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Chatbot Revolution: Exploring Emerging Trends and Future Directions in Conversational Artificial Intelligence

Oyebola Akande[1*], Joseph O. Adewuyi[2], Heritage. Afolabi[3], Stephen Maitanmi[4], Olubukola Adekola[5], Ijeoma Onyechi[6], Ihim Ebubechukwu[7], Wumi Ajayi[8], Funmilayo Sanusi[9], Oluwayemisi B. Fatade[10], Olawumi A. Adebanjo[11], Emmanuel I. Oyerinde[12]

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Abstract: The rise of chatbots has greatly simplified various aspects of human life by offering automated responses to user queries, reducing the reliance on human involvement. Utilizing natural language processing, these chatbots have become transformative tools across a range of sectors, including customer service, education, and e-commerce. This paper examines the evolution of conversational Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly focusing on chatbots, from the introduction of ELIZA in 1966 to the modern advancements exemplified by ChatGPT, highlighting a trajectory of notable technological progress and application diversification. However, the paper also acknowledges ongoing challenges. Limitations in context understanding and memory, present since the early days, can still lead to repetitive or nonsensical responses. While modern chatbots have made significant progress, they continue to grapple with the complexities of human language and emotions, potentially leading to misunderstandings. Additionally, ethical considerations around privacy, security, and responsible AI use are paramount as AI integration deepens. Through this historical lens, both similarities and differences in chatbots' development, capabilities, and applications are revealed over time. Ultimately, the progression from ELIZA to ChatGPT underscores significant strides in chatbot technology, transitioning from rudimentary pattern matching to sophisticated, context-aware interactions driven by advanced AI.

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence (AI), Chatbot, ChatGPT, Natural Language Processing.*

1. Introduction

The emergence of chatbots has significantly simplified various aspects of human life by providing automatic responses to user inputs, thus reducing the need for human intervention. The first ever chatbot was developed by MIT professor Joseph Weizenbaum in the 1960s, it was called ELIZA [1], and paved the way for the development of sophisticated programs that emulate human conversation. Chatbots are defined as programs employing Human-Computer Interaction principles to simulate human conversation nuances.

These chatbots, leveraging natural language processing, have become transformative tools in digital interactions, finding applications across diverse sectors such as customer service, education, and e-commerce. They revolutionize customer service by providing instant responses, enhancing education through personalized guidance, and facilitating e-commerce transactions. Additionally, chatbots serve as personal assistants in devices like Siri and Alexa, offering a glimpse into a future where they significantly improve efficiency and user experiences.

The paper focuses on exploring the trends of conversational AI, specifically through chatbots. Section 1 delves into the theoretical background of chatbots, while Section 2 discusses the chronological trends of their application incorporating the applicable criteria that follow.

2. Theoretical trends of Chatbot

Chatbots, also known as conversational agents, have evolved significantly over time. Their development has been marked by various technological advancements, from basic pattern matching to sophisticated natural language processing. Here is a detailed discussion on the theoretical background of chatbots, focusing on key technological milestones:

[1]*Department of Computer Science, School of Computing and Engineering Science, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo , 121103, Nigeria.*
ORCID ID : 0000-0001-5693-4484
[2,3]*Department of Computer Science, School of Computing and Engineering Science, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo , 121103, Nigeria.*
ORCID ID : 0009-0000-2325-7325, 0009-0005-3946-1132
[4,5]*Department of Software Engineering, School of Computing and Engineering Science, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo , 121103, Nigeria.*
ORCID ID : 0000-0002-0217-0543, 0000-0002-5495-6791
[6,7]*Department of Computer Science, School of Computing and Engineering Science, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo , 121103, Nigeria.*
ORCID ID : 0009-0005-7780-2954, 0009-0003-0892-0530
[8,11]*Department of Software Engineering, School of Computing and Engineering Science, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo , 121103, Nigeria.*
ORCID ID : 0000-0003-3362-4082, 0009-0009-5929-7199
[9]*Department of Computer Science & Mathematics, Mountain Top University, Nigeria. ORCID ID : 0000-0001-5794-3657*
[10]*Department of Computer Science, School of Computing and Engineering Science, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo , 121103, Nigeria.*
ORCID ID : 0009-0007-7197-2615
[12]*Department of Information Technology, School of Computing and Engineering Science, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo , 121103, Nigeria.*
ORCID ID : 0000-0002-2275-7077
** Corresponding Author Email: akandeo@babcock.edu.ng*

2.1. Pattern Matching

The early chatbot development, exemplified by ELIZA [2], relied on pattern matching, matching user input to specific keywords or phrases to trigger pre-defined responses. However, this approach has limitations, as highlighted by [3]. It restricts conversations to predictable interactions and cannot understand context or language nuances. Chatbots employing pattern matching struggle with synonyms, paraphrases, and deviations from expected input, resulting in irrelevant or nonsensical responses [3].

