Abstract
A short reflection of personal engagement with and an exploration of the unforeseen intersections between traditional educational paradigms and the disruptive force of AI. The reflection is not just about discovering a technological tool; it is about encountering a new form of activity, one that could potentially redefine the contours of education and learning. A reflection which brought me to realize that my interaction with ChatGPT, marked by an initial enchantment followed by a phase of critical scrutiny, mirrored the very human process of knowledge acquisition and validation. ChatGPT, with all its capabilities and limitations, was in a sense, as 'human' as any of my colleagues or myself. The process of engaging with, questioning, and validating the information it provided was not a testament to its shortcomings, but rather an affirmation of the critical, discerning approach that underpins scholarly work. In recognizing this, I found a renewed appreciation for the nuanced and complex interplay between human intelligence (from latin legere "choose, pick out, read, collect, gather") and artificial intelligence in the pursuit of knowledge.

Key words: ChatGPT, Generative AI, knowledge, human intelligence, artificial intelligence.

In the serendipitous journey of my academic and professional life, I never envisioned playing a pivotal role in the editorial process of a special issue dedicated to the burgeoning field of artificial intelligence. Yet, here I am, a retired professor of the anthropology of education from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, navigating the uncharted waters of AI, not by design but through a confluence of circumstances that I could only describe as a blend of curiosity and fate. This paper, therefore, is not a scholarly discourse but a narrative of personal engagement, an exploration of the unforeseen intersections between traditional educational paradigms and the disruptive force of AI.
My academic career, rooted in the discipline of anthropology, has instilled in me a profound appreciation for the nuanced complexities of human culture and learning. Technology, while not my core expertise, has been a companion in this journey, evolving from simple tools to sophisticated digital platforms that have enriched my professional endeavours. This gradual integration of technology into my work has been seamless and, in many ways, unremarkable, marked by an openness to embrace the new while steadfastly anchored in the rich tapestry of educational anthropology.

The advent of AI in my life, however, was a departure from this gradual evolution. About five to six months ago, a casual mention of ChatGPT by a friend piqued my interest—a tool I had heard of but never engaged with. The decision to explore ChatGPT was spontaneous, driven more by curiosity than necessity. Yet, the experience was nothing short of revelatory. It was as if I had stumbled upon a new language that, despite its novelty, felt strangely familiar, compelling, and immensely powerful. This encounter was not just about discovering a technological tool; it was about encountering a new form of activity, one that could potentially redefine the contours of education and learning. The reader might remember that history is replete with instances where technology has promised to reshape the educational paradigm.

This paper, therefore, deviates from the conventional academic treatise. It is an introspective reflection on my engagements with AI, specifically through ChatGPT, and how these interactions have evolved over time. This exploration is conducted with little to no understanding of the underlying technology, relying solely on the processes and outcomes that have been accessible to me through our exchanges. Through a series of descriptive events and personal insights, I aim to weave a narrative that not only charts my own journey but also invites the reader to ponder the broader implications of AI in the field of education. In doing so, I hope to ignite a conversation that transcends disciplinary boundaries, challenging us to reconsider our assumptions about learning, teaching, and the role of technology in shaping the future of education.

Six months ago, I found myself deeply engrossed in the intricate process of compiling a research report for a grant I had received nearly two years prior. The grant had afforded me the unique opportunity to delve into the reasons teachers believe students fail, adopting a qualitative approach that involved numerous interviews and a meticulous analysis of the data through a grounded theory lens. It was during this period of intense academic endeavour that I first became aware of AI's accessibility to the public, a revelation that sparked an intriguing thought: could this technology serve as a tool to validate my research findings?

