. Language and cognition are not only inherent and internalized within human individuals but are also widely distributed across the multimodal and multisensory semiotic practices of daily life, such as photography and video bricolages (Millei & Kallio, 2018). Today communication is also through online environments with a large set of semiotic resources that need different use of sensory perception faculties. Communication is not only human vocal and written symbols.

According to Pennycook (2016, 2018), posthumanist thought emphasizes not just the value of communication but also the need to reassess where social meaning-making occurs. Meaning is created and understood within a social context. This perspective shifts the focus from humans being the sole creators and bearers of meaning to recognizing the broader context in which meaning is generated. Language is not merely a tool of the mind but an integral part of our holistic experience that involves our bodies, objects, places, and senses.

Humans use language, symbols, and other forms of communication to interpret and convey shared understandings, values, and norms during their interactions. Different materialities constantly interact and influence each other, suggesting that language and cognition are not solely inherent and internalized within individuals. Instead, they are distributed across the multimodal and multisensory semiotic practices of daily life, such as photography and video bricolages (Millei & Kallio, 2018).

In today's digital age, communication extends to online environments, utilizing a vast array of semiotic resources that engage various sensory perception faculties. Consequently, communication is no longer confined to human vocal and written symbols alone but includes

diverse modes and materials that enrich our interactions and understanding.

In the three-credit Advanced Applied Linguistics course under study, students were assigned to write a research proposal. However, during the process, it was discovered that students' abstract of the research proposal needs more investigation and focus of intention because not all students are successful enough in writing the abstract of their research proposal. It is also a writing skill that requires the ability to read, interpret and produce information valued in academia. It is an information-based problem skill developed using analysis and synthesis (Ondrusek et al, 2024)

So far, limited research has been conducted specifically on students' proposal abstract writing, although substantial research exists on students' complete proposal and research report. Among the few, Ondrusek et al. (2024) conducted a study on graduate students' research proposal abstracts. They identified the primary challenges students faced: selecting relevant information, recognizing the structure of the proposal, and reorganizing the selected information.

Drudy et al. (2023) found that the abstract of a research paper is often an overlooked part of the dissemination process. However, the abstract plays a crucial role in determining whether a piece of research is deemed relevant for presentation at a conference or valuable enough for peer review and subsequent publication. Fauzan et al. (2022) investigated undergraduate students' difficulties in writing their thesis proposals, focusing specifically on the micro-skills aspects of writing. They discovered that students' primary problems were related to vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Similarly, Rastri et al. (2023) analyzed undergraduate students' issues in writing research proposals and found that linguistic factors were the most significant, compared to psychological and socio-cultural factors. Kusuma et al. (2022) investigated students' preferences of research proposal writing feedback and discovered that among the different types of feedback, students preferred the direct error correction and the directive comment feedback.

When students write their abstract, they should also write the title. The proposal title should be concise and precise in expressing the key question of the research. It should contain the most important keywords and convey the approach to relate to a specific field of study. In most situations, readers only read the title and abstract of a proposal before deciding to read the full paper. Therefore,

the most important elements for a title are simplicity, brevity, clarity, and attractiveness. The title should inform about the research paper, avoid abbreviations, adhere to a word limit of 8-15 words, and reflect the aim of the study. A descriptive title includes the theme, participants, and intervention, while an interrogative title includes the restatement of the research question (Shah, 2014; Bavdekar, 2016). Mack (2012) highlights the importance of including the approach to achieve the aim, such as an experimental method or simulation approach.

The task assigned to the students utilized transparent assignment design. With the teacher providing guidance from the sidelines, students were able to develop an understanding of posthumanist applied linguistics and work on their proposals. Each step was rigorously explained to ensure clarity, making the learning process more explicit but also positively influenced the quality of the students' work (Walton & Cohen, 2011).

This approach also allowed the teacher to reflect on the assignments and assess how well they met student outcomes. For instance, it helped determine how effectively students could produce their best work. Transparent assignments are characterized by a clearly defined purpose, specified tasks, and well-defined criteria for success. This simple, replicable teaching technique enhances student success without resorting to spoon-feeding (Ou, 2018; Balloo et al., 2018).

Transparent assignment design is rooted in inclusive pedagogy, which is based on the principle that every student can learn when provided with suitable conditions, recognizing that each learner is unique, and that education must be tailored to improve learning for all students (Florian, 2015). This approach is also part of a broader commitment to transparency in learning and teaching, aimed at enhancing the quality of higher education.

