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Perspectives from the academic writing community on the impact of Generative AI: a discussion

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Current (local) discussions about AI/ChatGPT

- What ChatGPT can do?
- How ChatGPT affects teaching and learning?:
  - University of Tartu faculty members opinions (Jane Klavan and Katri Kütt)
  - UT students assignment and opinions (Krista Lepik)
  - ChatGPT in (secondary) school context (Õpetajate Leht)
- Legal and copyright issues
- incl. plagiarism and academic integrity

Our starting point

- The question is whether ChatGPT is able to generate **“good” texts** in Estonian, as for a smaller language model?
  - What is considered to be a good text in academic community?

- Highlight the importance of a more common approach to the teaching of writing skills to our students, focusing on issues such as **assessment**, **form**, and **knowledge construction**.

- How we, practitioners and researchers, can use generative AI to help improve our own practices?

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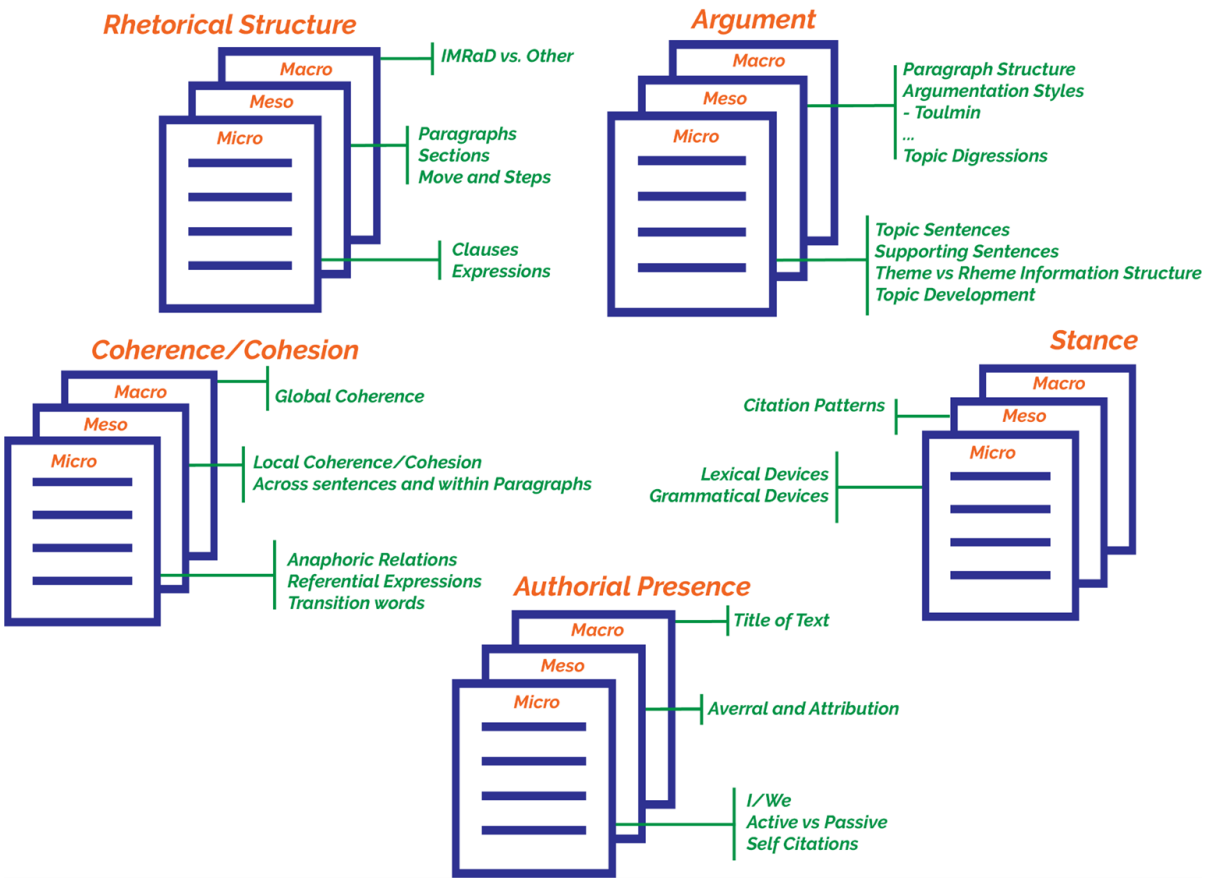
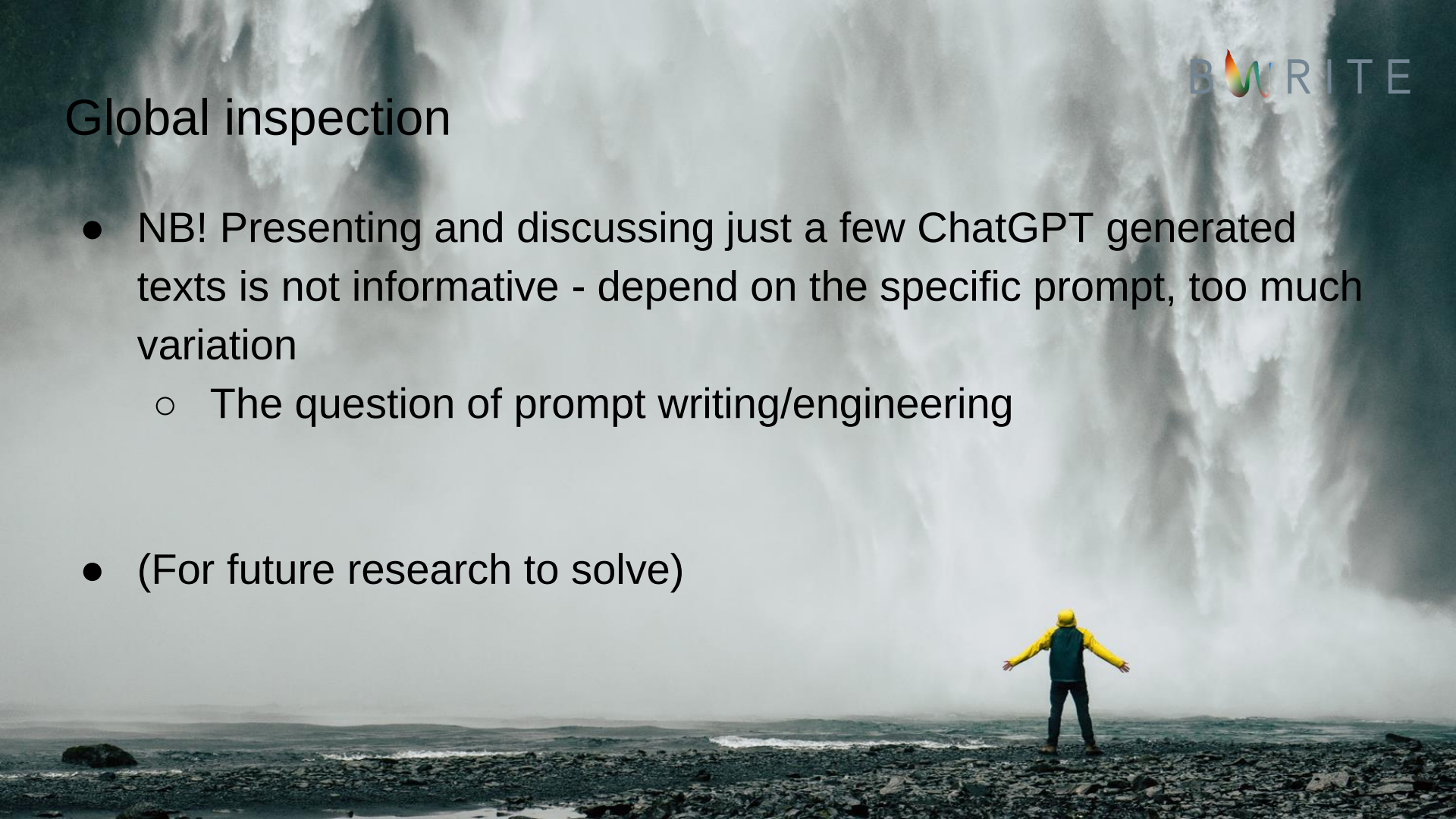


Global inspection

- NB! Presenting and discussing just a few ChatGPT generated texts is not informative - depend on the specific prompt, too much variation
  - The question of prompt writing/engineering

- (For future research to solve)



Close inspection

- **Meta-level understanding** (metatextual, metalinguistic, metaknowledge, …) of what good writing is and should look like; and how it relates to prompt writing
- Focus on **assessment**: humans as bad evaluators, *bad machines*
- Potential harmful effect of **overconfidence** (in college students, see e.g., Dunlosky et al. 2011; Dunlosky & Rawson 2012; Magnus & Peresetsky 2017)