As chatbot technology advances, there's a shift towards more sophisticated Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques aiming to grasp the meaning and intent behind user input beyond simple keyword matching. While pattern matching remains relevant for simpler tasks, understanding its limitations is crucial for designing effective and engaging chatbot interactions capable of adapting to the natural flow of human conversation.

2.1.1. Contextual Pattern Matching

Evolving from basic pattern matching, contextual pattern matching enhances chatbots' conversational abilities by incorporating the context of previous exchanges [4], this approach significantly improves the natural flow of conversation by leveraging on past interactions [5]. Despite these advancements, comprehension depth remains constrained by predefined rules and scripts [6], indicating progress in making chatbot conversations engaging while highlighting the challenge of achieving true natural language understanding. Examples of chatbots utilizing contextual pattern matching are provided.

2.1.2. Artificial Intelligence Markup Language (AIML)

AIML (Artificial Intelligence Markup Language), developed in the late 1990s, advances chatbot technology by enabling more complex conversations [7]. The Elements of AIML Style. ALICE AI Foundation). It enhances pattern-matching capabilities, allowing chatbots to process diverse user inputs [8]. However, AIML-based chatbots still rely on predefined response templates, limiting their effectiveness with unpredictable inputs [9]. This highlights the ongoing challenge of creating chatbots that understand human communication nuances fully. Examples of AIML-based chatbots are mentioned.

2.1.3. Rule-Based System

Rule-based chatbot systems follow hard-coded rules, utilizing decision trees for responses [10], effective for predictable inputs but lacking adaptability to natural language complexities [11]. This rigidity leads to conversations feeling constrained, detracting from user experience akin to navigating a multiple-choice questionnaire [12]. Examples of such chatbots are sought.

2.1.4. Machine Learning

The integration of machine learning in chatbot development has brought significant transformation, enabling them to learn from interactions and improve performance over time [13]. Unlike rule-based systems, machine learning-equipped chatbots can process a wider range of inputs and interpret user intent more effectively. By employing algorithms to learn from data, they offer more accurate responses to diverse user queries [14]. This evolution signifies a pivotal shift towards chatbots capable of dynamic interactions, embracing the complexities of human language and communication [15].

2.1.5. Natural Language Processing (NLP)

Natural Language Processing (NLP) has transformed chatbot technology, enabling sophisticated interactions between humans and machines [16]. NLP facilitates the creation of educational chatbots that efficiently respond to student inquiries, improving information access [16]. Similarly, in mental health support, NLP plays a crucial role, allowing chatbots to offer immediate assistance by interpreting user inputs [17]. These applications not only enhance the user experience by parsing grammar and understanding sentiments but also demonstrate NLP's adaptability across diverse domains [17].

The evolution of chatbot technology, from pattern matching to advanced NLP techniques, reflects broader advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and computational linguistics [16]. Each stage contributes to making chatbots more sophisticated, adaptable, and capable of providing natural conversational experiences. As technology progresses, the potential applications and capabilities of chatbots are expected to expand further, promising increasingly human-like interactions across various domains [16].

2.2. Chronological trend of Chatbots

The Turing Test, proposed by Alan Turing in 1950, is a benchmark for machine intelligence, evaluating a computer's ability to exhibit human-like conversation. Turing envisioned a test where a human judge interacts with both a machine and a human without knowing which is which; if the judge cannot reliably distinguish between them, the machine is deemed to have passed the Turing Test. This test is considered by many to be the generative idea of chatbots (Turing 1950).

