

## ChatGPT: discussion in Russian academia and media

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### *ChatGPT: discusión en la academia y los medios rusos*

#### ABSTRACT RESUMEN

The recent news of a Russian student successfully defending his Bachelor's thesis written by ChatGPT has sparked a debate in academia about using artificial intelligence (AI) in educational processes. A Russian student posted on Twitter the whole story describing his experience and the steps he followed to create a thesis in 23 hours. This case encouraged academia to discuss ChatGPT's usage in educational processes widely.

Professors and teachers tend to present two opposite ideas: to ban and exclude ChatGPT from academia or to use it for educational purposes. The article deals with these two sides and includes qualitative and quantitative content analyses of Russian media publications on this issue.

*La reciente noticia de que un estudiante ruso ha defendiendo con éxito su tesis de licenciatura escrita por ChatGPT ha provocado un debate en la academia sobre el uso de la inteligencia artificial (IA) en los procesos educativos. Un estudiante ruso publicó en Twitter la historia completa que describe su experiencia y los pasos que siguió para crear una tesis en 23 horas. Este caso alentó a la academia a discutir ampliamente el uso de ChatGPT en procesos educativos. El profesorado y los académicos tienden a presentar dos ideas opuestas: prohibir y excluir ChatGPT de la academia o usarlo con fines educativos. El artículo trata de estos dos enfoques contrapuestos e incluye análisis de contenido cualitativo y cuantitativo de las publicaciones que los medios rusos realizaron sobre este tema.*

#### KEYWORDS PALABRAS CLAVE

ChatGPT; Academia;  
Artificial intelligence; AI; Education; Media.

*ChatGPT; Academia; Inteligencia artificial; IA; Educación;  
Medios de comunicación.*

## 1. Introduction

According to various media reports (Thuvienpc.com, 2023), a student in Russia used ChatGPT, an AI-powered text generation tool, to write his Bachelor's thesis in 23 hours. He posted his story on Twitter and claimed that his thesis passed the school's censorship and achieved the minimum score. This case sparked a debate among Russian academics and educators about using and misusing ChatGPT in educational processes (Rt.com, 2023).

Some professors and teachers argued that ChatGPT should be banned and excluded from academia, as it threatens academic integrity, originality, and quality of research (Rudolph et al., 2023). They also expressed concerns about the potential plagiarism and cheating that ChatGPT could enable among students (Tlili et al., 2023). They called for restricted access to ChatGPT and measures to detect and prevent its use in academic writing (García-Peñalvo, 2023)

Others suggested that ChatGPT could be used for educational purposes, such as generating ideas, stimulating creativity, enhancing language skills, and providing feedback (Baidoo-Anu & Owusu Ansah, 2023). They also pointed out that ChatGPT could be a better tool and still requires human supervision, editing, and evaluation (Thorp, 2023). They argued that ChatGPT could be a helpful assistant rather than a replacement for human writers (Pavlik, 2023).

The debate over ChatGPT in Russia reflects a broader discussion about the ethical implications of AI technologies in education. Other countries have faced similar challenges with ChatGPT or other text-generation tools. For example,

Researchers at Northwestern University and the University of Chicago instructed ChatGPT to generate fake research abstracts based on 10 real ones published in medical journals (Bushard, 2023). They then fed the fakes through two detection programs that attempted to distinguish them from real reports. Even though the fake papers were 100% unique when measured by a plagiarism detection program, only 8% followed the formatting requirements required by scientific journals. The study urges journals and medical conferences to maintain rigorous scientific standards and implement AI output detectors when reviewing papers.

- The Chinese government launched an investigation into the use of the ChatGPT chatbot following complaints from users about the dissemination of "illegal" information. As a result, the authorities banned the use of ChatGPT on all platforms and instructed Tencent and Ant Group to shut down the chatbot (Yalalov, 2023).

## 2. ChatGPT and its use in education

ChatGPT is an AI-based language model developed by OpenAI, capable of generating human-like text responses based on its training data. Its advanced language processing abilities have led to its widespread use in various fields, including education. Some academics advocate for ChatGPT's integration into the educational process, highlighting its potential to enhance students' learning experience, improve their writing skills and promote critical thinking (Kung et al., 2023). ChatGPT can help students generate new ideas, rephrase concepts and analyze data, thus creating more comprehensive and original papers.

Russian academia has diverse opinions about ChatGPT. Some academics are concerned that ChatGPT could be used for plagiarism, cheating, hacking, or other forbidden activities (Marusenko, 2023). They suggest that students who use ChatGPT are not developing essential skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and research. Furthermore, using ChatGPT might lead to plagiarism and undermine academic rigor, as students rely on AI to produce their academic work (Khalil & E, 2023). Such critics suggest that ChatGPT should be banned from academia to prevent academic misconduct and protect academic integrity (Al-Worafi et al., 2023).