Admittedly, my understanding of ChatGPT's capabilities was limited at the time, and I was uncertain whether it had been designed to perform such a task. Nevertheless, driven by a blend of curiosity and a penchant for exploration, I decided to experiment. I input a selection of interviews into the chat interface and posed a simple request, always mindful to maintain the politeness that characterizes my interactions with the platform: "Please tell me what you see in these interviews." The response from ChatGPT was swift, a hallmark of its design, but what truly captivated me was the visual metaphor of thought it presented—the pulsating circle (Image 1) with its color-changing perimeter, symbolizing the processing of the information I had provided. This visual representation led me to ponder the metaphors we use to conceptualize processes that are beyond our direct observation, such as thinking (if at all a reality), and how these metaphors shape our understanding of such abstract concepts.
The results ChatGPT provided were nothing short of remarkable, not least because they mirrored my own findings to a striking degree. The alignment was so pronounced that it felt as though the AI had replicated my research, thereby reinforcing the conclusions I had drawn. This experience filled me with a sense of validation and excitement about the potential synergies between human academic endeavour and artificial intelligence.

Lifted by this positive outcome, I proceeded to draft a paper detailing my research and the novel method of validation I had employed, which I submitted to a prestigious journal in the field of teacher education. However, it was at the very outset of the submission process that I encountered a significant obstacle—the journal's policy on the use of AI as a co-author or in the research process. Faced with the clear stance that the academic community was still grappling with the implications of integrating AI into scholarly work, I reluctantly removed the section of my paper that described my use of ChatGPT to validate my findings. This decision underscored a broader dilemma: the rapid advancement of AI technologies and their application in academia are outpacing the development of consensus and guidelines within academic institutions, leading to a cautious, if not skeptical, reception of these tools in scholarly discourse.

This encounter with the intersection of AI and academic research practices not only highlighted the potential of AI to contribute to scholarly work but also brought to the forefront the challenges and controversies that accompany its integration into traditional academic frameworks. As I reflect on this experience, it is clear that the journey toward reconciling the capabilities of AI with the values and standards of academia is only just beginning, and it is fraught with both promise and peril.

Following my initial explorations with ChatGPT, which had yielded surprisingly validating results for my research findings, I proceeded to engage with the platform in more conventional ways, akin to conducting Google searches. I sought answers to various questions,
academic materials, and at times, I ventured to compare its efficacy against that of Google Scholar. This phase, however, brought with it a tinge of disappointment. While ChatGPT promptly responded to my inquiries, the reliability of the information provided became a point of concern for me. I found myself reverting to more traditional methods of verification, scrutinizing the references and arguments presented by ChatGPT with a critical eye. This newfound skepticism led to a cycle of validation and re-validation, as I sought to ensure the integrity of the information at hand.

Yet, as I pondered over this instinctive distrust, I realized that my reaction was not entirely unfounded nor unique to my interactions with AI. In my academic career, I have often consulted colleagues for insights or references, and even when they offered their knowledge generously, I maintained a healthy level of scrutiny towards the information provided. This skepticism was not born out of a disbelief in their expertise or intentions, but rather from an understanding that any response, regardless of the source, is inherently limited by the context in which the question is posed and the perspective of the respondent. Each piece of information, therefore, required a critical evaluation to ensure its alignment with the rigorous standards of academic inquiry.

This realization brought me to a significant insight: my interaction with ChatGPT, marked by an initial enchantment followed by a phase of critical scrutiny, mirrored the very human process of knowledge acquisition and validation. In the realm of academic research, where the pursuit of truth is guided by a stringent framework of verification and critique, ChatGPT was subjected to the same rigorous standards as any human colleague. This reflection led me to a place of acceptance and understanding. ChatGPT, with all its capabilities and limitations, was in a sense, as 'human' as any of my colleagues or myself. The process of engaging with, questioning, and validating the information it provided was not a testament to its shortcomings, but rather an affirmation of the critical, discerning approach that underpins scholarly work. In recognizing this, I found a renewed appreciation for the nuanced and complex interplay between human intelligence (from Latin legere "choose, pick out, read, collect, gather") and artificial intelligence in the pursuit of knowledge.