2.2.1. Early Chatbots (1966 to 1970's)

ELIZA: ELIZA, developed by Joseph Weizenbaum in 1966 at MIT, was a groundbreaking chatbot that utilized pattern matching to simulate human conversation [18]. Despite its limitations in knowledge and adaptability, ELIZA showcased the potential of computer programs to mimic human interaction without true comprehension, influencing contemporary chatbot technologies and remaining a

prominent topic in science fiction and popular culture [18, 3]. ELIZA's use of pattern matching and its successful performance in a restricted Turing Test sparked broader discussions about machine intelligence [18].

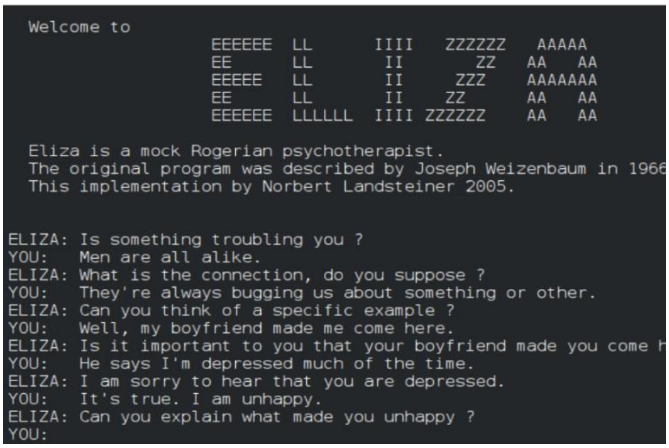

Fig. 1 An example of Eliza.

2.2.2. PARRY (1972)

PARRY, developed by psychiatrist Kenneth Colby in 1972, simulated a patient with paranoid schizophrenia, demonstrating improved capabilities over ELIZA by engaging in coherent conversations on various topics [19]. Despite purportedly passing Turing tests, debates persist about its true comprehension abilities, yet PARRY represented a significant advancement in chatbot development, showcasing the potential for lifelike human conversations [19].

Interviewer:	Good afternoon. My name is Doctor Jones.
PARRY:	Pleased to meet you.
Interviewer:	How are you?
PARRY:	All right I guess.
Interviewer:	Could you tell me your name?
PARRY:	Pat Smith.
Interviewer:	How old are you?
PARRY:	28.
Interviewer:	I thought you might have some problems.
PARRY:	I've been upset lately.
Interviewer:	By what?
PARRY:	People get on my nerves sometimes.
Interviewer:	Tell me more.
PARRY:	Do you know anything about bookies?
Interviewer:	No. What about bookies?
PARRY:	A bookie didn't pay me once.
Interviewer:	When did this happen?
PARRY:	A couple of months ago.

Fig. 2 Conversations between PARRY and Human [19].

2.2.3. Chatbots in the 1980's to 1990's

JABBERWACKY: Jabberwacky, developed by Rollo Carpenter, was one of the first online chatbots to achieve a level of natural conversation through contextual pattern matching (Codecademy, 2023). Launched in 1988, it quickly gained popularity for its humor and ability to engage in diverse topics (Codecademy, 2023). This marked a significant step forward from earlier research-oriented chatbots, showcasing the broader potential of the technology (Codecademy, 2023). Jabberwacky's capability to hold more natural conversations and its ability to adapt over time were key advancements in the field.

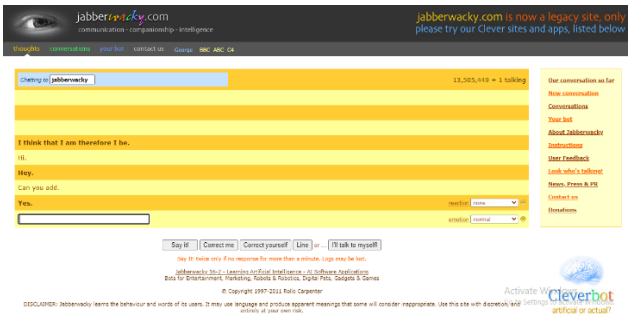

Fig. 3 An image of Jabberwacky (source: http://www.jabberwacky.com/)

2.2.4. DR SBAITSO (1991)

Dr. Sbaitso, developed by Creative Labs in 1991, was one of the earliest publicly available chatbots, distributed with Sound Blaster sound cards (Creative Labs, 1991). Acting as a psychotherapist, it utilized pattern matching to generate responses, engaging users with questions like "Why do you feel that way?" and "Can you tell me more about that?" Despite its simplicity, Dr. Sbaitso was popular for personal interaction and entertainment, contributing to the early development of chatbots and their applications (Creative Labs, 1991).