Transparent teaching helps students understand the purpose and methodology behind their learning, demonstrating how course content is relevant and applicable to solving real-world problems (Andersen et al., 2013). It employs clear language and techniques to foster and enhance analytical and critical thinking skills, thereby deepening student learning (Biggs, 2003).

Transparent teaching can be best defined as a set of practices that explicitly communicate instructor expectations for student learning and classroom success (Harden, 2001; Fierro, 2003; Cook-Sather, 2011; Winkelmes et al., 2016). When expectations and assignments are transparent, they contribute to increase student engagement and

academic achievement. Emerging research supports this assertion, with recent studies indicating that transparent assignments improve learning outcomes for underserved students at the introductory level and reduce attrition rates among students at the highest risk of dropping out (Winkelmes et al., 2016).

METHOD

This exploratory case study began with planning the assignment, followed by implementing the plan, collecting data, and producing a descriptive end product. The implementation involved a combination of lectures, student assignments, feedback provision, and follow-up actions. Quantitative and qualitative data were obtained by analyzing students' submissions of their abstracts.

The aim of the study was to identify the difficulties students face in producing high-quality research proposal abstracts on posthumanism in applied linguistics. Students submitted their work for each step of the task to the university LMS, where the teacher provided feedback. The study involved 19 doctoral students enrolled in a three-

credit Advanced Applied Linguistics course at a teachers' college in Indonesia.

Writing a research proposal abstract is a crucial and complex skill that requires continuous guidance and practice; students cannot be expected to master it instantly. This research proposal assignment is designed to provide step-by-step support, guiding students through five key stages. The rubrics for this task, as shown in Tables 1 and 2, is explained to the students.

Table 1: The title rubric

No	Components	Absent or inadequate	Present and clear
1	Conciseness, word limit 8-15		
2	Key issue/intervention/research question		
3	Key term		
4	Approach or Method		

Table 2: The research proposal abstract rubric

No.	Components	Absent or inadequate (1)	Present but unclear (2)	Clear (3)	Clear and thoughtful (4)
1	Informative lead sentence				
2	Research problem/research question				
3	Posthumanist Perspective				
4	Participants				
5	Type of research approach				
6	Methods for data analysis				
7	Significance of the study				

