9-9-2024

Interrogating a ChatGPT-generated Literary Analysis

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Recommended Citation

SPAN 421: Contemporary Spanish Literature and Culture
Fall 2024

Interrogating a ChatGPT-generated Literary Analysis

Purpose: In an upper-level Spanish literature and culture course, one of the ways in which students demonstrate reading comprehension and critical thinking skills is through writing literary analysis essays in the target language. With this type of assignment, students display analytical reasoning and practice their formal writing skills through the formation of a well-articulated thesis and logically presented evidence from the text. An additional goal of a literary analysis is that students will use those same critical thinking skills and apply them to texts they encounter in their everyday lives (i.e. political speeches, news articles, other types of written and oral correspondences). In the lead-up to crafting their own literary analyses, I often have students look at sample analysis essays and critique what is and what is not working. For this assignment, students will work in groups to read through and critique a literary analysis generated by ChatGPT.

> **Skills**: The purpose of this assignment is to help students practice the following skills:
>
> - Applying an understanding of what constitutes an effective literary analysis essay to an evaluation of a written product generated by ChatGPT
> - Collaborating with others on the evaluation of the written product generated by ChatGPT
> - Synthesizing the group's ideas and orally presenting them to the class
> - Reflecting on the process of this evaluation and determining what they would do differently for their own literary analysis
>
> **Knowledge**: This assignment will also help students to become familiar with the following important content knowledge:
>
> - What constitutes an effective literary analysis essay
> - How to compose and format an effective literary analysis essay
> - How to engage in critical inquiry and analysis
> - How to identify the limitations of generative AI

Task: Prior to the task, students will have read and discussed Emilia Pardo Bazán's short story "Las medias rojas." Additionally, the class will have gone over the course rubric for a literary analysis as well as documents that list best practices for writing an analysis. The task itself will be to evaluate a literary analysis essay generated by ChatGPT. The assignment will be structured as an in-class group activity with an individual reflective component to follow.

1. The instructor will prompt ChatGPT to write a 900-1200 word literary analysis of Emilia Pardo Bazán's "Las medias rojas." She will then print the written product for her students. Providing the same product will be useful in this case as it allows students to, quite literally, be on the same page in order to easily compare and contrast their ideas on its effectiveness.

2. For the in-class activity, the instructor will arrange students into groups. They should have their literary analysis rubric and "best practices" documents on hand. They will then individually read through the ChatGPT-generated essay, making notes on what the essay does well and what could be improved.

3. After students have had time to individually evaluate the essay, they will discuss their ideas in groups. Though students are encouraged to point out any of their own individual insights, the instructor will also have the following questions available on the screen: Does the essay comply with the basic norms of a literary analysis? Does the introduction contain a clear thesis? Is it easy to find the main points of the essay's argument? Are transitions used effectively throughout? Are there any grammar or stylistic errors? Is the tone of the essay appropriate? Does the essay connect its argument back to the text? Does it cite its sources well? Is there a works cited page present? What are this essay's greatest strengths and conversely, its greatest weaknesses? How would you improve the quality of this analysis?

4. Each group will present the main ideas that they discussed. The instructor will make note of their responses on the board, placing particular emphasis on their response to the last question: How would you improve the quality of this analysis?

5. After the class has had the chance to evaluate the ChatGPT-generated essay together, students will then take a moment to individually reflect upon the activity. Some of the questions they can use to help generate ideas for their written reflection include: Did this assignment reveal any shortcomings in the ChatGPT output? Did this assignment help you to understand what a more effective literary analysis looks like? Why or why not? What are your biggest takeaways from today's activities?

Criteria for Success: Students should be engaged and working together to explore the effectiveness of the literary analysis generated by ChatGPT. A successful outcome will include robust discussion and thorough analysis of the elements of the ChatGPT essay in comparison to how the students would approach such an essay. Each student will then have 15-20 minutes to submit an individual reflection of 1-2 paragraphs, written in Spanish, at the end of the assignment. This reflection will be worth 20 points and will be graded based on effort and completion. The rubric can be found on page 3 of this document. The reflection will be the only graded component of this particular assignment, but the goal is that students will better know how to write an effective literary analysis and apply those skills to that larger written assignment later in the semester.

Rubric for Grading Criteria

Criteria	Does Not Address	Needs Work	Sufficiently Addressed
Student responds to the reflection prompt, in 1-2 paragraphs, using concrete details from the ChatGPT-generated essay	0 points	5 points	10 points
Student reflection shows engagement with the task, commenting on the effectiveness of the assignment and key takeaways they will use for their own analysis	0 points	5 points	10 points