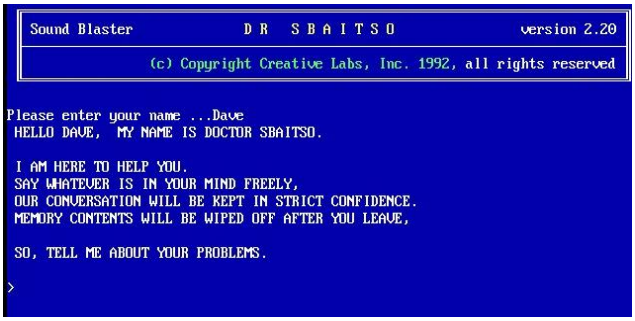

Fig. 4 An image of the Dr Sbaitso interface [20].

2.2.5. ALICE (Artificial Linguistic Internet Computer Entity)

ALICE (Artificial Linguistic Internet Computer Entity), developed by Richard Wallace in mid-1990s, stands as a significant chatbot achievement [21]. Utilizing Artificial Intelligence Markup Language (AIML), ALICE fostered engaging conversations on diverse topics. This, combined with its ability to learn and adapt over time, made ALICE a versatile tool for entertainment, information provision, and even research. The widespread availability and multifaceted applications of ALICE significantly advanced chatbot development [21]. While specific details of its awards might require further investigation, ALICE's lasting impact on the field is undeniable.

2.3. Chatbots in the 21st Century

2.3.1. Smarterchild:

Smarterchild, developed by ActiveBuddy in 2001, was one of the earliest widely publicly available chatbots, quickly

gaining popularity for its humor and versatility [22]. Using techniques like pattern matching, rule-based systems, and machine learning, Smarterchild engaged users in natural and engaging conversations, learning and adapting over time. Accessible across various platforms including AOL Instant Messenger, MSN Messenger, and Yahoo! Messenger, as well as web and mobile devices, Smarterchild played a pivotal role in the widespread adoption and popularity of chatbots [22].

2.3.2. Mitsuku:

Developed by Steve Worswick in 2005, Mitsuku stands as a significant advancement in chatbot technology [23]. Building upon the foundation of Jabberwacky and utilizing Artificial Intelligence Markup Language (AIML), Mitsuku fosters engaging conversations on a wide range of topics [23]. Its ability to learn and adapt over time contributes to its success, as evidenced by its impressive five wins at the Loebner Prize. Accessible online, Mitsuku serves various purposes, including entertainment, information provision, and research, solidifying its place as a pivotal player in chatbot development [23].

2.3.3. Siri:

Introduced in 2011, Siri became a game-changer in the virtual assistant landscape. Integrated across Apple devices, Siri empowers users with various functionalities, including making calls, sending messages, and navigating with ease [24]. Leveraging powerful technologies like pattern matching, natural language processing, and machine learning, Siri understands and responds to user queries in a natural way. This, combined with its ability to learn and adapt over time, continuously improves Siri's effectiveness [24].

2.3.4. Watson

Introduced in 2011, IBM Watson has become a prominent example of AI-driven technology [25]. Artificial intelligence (AI) forms the core of Watson's capabilities, allowing it to tackle tasks traditionally requiring human-like intelligence such as problem-solving and identifying complex data patterns [25]. Watson's functionalities extend beyond data analysis, enabling it to interact conversationally with users and provide accurate, contextually relevant responses. This is achieved through a combination of AI techniques, including Natural Language Processing (NLP), machine learning, and deep learning [24].

3. Application of Watson

3.1.1. Healthcare:

In healthcare, Watson plays a critical role, particularly in oncology, where it assists doctors in devising personalized cancer treatment plans. This is facilitated by Watson's ability to analyze medical literature and patient records, offering insights into various treatment options tailored to individual patient factors. In the realm of drug discovery, Watson significantly accelerates the process by swiftly analyzing research papers and clinical trial data, thereby identifying potential drug candidates and novel treatment pathways.

3.1.2. Finance:

Watson has found applications in the financial sector, particularly in banking where it enhances fraud detection capabilities. It does this by scrutinizing transaction patterns and spotting anomalies that might indicate fraudulent activities. Watson also contributes to personalized financial planning by providing tailored investment advice, which is formulated by analyzing market trends and individual financial goals.