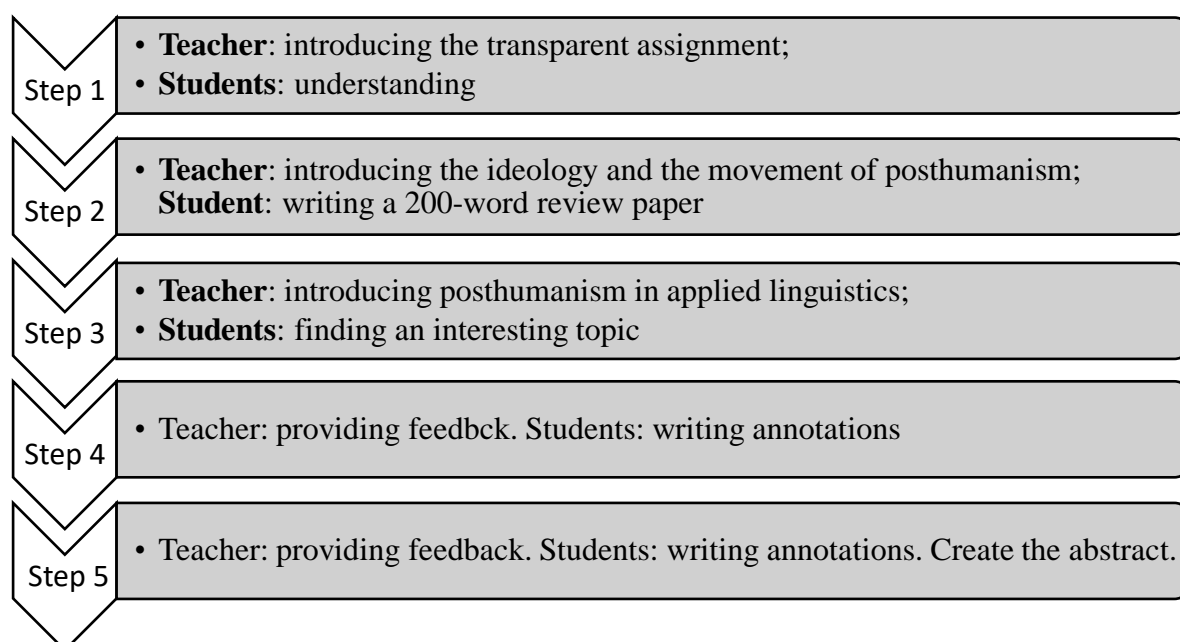


Figure 1. *The transparent assignment design of the research proposal abstract*

Step 1. The teacher, who was also one of the researchers, introduced the assignment related to IKU 7 using a PowerPoint presentation. IKU 7 focuses on collaborative and participatory classes, utilizing methodologies such as case-based learning and team-based projects. In this context, the doctoral students shared the responsibility of producing an authentic, high-quality paper. The researcher explained that she would guide the students using the transparency assignment model. In this context, the doctoral students were informed that they had the responsibility of producing authentic, high-quality research proposal abstracts in the field of posthumanist applied linguistics. In doing so, they were not only knowledge consumers but also knowledge co-creators.

Step 2. The teacher introduced the concept of posthumanism to the students, who were initially unfamiliar with it, and explained Assignment Step 1. She began with an engaging introduction, using examples from science fiction novels and movies to make the topic more relatable. She then outlined the core principles of posthumanist ideology, which challenge traditional anthropocentric views and emphasize the interconnectedness of humans, technology, and the environment. This perspective redefines ideas of identity and subjectivity, highlighting the fluid boundaries between humans, machines, and society.

To aid their understanding, students were given: (a) a handout on posthumanism, (b) an e-book titled *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Posthumanism* edited by Thomsen and Wamberg, (2020) for additional reading, and (c) a dissertation titled *The*

Posthuman Curriculum and the Teacher (Cook, 2016).

Assignment Step 1: students were asked to read the dissertation (Cook, 2016) and write a 200-word review paper. This Assignment Step 1 was designed to help them grasp the key themes, arguments, and implications related to posthumanism in education.

Step 3. Following learning about posthumanism in education in Step 2, the teacher explained about post-humanist applied linguistics. A handout was distributed to the students. They were supposed to read as many articles on post-humanist applied linguistics as possible, and find an interesting topic.

They were also provided with an e-book titled *Posthumanist Applied Linguistics* (Pennycook, 2018), next to two articles on posthumanist approach to education (Blaikie, 2020; Densmore, 2017).

Assignment Step 2: Students were supposed to find an interesting topic that they observed or experienced from the post-humanist perspective. Then, they were required to extensively review related literature, focusing on their specific concerns. Each student then submitted annotations for 10 relevant research articles.

It was explained to the students that reading extensively was essential for strengthening the theoretical foundations of their ideas when writing an abstract. They should connect their understanding of posthumanist perspectives with relevant theories in linguistics, language teaching,

psychology, and other pertinent areas of language instruction. Students were also encouraged to explore linguistic theories rather than relying solely on their pedagogical intuition or personal experience. Additionally, they should relate their posthumanist challenges to current instructional methods, such as active learning, student-centered learning, collaborative learning, experiential learning, problem-based learning, and transformational pedagogy.

Step 4. Students read closely, critically, and extensively the literature related to their research problems. They obtained and evaluated key information, improved their analysis and interpretation skills, ultimately gaining more inspiring ideas for their papers.

Assignment Step 3: Students wrote 10 annotations of the most relevant journal articles to their topics. They should skim and scan the articles, then write their opinions and questions. Additionally, they should make predictions and consider new perspectives, when reading.

Step 5. Students continue writing 10 more annotations. They learn how to write the research proposal abstract. They started with writing an outline and graph. To engage the reader, the abstract can start with phrases like: “The issue regarding ...”, “This proposal focuses on ...”, “What will happen if...”, “In the ever-growing literature ...”, “... are widely recognized as ...”, “... has an important role to play ...”. They learn how to provide relevant background on the topic and existing research, position the posthumanist approach, and detail the research problem and problem statements.

Assignment Step 4: While reading extensively about posthumanist applied linguistics, students

were tasked with identifying local problems they were familiar with and relating these issues to the literature. Then, students wrote an abstract of approximately 250-300 words. A rubric was prepared for the students. The abstract was required to: (1) Introduce the research topic. (2) Provide an orientation to the local problem. (3) Create context and background. (4) Explain the importance of the topic. (5) Position the posthumanist approach as a contribution to knowledge. (6) Detail and state the research problem. (7) Include important definitions and explanations. (8) Describe how the research adds to knowledge, practice, and policy in the area considered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

About the title

Table 1 shows that while most titles are concise and address key issues, approximately half do not include specific key terms. Additionally, many titles lack details about the proposed research approach or design, such as “a longitudinal study of...,” “a meta-analysis of...,” “a linguistic ethnographic analysis of...,” “case study research in...,” or “classroom action research in...” Notably, Mack (2012) is the only source identified in the literature that recommends including the research approach in the title. This suggests that incorporating the research approach is not a common practice, which may explain why many student-generated titles overlook this detail. Despite this, including the research approach could enhance the informativeness and comprehensiveness of the titles.