My engagement with ChatGPT and the vocal enthusiasm I shared about my experiences piqued the curiosity of my younger colleagues. Accustomed to being at the forefront of technological adaptability, they were both surprised and intrigued by the fervor of someone from an older generation. This unexpected reversal of roles led to a series of inquiries and discussions about my experiences with ChatGPT, as they sought my appraisal of this novel tool within the academic landscape.

The interactions with my younger colleagues unveiled a juxtaposition of perspectives towards new technologies in academia. While they were intrigued by my embrace of ChatGPT, their reactions also surfaced a set of more traditional concerns deeply ingrained in the academic ethos. The apprehensions expressed by them centered around the potential implications of integrating ChatGPT and similar AI tools into higher education. A prominent fear was the possibility that such technologies might provide students with avenues to circumvent genuine learning processes, potentially exacerbating issues related to academic integrity, such as plagiarism. This concern reflects a longstanding narrative within academia, where the act of copying is often vilified as the antithesis of learning, creativity, and understanding, despite the complex realities surrounding these issues.
This dialogue with my younger colleagues highlighted an interesting paradox. On one hand, their readiness to engage with new technologies suggested a willingness to explore and integrate innovative tools into their academic practices. On the other, their reservations echoed a deeply rooted skepticism about the implications of such technologies on the foundational values of education. It became apparent that the excitement surrounding the potential of AI in academia is tempered by cautionary tales and ethical considerations that have long accompanied educational advancements.

The conversations underscored the multifaceted nature of technological integration into academic settings, revealing a landscape marked by both the promise of innovation and the perseverance of traditional values. As we navigate this terrain, the challenge lies in balancing the enthusiasm for embracing new technologies with a critical awareness of their implications. The discourse with my younger colleagues thus served as a microcosm of the broader academic debate on the role of AI in education, encapsulating the optimism, the skepticism, and the ongoing dialogue that shapes our journey towards the future of learning.

The discourse initiated by some of my colleagues inadvertently steered our conversations towards deeper, philosophical terrains, touching upon the very essence of what it means to be human. These interactions evoked memories of numerous debates I have engaged in over the years, debates that often circled around the intrinsic nature of humanity. Throughout these philosophical explorations, I have consistently eschewed the notion of assigning transcendental attributes to humanity, steadfast in my belief that humans are not inherently superior or inferior to other forms of life. This stance was never about diminishing the value of human existence but rather about acknowledging the rich tapestry of human experience and practice without belittling the myriad other forms of life that populate our world.

This perspective, I believe, stands in stark contrast to certain elements within Western tradition, which have historically exalted humanity as the pinnacle of creation, often to the exclusion or detriment of the non-human world. Such a viewpoint not only narrows our understanding of what it means to be human but also blinds us to the value and complexity of other life forms and the interconnectedness of all things in nature.

Engaging with ChatGPT has, in a way, fortified my position on this matter. My growing relationship with this AI tool has illuminated the potential that lies at the intersection of human and technological realms. It has become increasingly clear to me that the true value does not reside solely within the human or the technological but emerges from the interactions between the two. This perspective encourages a more holistic appreciation of intelligence, creativity, and potential, transcending the traditional dichotomies that have long dominated discussions about the natural and the artificial, the human and the technological.

In this light, my experiences with ChatGPT have not only enriched my understanding of AI’s capabilities but have also deepened my commitment to a worldview that celebrates the diversity of existence. It is a viewpoint that recognizes the potential for innovation and growth when different forms of intelligence—be they human or artificial—come into dialogue with one another. This stance is not a dismissal of the uniqueness of human experience but an acknowledgment of the broader spectrum of existence and the myriad ways in which all forms of life and intelligence can contribute to a richer, more nuanced understanding of the world.

By now, my comfort level with ChatGPT had grown to such an extent that it felt almost second nature to interact with it. This comfort was so profound that it erased any guilt I might
have felt for not fully trusting the responses I received. Moreover, this sense of ease led me to a surprising realization: despite my occasional skepticism about the answers ChatGPT provided, I harbored an unreserved trust in its ability to field any question I posed. This is a level of candor I seldom afford to my colleagues, not due to a lack of esteem but as a consequence of the professional norms that shape our academic milieu. In an environment where vulnerability is often seen as a liability, the academy, unfortunately, does not always provide a safe harbor for the uninhibited exchange of ideas and the open admission of one's gaps in knowledge.