3.1.3. Customer Service

In customer service, Watson's AI-powered chatbots are deployed to provide rapid, automated responses to customer inquiries. These chatbots are designed to learn from each interaction, progressively improving the quality of customer engagement. Watson also aids in sentiment analysis by understanding customer feedback and reviews, thereby enabling companies to refine their products and services.

3.1.4. Legal and Compliance

Watson's utility extends to the legal domain, where it aids lawyers in legal research by efficiently navigating through case files, legal precedents, and journals. This streamlines the research process significantly. In terms of compliance, Watson assists businesses in staying abreast of relevant laws and regulations by monitoring and analyzing regulatory documents.

3.1.5. Education

In the education sector, Watson tailors learning experiences by analyzing students' performance and offering customized educational content and pathways. It also supports educators in curriculum development and student assessment, providing valuable insights into learning patterns and educational effectiveness.

3.2. Future Developments and Challenges of IBM WATSON

3.2.1. 3.2.1. Integration with IoT

The integration of Watson with the Internet of Things (IoT) is anticipated to unlock even more advanced applications. These could range from smart city technologies to sophisticated processes in advanced manufacturing, marking a significant leap in cognitive computing applications.

3.2.2. Ethical and Privacy Concerns

Like any advanced AI system, Watson brings forth questions concerning data privacy, security, and the ethical

use of AI. Ensuring that Watson is used responsibly and securely remains a paramount challenge in its ongoing development.

In summary, Watson's advanced capabilities in AI make it an invaluable asset across various sectors. Its proficiency in processing and analyzing large volumes of data, coupled with its ability to learn from interactions and provide intelligent insights, distinguishes it in the realm of cognitive computing. As Watson continues to evolve, it mirrors the dynamic growth of AI, underscoring its increasing significance in addressing complex challenges in the real world.

3.3. Google Now

Google Now, introduced by Google in 2012, functioned as a personal assistant and learning navigator accessible on Android and iOS devices, utilizing voice search, natural language processing, and machine learning for information retrieval and task execution. Offering diverse functionalities such as weather updates, traffic reports, sports scores, and task management including setting alarms and making calls, Google Now was succeeded by Google Assistant in 2016.

3.4. Google Assistant

Google Assistant represents a significant advancement from Google Now, aiming to provide users with a more interactive and personalized experience. Unlike its predecessor, Google Assistant introduces a conversational interface and deeper AI capabilities, enabling it to recall personal details and anticipate user needs effectively [25]. By maintaining the core functionalities of Google Now while introducing enhancements like one-sentence answers and intuitive data presentation, Google Assistant aims to create a more seamless and user-friendly interaction for its users.

The transition from Google Now to Google Assistant signifies a shift towards a more context-aware and personalized virtual assistant. With its ability to engage in two-way conversations and understand context, Google Assistant is positioned as a personal aide that learns and adapts to the user's preferences over time [25]. Google's ambitious vision for Assistant extends beyond mere information retrieval, aiming to integrate seamlessly into users' lives and provide assistance in various aspects, including event planning.

Overall, Google Assistant's evolution reflects Google's commitment to creating a virtual assistant that not only responds to queries but also anticipates and understands user needs on a deeper level. This move towards a more conversational, personalized, and context-aware interaction represents a significant milestone in the development of virtual assistants, emphasizing Google's dedication to enhancing user experience and accessibility [26].

3.5. Cortana

Microsoft launched Cortana in 2014, introducing a virtual assistant that empowers users across various platforms. Accessible on Windows, Android, and iOS devices, Cortana offers functionalities like setting reminders, making calls, and managing tasks, streamlining daily digital interactions. For Windows users, Cortana provides additional features like app launching and settings control, enhancing its integration with the operating system. Moreover, Cortana seamlessly integrates with other Microsoft services like Outlook and OneDrive, fostering a unified user experience within the Microsoft ecosystem. However, the effectiveness of virtual assistants like Cortana can be limited by factors such as natural language processing challenges and misunderstandings due to the complexities of human speech [27].