Observations related to overconfidence

- The **content** of the text
  - students are not yet **experts** (cf. Krista Lepik, Apr 6, 2023)
  - incl. the ‘problem’ with **references** (whether the chosen references are the best ones/most relevant)
- The **textual aspects** of the text
  - e.g. the lack of authorial voice (Klaus Mundt, Feb 24, 2023)

Photo by King Lip

Implications for teaching academic writing

- **Learning** is important
    - Deeper learning
    - The need and opportunity to create **better learning assignments**

- **Disciplinarity** (e.g. Murray 2006)

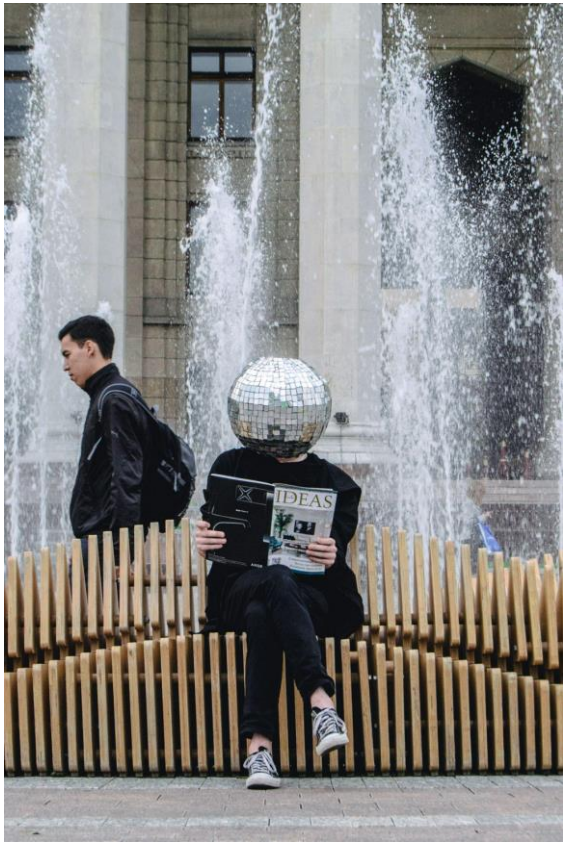


Photo by Vale Zmeykov

Implications for teaching academic writing

- Writing as a social act (Murray 2015)
- Process vs. product:
- **Process oriented writing** even more important now
  - several drafts,
  - writing group meetings,
  - a “scaffolding” approach
  - [e.g., ChatGPT and overcoming writer’s block]

Photo by Wulan Sari

Human vs. Machine and Machine vs. Human

Chris Anson and Les Perelman (2021)

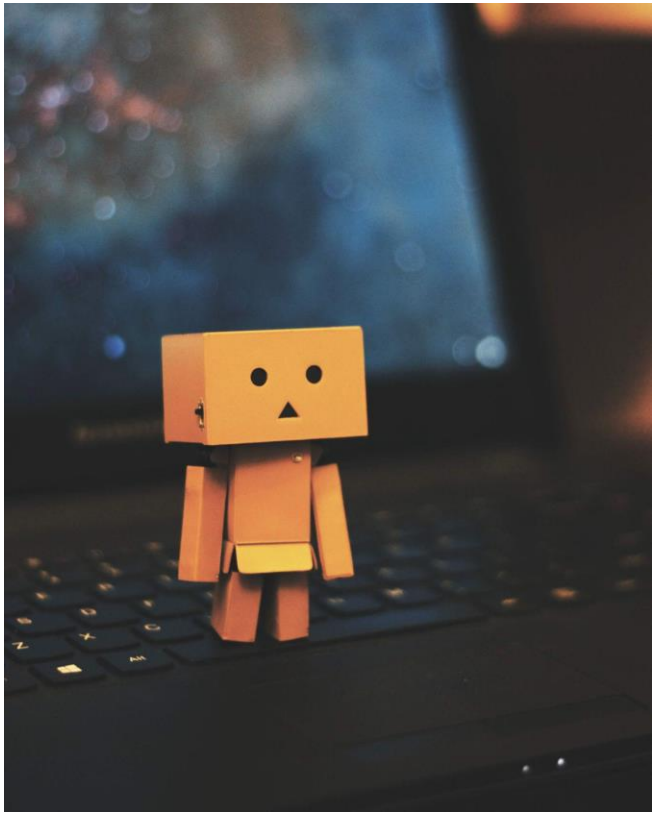
Photo by Julia M Cameron

Partnership with AI

Learn the best techniques to use available tools

Photo by Helena Lopes

Discussion



- Share Your personal experiences regarding student use of ChatGPT for their writing assignments.
- Also share your concerns or excitement about generative AI in general.

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