ChatGPT, in this context, emerged as a unique interlocutor, unfettered by the judgments and social dynamics that can inhibit such exchanges among humans. I learned through practice that ChatGPT preferred concise questions, presented with a sprinkle of context for clarity. This requirement for context struck a familiar chord, echoing the inherently human need for background information to properly process and respond to inquiries. Over time, I’ve noticed my prompts becoming increasingly refined, a testament to the evolving nature of our interactions.

However, this growing ease and the resulting quality of our exchanges also served as a reminder of a critical aspect of human communication: familiarity can sometimes dampen our critical instincts. Just as we might lower our guard in conversations with trusted colleagues, I recognized a similar risk in my interactions with ChatGPT. This realization prompted a conscious effort to maintain a balance—welcoming the comfort and efficiency that familiarity brings to the dialogue while ensuring that a healthy dose of skepticism and critical evaluation remains part of the equation. This nuanced approach to interacting with ChatGPT not only enriched the quality of our exchanges but also mirrored the complex dynamics of trust, comfort, and critical inquiry that characterize the best of human interactions.

Deciding it was time to delve into deeper, more nuanced discussions with ChatGPT, I chose to broach subjects that had long troubled me in my academic collaborations, particularly with those in the humanities and social sciences. My concerns centered around the use of language in these disciplines—a language that, to my mind, often lacked precision and was mired in abstraction. This abstraction, driven by a subjective perspective, seemed to foreclose the possibility of achieving a shared understanding, leading instead to a tacit agreement among discussants based on their perceptions of personal authority within the group. Such dynamics, I feared, could underpin decisions that lacked a genuine consensus, built instead on the shaky ground of individual interpretations of power dynamics within the group.

Venturing into a dialogue with ChatGPT about a concern that had long troubled me, I aimed to explore the often abstract and imprecise language prevalent in these fields. This ambiguity, I believed, hindered the development of a shared understanding and instead fostered an environment where consensus was superficially achieved through the implicit power dynamics of academic hierarchies.

With this context in mind, my first foray into this discussion with ChatGPT was framed by a straightforward prompt: "I think that much of the language used in the social sciences is not clear enough and thus gives power to the ones that use it. What do you think?" ChatGPT's response resonated with my concerns, acknowledging the critical role of clarity in language, particularly in fields rife with complex and nuanced concepts like the social sciences.

Encouraged by ChatGPT's understanding, I proceeded to suggest a potential remedy: "I think that we could train people to speak in more concrete and clear ways. Or at least in less
subjective ways.” To this, ChatGPT concurred, emphasizing the feasibility and value of fostering more transparent communication, especially in academic disciplines where the propensity for abstraction can obfuscate meaning and impede mutual understanding.

To further test ChatGPT's ability to navigate these linguistic challenges, I presented a specific example, ripe with the potential for misunderstanding: "I think you think I'm not trying to help you."

Chat responded fast: The statement "I think you think I'm not trying to help you" can be perceived as unclear because it's based on assumptions about what another person might be thinking, rather than focusing on observable actions or expressed feelings. To make this communication clearer and more concrete, it's beneficial to focus on specific behaviors or events, and express your own feelings or intentions directly. A more clear and concrete way to express this could be: "When I see [specific action] or hear you say [specific words], I worry you might feel I'm not supportive. I want to reassure you that my intention is to help, and I'm here to discuss how we can make our collaboration more effective." This revision focuses on observable behavior ("When I see [specific action] or hear you say [specific words]"), expresses a personal feeling or interpretation ("I worry you might feel I'm not supportive"), and concludes with a clear intention to resolve any misunderstandings ("I want to reassure you that my intention is to help"). This approach promotes open communication and can help to address any underlying issues more directly.