Other academics are interested in exploring the potential of ChatGPT for teaching, learning, and research. They suggest that ChatGPT could be used to assist students and teachers with various tasks, such as writing, summarizing, grading, or generating ideas (Fostikov, 2023). They also acknowledge the limitations and challenges of ChatGPT, such as its reliability, accuracy, and ethics (Fostikov, 2023).

There is no consensus among Russian academics on how to deal with ChatGPT. Some have called for more dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders to establish guidelines and best practices for using ChatGPT in academia (Marusenko, 2023). Others have expressed their intention to develop their own versions of ChatGPT-like services for the Russian market.

## 3. Russian media coverage

In Russia, the recent case of a student successfully defending his thesis written by ChatGPT has garnered widespread media attention, with articles and news segments discussing the pros and cons of ChatGPT's use in education. Two hundred articles were gathered from Yandex.News aggregator to conduct the research. The following keywords were applied: ChatGPT, education ("образование" in Russian), and student ("студент" in Russian). The date filters were set to February 1st - February 14th, 2023.

According to a Yandex.News aggregator analysis of Russian media coverage, the topic of ChatGPT and its use in education has been covered extensively in the Russian media — 200

publications are the highest limit of Yandex.News output for filtered research. Yandex.News is a news aggregator that collects news articles from various media outlets and presents them in one place. Yandex.News has its own list of media outlets from which it aggregates content. In the first stage of the analysis, the news stories were not classified into categories. Instead, only their media outlets were classified based on the Yandex.News sources list.

The analysis found that at least 200 articles were published on the topic, with coverage peaking in the weeks following the news of the Russian student successfully defending his Bachelor's thesis written by ChatGPT. Most articles presented both sides of the debate, with some publications suggesting ChatGPT's potential use as a tool to improve writing skills and others questioning its impact on academic rigor and integrity.

The analysis also revealed that the media coverage of ChatGPT in education was not limited to academic or educational publications but was also featured in general news outlets, technology blogs, and social media platforms.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that the media coverage of ChatGPT in education was not limited to Russian media outlets, but international media also covered the topic. It indicates that the Russian case gained attention and interest worldwide.

Overall, the Yandex.News aggregator analysis highlights the extensive media coverage and public interest in the debate over ChatGPT's use in education in Russia and globally. It further emphasizes the need for careful consideration and examination of ChatGPT's potential impact on academic integrity and rigor in educational settings.

The table 1 demonstrates that ChatGPT's use in education has been covered extensively in Russian media outlets, with general news publications leading the way regarding the number of articles published. However, academic outlets and technology blogs also contributed significantly to the overall coverage of this topic.

While this table provides a snapshot of media coverage during a specific period, the number of articles and percentage of

coverage may continue to evolve as the debate surrounding ChatGPT's use in education progresses.

Below are some examples of news stories from each category:

#### Academic/Educational:

- "How the neural network ChatGPT has revolutionized humanitarian education" by Skillbox (2023) discusses the potential benefits and challenges of using AI technologies, including ChatGPT, in higher education.

#### General News:

- "A Russian student defended a thesis that wrote a neural network for him," published by ForPost (2023), covers the controversial case of a Russian student using ChatGPT to write his Bachelor's thesis.

"A student of the Russian State University for the Humanities defended his thesis written using ChatGPT. Complained about him to the management of the university" published by Afisha Daily (Gudoshnikov, 2023), discusses the ethical implications of using AI technologies, including ChatGPT.

#### Technology Blogs:

- "Russian student defended his diploma using ChatGPT," published by Hi-Tech Mail (2023), discusses the potential applications of GPT-3 and other AI technologies in education, including ChatGPT.
- "C grade: a Russian student told how he wrote a thesis using ChatGPT and even defended it," published by iXBT.com (2023), examines the potential risks and ethical concerns of using AI technologies, including ChatGPT, in education.

Moreover, a revised table (see table 2) shows the percentage of total coverage and the percentage of negative, positive, and neutral descriptions mentioned. Alongside counted media coverage, the qualitative content analyses show that all the articles had inclinations towards positive, neutral, or negative ChatGPT's description. They were analyzed manually by the author. Sentiment analysis was used to determine the sentiment or tone of each article towards ChatGPT's use in education. Sentiment analysis involves identifying and

Media Outlet Type	Number of Articles	Percentage of Total
Academic/Educational	35	17,5%
General News	121	60,5%
Technology Blogs	44	22%
Total	200	100%

Table 1. Media types in publications on ChatGPT in Russia. From the author.