Table 1. *The total distribution of the 19 students’ title component*

No.	Components	Absent or Inadequate	Present and Clear
1	Conciseness, word limit 8-15	2	17
2	Key issue/intervention/research question	5	14
3	Key Terms	9	10
4	Approach/Method	15	4

To illustrate, the following is the examples of the titles created by the students. (1) Examining the Impact of Technology on Language and Communication. (2) A posthumanism perspective on the importance of student voices in assessment. (3) Incorporating Climate Change Issues into

English Language Teaching: An Ecological Perspective. (4) Multilinguality on the EFL Learners in *Pesantren* Gender-Based Differentiated: An Empirical Evidence of Sociolinguistics Study from Indonesia

Title (1) is concise, but it lacks a specific research question. It does not contain relevant key terms, as "Language and Communication" is too broad and encompasses a wide range of aspects, forms, and issues. The title should be more focused and include specific key terms related to the study, such as "posthumanism applied linguistics," which the student needs to investigate. Title (2) is concise and includes key terms such as "posthumanism" and "assessment," along with the important issue of students' voices. It effectively highlights the focus and scope of the research. Title (3) is concise and includes specific keywords such as "Climate Change," "English Language Teaching," and "Ecological Perspective." It effectively implies key questions related to incorporating climate change issues into language teaching, meeting the criteria of conciseness, relevance, and approach. Title (4) is comprehensive but lacks conciseness, and the word *pesantren* may be unfamiliar to non-Indonesian readers. A revised version could improve clarity and accessibility, such as: "Gender-Based Multilingualism Among EFL Learners in Indonesian Islamic Boarding Schools: An Ethnographic Study."

About the abstract

Table 2 reveals several key observations about the abstracts created by the students. All students began their abstracts with clear and thoughtful lead sentences, showcasing their ability to capture initial interest. While nearly all students articulated their research problems, only six of them presented well-considered and thoughtful research problems, with the rest describing unclear or impractical research plans. Most students explicitly identified posthumanist applied linguistics as their field of investigation, demonstrating a clear understanding of their research area. However, less than half of the students were prepared to detail their participants, research approach, or data analysis methods, indicating a need for further guidance in these areas. Additionally, three students omitted the significance of their study entirely, and none provided a thoughtful discussion on the

significance of their research. Although the students understood the need to justify their research's usefulness to specific groups of English language learners, they failed to specify this adequately. In summary, while the students demonstrated strengths in initiating their abstracts and identifying their research field, there are significant areas for improvement, particularly in defining their research problems, detailing research components, and articulating the significance of their studies.

The following is an example of an abstract submitted by a student. The abstract presents several issues: the problem is unclear, the topic is vague, the significance of the study is not evident, and there is an absence of methodology. It fails to specify the exact nature of the connection between artificial intelligence (AI) and multimodality that the research aims to explore, making the problem statement too broad. Additionally, it does not indicate that the study is situated within the subfield of posthumanist applied linguistics. Furthermore, the abstract does not outline the research methodology, leaving readers without an understanding of how the study will be conducted. Writing an abstract is a concise task that requires significant thought and expertise. It appears that the student needs to invest more time and effort into crafting a well-formulated abstract.

This study examines the paradigmatic boundaries between artificial intelligence as a type of technology and multimodality as a concept in applied linguistics through posthumanism thought around language and literacy. The digital revolution in the last decade has drastically changed transaction behaviour, then it leads to shopping transactions on digital platforms and this demands mobile payment methods, QRIS, a payment gateway that uses QR technology as a method of transaction. On the other hand, QRIS as a visual sensory modality sets representation and communication as relying on a multiplicity of modes, all of which have been socially developed as resources to make meaning

Table 2: *The total distribution of the 19 students' research proposal*

No.	Components	Absent or inadequate (1)	Present but unclear (2)	Clear (3)	Clear and thoughtful (4)
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1	Informative lead sentence				19
2	Research problem/research question	1	3	9	6
3	Posthumanist Perspective	5			14
4	Participants	11			8
5	Type of research approach	11			8
6	Methods for data analysis	11			8
7	Significance of the study	3	5	8	

Understandably most students used the keyword posthumanist perspective or "posthumanist applied linguistics to indicate their field of research. The main reason is that they were already very familiar with the concept and knew that they should write research with posthumanist perspective. Before writing their abstracts, they were already told that they should pick a topic in the field. Then, they were assigned to read a dissertation and a book on posthumanist applied linguistics, and they also wrote numerous annotations on the subject.