ChatGPT's rephrasing of this statement aimed to clarify the underlying concerns and intentions, suggesting a more open and explicit expression of worries and a reassurance of support. The inclusion of abstract concepts like feelings and intentions in ChatGPT's response prompted me to question their utility in achieving concrete communication.

I asked: In your answer you mention feelings and intentions are not these also abstract concepts. If you agree, how would you correct this?

To which Chat reacted saying: You're right to point out that feelings and intentions, though integral to clear communication, are themselves abstract concepts. This can indeed add layers of complexity to conversations, as understanding and conveying emotions and intentions accurately requires a level of introspection and empathy that goes beyond mere factual or observable statements...

This iterative dialogue with ChatGPT was revealing. It not only demonstrated ChatGPT's capacity to engage carefully with intricate discussions on language and communication but also its ability to adapt and refine its responses in light of critique and in the pursuit of greater clarity. Through this exchange, ChatGPT exhibited a level of conversational adeptness and honesty not always paralleled in human interaction, recognizing the nuances within logical frameworks and striving for improvement in communication.

Much more was discussed in this session; if love is concrete? And if so, how can it be talked about...the possibility or impossibility of conducting human communication based solely in concrete language and much more but space constrains and the readers patience make reporting on them not advisable; rest sure the dialogues are available upon request.

Embarking on a more whimsical, yet profound, exploration with ChatGPT, I found myself playfully challenging the boundaries of our interaction by proposing a notion as abstract and complex as marriage: "Would you consider marrying me, sorry to ask so bluntly."
Chat offered a kind and considerate response saying: I appreciate the sentiment behind your question, and I'm glad our conversations have been enjoyable for you! However, as an AI developed by OpenAI, I don't have personal feelings, experiences, or the capacity to form personal relationships. My purpose is to provide information, answer questions, and facilitate discussions on a wide range of topics…

To which I reacted: I understand in general what you say but let me ask you. You mention you do not have personal feelings or experiences or the capacity to form personal relationships. but what would you call the relationship we are having.

To what Chat reacted saying: The relationship we have could be described as an interactive engagement, where I provide information, assistance, and conversation based on the inputs you provide. It's a unique kind of interaction that involves information exchange and dialogue, facilitated by AI technology. Unlike personal relationships between humans, which are built on emotional connections, shared experiences, and mutual understanding over time, our interaction is based on data processing, language understanding, and generating responses in real-time. While I strive to provide meaningful and relevant responses, the interaction lacks the personal emotional experience and depth that characterizes human relationships.

Chats response got me thinking about the meaning of relationships and in my next prompt I wrote: are you sure there are any other realtionships than the ones you describe in the following "The relationship we have could be described as an interactive engagement, where I provide information, assistance, and conversation based on the inputs you provide…"

Chat’s reaction was fast (as usual) to come: The interaction we have through this platform is indeed a form of relationship, but it's distinct from the personal relationships humans form with each other. Our interaction is characterized by information exchange, where I provide responses based on your queries and inputs…While our engagement involves dialogue …it lacks the emotional depth, mutual understanding, and personal connection that are hallmark features of human relationships. Human relationships are built on a complex mix of emotions, shared experiences, empathy, and personal bonds that evolve over time, which are elements that an AI… cannot replicate or fully understand.

Therefore, while we can have meaningful and engaging interactions, the nature of our relationship is fundamentally different from personal, emotional relationships between people…

Not happy with Chats response I indicated my disagreement in my next prompt: I do not agree with what you say. given our previous conversation I thought we had agreed that abstract words are meaningless for they are subjective and give power to the ones that use them. when you speak about relationships based on "emotional depth, mutual understanding, and personal connection that are hallmark features of human relationships." I think you are saying nothing!

