

English Pedagogies in the Era of Artificial Intelligence: An Analysis of ChatGPT-generated persuasive essays

The appearance of ChatGPT has sparked considerable discussion in language and literacy education during the past few years. It is widely known that this AI chatbot can produce essays on various topics based on prompts. However, how these essays are structured, how coherent they are, and how well they engage with the audience and achieve their communicative purpose is still under researched. This calls for more evidence-based research to consider the role of ChatGPT/AI in education, and specifically the learning, teaching, and assessment of English language skills. This paper adopts Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the main theoretical and methodological framework to analyse ChatGPT-generated texts. SFL is a comprehensive language theory which provides rich meaning making resources in social contexts. This paper analysed the structure and language features of persuasive essays across Year 3, Year 5, Year 7, and Year 9 produced by ChatGPT prompted a NAPLAN writing topic, titled "It is cruel to keep animals in cages". Initial findings reveal the inconsistency in ways these persuasive texts were structured and the repetition across the produced persuasive texts. These findings indicate that persuasive texts produced by Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT cannot replace good teaching by teachers, and students need to learn the generic structure and valued language features of a particular text type to write that text type effectively. Teachers, however, can use those texts produced by ChatGPT for the Deconstruction stage in the Teaching and Learning Cycle for students to evaluate against the mentor texts for modelling.

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