Given that posthumanist applied linguistics was the focus of the students' research, they frequently used the term as a starting point in their leading sentences. Examples of these include: "Posthumanism aims to understand the relationship between humans and technology," "Posthumanism is gaining growing recognition nowadays," and "In the context of English language education, posthumanist applied linguistics highlights the relationship between humans, environments, animals, and objects."

Only eight out of eleven students included information about the participants, type of research approach, and data analysis methods. It appears that these students employed an avoidance strategy, believing they could only write these sections after completing their research. They needed more time to prepare and decide on the appropriate methodology. To avoid making mistakes or using incorrect methods, they omitted these crucial elements

Some researchers prefer to write the title and abstract after completing the entire proposal. However, both the title and abstract are needed before researchers can truly begin their work, especially when seeking funding. Titles and abstracts are also required by conference selection committees. Research funding agents often lack the time to read the entire proposal, so a well-crafted title and abstract are crucial for capturing their attention and encouraging them to continue reading. This makes the title and abstract essential components of any research paper. Additionally, the abstract can serve as a guiding framework for

the research itself, even though it may be revised later. Therefore, Bavdekav (2016) emphasizes that writing the title and abstract should be a key focus early in the research process.

Students' difficulties in writing their abstracts were similar to those of postgraduate students at a university in Zambia, and at Georgia, USA. Students in Zambia's problems include unclear topics, poorly stated research problems, and incorrect methodology. One reason for these issues was that students needed more time to gain sufficient practical knowledge in conducting research. They also needed more time to read and understand their topics (Manchishi et al., 2015). The primary challenges of students Georgia, US, were on selecting relevant information, recognizing the structure of the proposal, and reorganizing the selected information (Ondrusek et al., 2024). All those problems existed in the current students' abstract.

About the transparent assignment design

The proposal abstract writing assignment was divided into a series of steps according to transparent assignment design; however, most students did not produce the expected quality of abstracts. While transparent assignment design aims to help students understand the purpose, tasks, and criteria for success before starting the assignment, student persistence is essential for effective completion. Additionally, students need strong analytical skills and the ability to coherently synthesize ideas, integrating both lateral and vertical thinking, collecting relevant information, and building logical, structured arguments from an unfamiliar perspective. To address this issue, Peplow et al. (2021) suggest providing more examples and explicit expectations to better support students in such tasks.

Another possible reason for the students' struggles is that the task's content was too demanding. Students needed to use a posthumanistic perspective to view real-world problems and connect it with relevant theories in other academic disciplines, such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, and education, as well as

current instructional methods. This required them to integrate complex concepts despite lacking sufficient prior knowledge of posthumanistic applied linguistics to identify and formulate their problems.

The results of this study can significantly impact applied linguistics courses. With the increasing fusion between humans and machines and the integration of digital technology in language use and learning, students must become more familiar with posthumanist applied linguistics. Additionally, they need to equip themselves with the necessary skills to craft effective research proposal abstracts in this field.

CONCLUSION

With the emergence of AI chatbots, a new applied linguistics perspective on language, cognition, and the human subject should be considered. In this context, posthumanist applied linguistics offers valuable futuristic insights for students. However, this new perspective proved to be too demanding for students to grasp fully, even with guidance. Students needed more time and examples to understand the concepts thoroughly. This lack of understanding impacted their ability to identify the research problem and negatively affected the drafting of their abstracts.

Students effectively created concise titles for their proposal abstracts, addressing key issues, but often omitted the research approach, possibly due to a misconception of its importance. The inclusion of non-English terms in some titles may reduce clarity and accessibility, suggesting that titles should avoid foreign words.

While all students excelled in crafting clear and engaging lead sentences that captured initial interest, many struggled with articulating their research problem and detailing their methodology. Despite guidance from a transparent assignment model, students faced challenges in producing high-quality abstracts. Given the complexity of writing a proposal abstract, students must persist in refining their analytical and synthetical skills, building logical, structure argument to improve their abstract writing.

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