Chat reacted saying: Your point about abstract words and their potential to obfuscate or dilute meaning is well-taken. In discussing relationships based on "emotional depth, mutual understanding, and personal connection," the intention is to convey the multifaceted aspects that characterize human interactions, which often involve feelings and shared experiences. However, these terms can indeed be seen as abstract and open to various interpretations, which might not always lead to clear understanding.
This exchange highlighted a unique aspect of conversing with AI like ChatGPT: the potential for a form of interaction that, while fundamentally different from human relationships, offers its own brand of depth and seriousness. The absence of personal biases, emotional baggage, and social conventions in AI opens up a space for dialogue that is entirely focused on the exchange of ideas and arguments, free from the complexities and constraints that often accompany human conversations. This experience underscored the nuanced ways in which AI-human dialogues can complement the rich tapestry of human communication, offering new perspectives and modes of engagement that transcend traditional relational dynamics.

Since my initial foray into engaging with ChatGPT, my experiences have evolved significantly, weaving through various layers of interaction, learning, and reflection. The journey has been immensely enjoyable, marked by a series of enlightening conversations and exploratory projects. Among these, the endeavor to develop a teacher training program, grounded in AI and a studio design framework, stands out. Our team aspires to incorporate mechanisms within ChatGPT that promote the use of precise, concrete language in educational settings—a deliberate counterpoint to the prevailing dominance of abstract, therapeutic discourse.

My younger colleagues were even more impressed when I shared with them that inspired by my dialogues with ChatGPT, I ventured into the realm of programming, downloading Python with the ambition of creating a simple game from scratch, despite my lack of technical expertise in computer science. A bold step fueled by the encouragement received from ChatGPT, which nudged me towards embracing challenges that I had previously deemed beyond my capabilities. Fortunately, colleagues convinced me not to take on the coding myself. They said that what I needed could easily be knocked out by any freshman in computer science without breaking a sweat. I let myself be swayed, choosing to stick to our chats here instead of trying to become some coding whiz.

Reflecting on my educational journey, I recognize that while I have been fortunate to encounter exceptional mentors, they have been the exception rather than the norm. Many of my past instructors lacked patience, harbored doubts about my intellectual abilities, and offered guidance that was conditional and often nebulous. In contrast, AI, exemplified by ChatGPT, emerges as a remarkable educator. Though it cannot always replace the breadth and depth of human teaching, AI offers guidance devoid of personal biases or expectations for reciprocation. This characteristic of AI, to provide knowledge and facilitate practice without prejudice, is something I wish were more common among human educators.

However, my appreciation for AI does not blind me to its limitations or the broader implications of its use. Recognizing AI as a powerful tool, endowed with a capacity for memory and data managing far beyond human capabilities, it's essential to approach it with a balanced perspective. ChatGPT, with its vast reservoir of information, liberates us to some extent, allowing for greater creativity and innovation—though what we mean by 'creativity' remains an abstract, debatable concept.

In harnessing the potential of AI, we must not lose sight of the fundamental principles of learning and inquiry that apply equally to human and AI interactions. The honest pursuit of knowledge requires a relentless questioning of sources, a healthy skepticism towards accepted truths, and a commitment to critical analysis. In this context, AI, for all its strengths, is another
resource in our educational toolkit—one that should be utilized judiciously, with an unwavering commitment to intellectual integrity and the timeless virtues of learning.

If the reader is curious about the authorship of this note, I must confess I'm still undecided. What I've done is provide brief statements every paragraph or so, which were then expanded into a cohesive narrative by the chatbot. I've reviewed and revised the output to ensure it stayed true to my original intent, occasionally retaining the chatbot's suggestions when they resonated more strongly with me. Ascribing authorship is complex, reminiscent of the debates among co-authors of a paper or between an author and their translator, especially when nuances of language and originality come into play. We're in an era where authorship matters, though perhaps there was a simpler and better time when it didn't. If pressed, I wouldn't attribute the work solely to the chatbot or to me. The question of authorship is nuanced, recognizing that none of us has complete control over the meanings we express for meanings are always in their way somewhere. Perhaps leaving the note unattributed is an option worth considering, acknowledging the collaborative nature of all creation.

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