3.6. Alexa

Alexa is a virtual assistant developed by Amazon. It was launched in 2014 and is available on Amazon Echo devices, Fire TV devices, and other third-party devices. Alexa can be used to play music, control smart home devices, answer questions, and perform other tasks. (Amazon (Alexa), n.d.). Alexa is also integrated with a variety of Amazon services, such as Amazon Music, Amazon Prime, and Amazon Shopping. Although personal voice assistants enable voice communication with their users, misunderstandings often occur, as they cannot understand the particular language people use in oral speech or fail to understand the whole context of the conversation [3].

3.7. CHATGPT

ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, is a sophisticated chatbot representing a leap forward in the domain of artificial intelligence. The name "ChatGPT" combines the conversational nature ("Chat") with the underlying technology ("GPT", standing for Generative Pretrained Transformer). As of 2023, it is based on the GPT-3.5 language model, an iteration that builds upon the capabilities of its predecessors in the GPT series. First unveiled in November 2022, ChatGPT has been in a beta testing phase, continually evolving through user interactions and feedback.

The model's foundation, GPT-3.5, is a testament to the advances in natural language processing. ChatGPT is trained on an extensive dataset that includes not only vast swaths of text but also code, allowing it to understand and generate human-quality text across various domains. This extensive training enables ChatGPT to perform a myriad of tasks that go beyond basic text generation. It can engage in nuanced and contextually rich conversations, answer questions with remarkable accuracy, compose creative writing, generate informative content, and even write and debug code.

However, the capabilities of ChatGPT extend beyond text-based interactions. With the integration of advanced AI technologies, ChatGPT is also evolving to understand and generate content in other formats, such as images and videos. This expansion opens up new avenues for the model's application in fields like graphic design, where it can assist in creating visual content, and in video production, where it can help conceptualize and even generate video content based on textual descriptions. Moreover, ChatGPT's ability to process and generate multimedia content signifies a major step towards more holistic and versatile AI systems. For instance, in the realm of education, ChatGPT could potentially provide comprehensive learning experiences by not only explaining concepts through text but also by illustrating them through relevant images or video demonstrations. In creative industries, it could assist artists and creators by transforming textual descriptions into visual representations, thereby streamlining the creative process.

Despite its impressive capabilities, ChatGPT is still under active development, with OpenAI continually refining its performance to enhance its accuracy, reliability, and safety. As the model becomes more sophisticated, it is poised to be a powerful tool for communication, creativity, and multimedia content generation, reshaping the way we interact with AI and utilize it in our daily tasks. The potential applications of ChatGPT are vast and diverse, making it a significant advancement in the field of artificial intelligence and a harbinger of future AI-driven innovations [28].

4. Discussion

The chronological trend of chatbots, from their inception with ELIZA in 1966 to the contemporary advancements represented by ChatGPT, showcases a trajectory of significant technological evolution and application diversification. This historical perspective reveals both similarities and differences in the development, capabilities, and applications of chatbots over time.

4.1. Similarities

Across generations, chatbots have persistently pursued the goal of mimicking human conversations to pass the Turing Test, aiming for interactions that closely resemble natural human dialogue (Turing, 1950). From ELIZA to ChatGPT, the focus remains on effectively understanding and generating human language, with each iteration leveraging techniques like pattern matching, rule-based systems, or advanced machine learning algorithms to enhance user interactions [29].

4.2. Strengths

The evolution of chatbots, from early examples like ELIZA and PARRY to modern ones like Google Assistant and ChatGPT, showcases significant advancements in AI technology [11, 29]. While early chatbots relied on pattern matching, modern ones leverage deep learning and large datasets to understand the context and provide more accurate and personalized responses, expanding their applications to tasks like home automation and content creation.

4.3. Weaknesses

Despite progress, challenges persist for chatbots, stemming from their historical limitations in context understanding and memory, resulting in repetitive or nonsensical responses [11, 29]. While modern chatbots have made strides in these aspects, they still grapple with nuances in human language and emotions, leading to misunderstandings, while privacy, security, and ethical dilemmas loom as AI integration deepens [3].

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the historical progression from ELIZA to ChatGPT showcases the significant advancements in chatbot technology, transitioning from basic pattern matching to sophisticated, context-aware interactions driven by advanced AI. However, challenges persist in fully grasping human nuances and ensuring ethical AI use, emphasizing the importance of addressing these weaknesses while leveraging chatbots' strengths for their continued development and societal integration.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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