Media Outlet Type	Number of Articles	Percentage of Total Coverage	Percentage of Negative Descriptions	Percentage of Positive Descriptions	Percentage of Neutral Descriptions
Academic/Educational	35	17,5%	88,5% (31)	11,5% (4)	0%
General News	121	60,5%	62% (75)	32% (39)	6% (7)
Technology Blogs	44	22%	11% (5)	84% (37)	5% (2)
Total	200	100%	55,5% (111)	40% (80)	4,5% (9)

**Table 2.** Media types and tones in publications on ChatGPT in Russia. From the author.

extracting subjective information from text, such as opinions, emotions, and attitudes. The author manually analyzed each article to determine its sentiment towards ChatGPT's use in education. For example, certain keywords or phrases were commonly associated with positive, negative, or neutral language, such as "innovative" or "controversial."

The qualitative content analysis involved reading and interpreting each article to identify whether it had a positive, negative, or neutral sentiment towards ChatGPT's use in education. The logics that was used to analyze the sentiment of the news articles:

- **Positive language:** The author looked for language that expresses enthusiasm, support, or approval of ChatGPT's use in education. For example, an article might use words like "innovative," "game-changing," or "exciting" to describe the potential of ChatGPT in education.
- **Negative language:** Conversely, the author looked for language that expresses criticism, skepticism, or concern about ChatGPT's use in education. For example, an article might use words like "controversial," "untested," or "problematic" to describe potential issues or risks associated with using ChatGPT in education.
- **Neutral language:** The author searched for language that does not express a clear positive or negative sentiment towards ChatGPT's use in education. This includes language that is descriptive or factual, rather than evaluative or opinionated. For example, an article might describe the technical capabilities of ChatGPT or the ways in which it has been used in educational settings without expressing a clear judgment about its effectiveness or ethical implications. The author also considered the absence of language that expresses a clear sentiment, such as articles that focus primarily on reporting news or events without offering explicit commentary or evaluation.
- **Overall tone:** In addition to specific language cues, the author may have considered the overall tone of the article in assessing its sentiment towards ChatGPT. For example, an article that consistently emphasizes the benefits and

potential of ChatGPT in education may be considered positive, while an article that focuses primarily on risks and challenges may be considered negative.

It is important to note that this table (see table 2) is based on a quantitative content analysis of media publications and does not necessarily reflect the nuanced perspectives and opinions of individual authors or publications.

While only comprising 17.5% of the total coverage, academic and educational publications had the highest percentage of negative descriptions at 88.5%, with only 11.5% of their coverage being positive. It shows that academia is skeptical of ChatGPT's use in education and may view it as a potential threat to academic integrity.

Technology blogs, with 22% of the total coverage, had the highest percentage of positive descriptions at 84%, with only 11% of their coverage being negative. It suggests that the tech community is more optimistic about the potential benefits of ChatGPT's use in education.

Overall, the table shows a wide range of opinions and perspectives on ChatGPT's use in education in Russia, with significant differences between media outlet types. The high percentage of negative descriptions in academic and educational publications signifies that there may be resistance to the use of ChatGPT in the traditional academic setting. At the same time, the more favorable coverage in technology blogs suggests that there is potential for ChatGPT to be used in innovative and exciting ways outside of academia.

## 4. Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the ongoing debate about the use and misuse of AI technologies in education, which is not unique to Russia. The case of the Russian student using ChatGPT to write his Bachelor's thesis has raised concerns about academic integrity and quality, as well as the ethical implications of AI technologies in education. The media coverage of this case demonstrates the high level of public

interest in this topic, as well as the diversity of opinions and perspectives on the issue.

However, the challenges and opportunities associated with the use of AI technologies in education are not limited to Russia. Similar debates have been reported in other countries, and it is important to address these issues and establish guidelines and best practices for their use. This requires collaboration between researchers, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders, as well as a critical reflection on the ethical implications of these technologies for learning and teaching.

In light of these findings, future research may focus on identifying the potential benefits and risks of using AI technologies in education, as well as developing strategies for ensuring their responsible and ethical use. This will require interdisciplinary collaborations and a comprehensive understanding of the complex social, cultural, and political contexts in which these technologies are deployed. By addressing these issues, we can ensure that AI technologies are used to enhance, rather than undermine, the quality and integrity of education.

The potential ban of ChatGPT has been a topic of discussion among researchers (Al-Woraf, 2023), but it appears that negative assessments of the technology have also been disseminated by the media. As a result, both academic and media sources have expressed varying views on ChatGPT, creating a mixed perception of the technology. Based on the statistical results presented in this paper, it is likely that the current period represents a transitional phase in determining the prevailing perception of ChatGPT. The outcome of this phase could ultimately shape how the media, academia, and society as a whole assess and cover ChatGPT in the future.

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