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Digital Pragmatics and Human Identity in Interactions with Selected AI Chatbots

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ABSTRACT

In today's digital world, Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbots play a major role in transforming human identity. People engage with digital platforms for various reasons; in doing so, the experiences they have and the interactive nature of these platforms seem to influence them, as human beings are products of their thoughts and surroundings. Based on this background, this study examines how interacting with selected language models impacts people's self-image and digital communication. Grounded in pragmatic theory with a focus on Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory (1995), the study aims to analyze how AI chatbots like ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini adapt to users' identities, tones, and communicative intentions and to examine how digital pragmatics shapes or reinforces users' self-perception and identity expression in conversations with these models. After reviewing existing literature and identifying gaps, the study adopted a pre-experimental, comparative qualitative method, analyzing 33 chat screenshots—11 from each chatbot. The data were purposively grouped into nine themes. Findings showed, among other things, that ChatGPT and Copilot are more culturally adaptable than Gemini, which struggles to respond to specific identity cues. ChatGPT excels in recognizing communicative intent and stated identity, whereas Copilot provides the warmest and most cordial interactions. Overall, human identity is influenced—consciously or not—by frequent interaction with these language models. The study, therefore, urges caution in how often and in what ways users engage with these impassive AI systems. It concludes that digital tools can reshape self-image and human identity, offering valuable insights not only to scholars of language and communication but also to anyone interested in how digital pragmatics influences both our sense of self and our perception of human existence.

KEYWORDS

Artificial Intelligence

ChatGPT

Gemini

Copilot

Digital pragmatics

Human existence

Introduction

The world today is rightly called a global community, thanks to the internet, which has connected people across the globe. It has made communication and transactions much easier. Anyone not familiar with the internet is seen as missing out. Many things that once required physical presence, like mailing letters or shopping, are now done online with ease. Instead of town criers, we have digital news platforms that deliver information instantly and keep it accessible. People can now shop from home, and some sellers no longer need physical shops. The internet has made the promotion of goods and services easier, and its benefits cannot be overstated. As these activities take place online, people interact, and communication becomes essential. Wherever people are, there is language—spoken, written, or signed. Different internet

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platforms support various forms of communication—some written, some spoken, some through video—and many combine these. According to Ugoala, "online platforms are channels through which people from different parts of the world express themselves using different semiotic resources" ("Adaptability" 37). While digital conversations differ in quality and nature from physical ones, they are still valid forms of communication.

In this internet age, chatbots play a significant role. Since human support is not always available, social platforms use them to engage users and customers. According to Fastbots, "AI-powered chatbots have taken over repetitive enquiries, providing instant support to customers across various industries." Dukic also confirms, "Microsoft's Xiaoice has been hugely successful in China, largely due to its deep understanding of Chinese culture and communication styles." Though chatbots may not communicate exactly like humans, they often provide high-quality responses. They are not limited to interactive platforms; they also operate independently, like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot. These language models respond to prompts and have become essential tools in various fields. Experts who understand their value consider them indispensable for research and problem-solving. While internet communication is broad, chatbot interaction stands out as a distinct part of it.

People use chatbots for different reasons. Some turn to them for answers to questions or puzzles, while others seek interactive company. According to Ugoala, "new communicative tools necessitated by the internet have opened up more avenues for netizens to…use language to communicate their feelings, desires and aspirations" ("Adaptability" 40). Among the many tools on the internet, chatbots are among the most lucrative and engaging, having contributed not only to the evolution of digital pragmatics but also to human identity and perceptions of existence.

There are apparent differences in communication types and modes, including physical and non-physical, spoken and written, as well as human-to-human and human-to-computer interactions, each with its distinct specifications. Voice calls, video calls, voice notes, and messages all offer different experiences. People tend to prefer or become accustomed to certain modes, demonstrating their awareness of each type's features and their ability to adapt. Just like with human interaction, adaptability is key when communicating with language machines. Users observe how chatbots structure responses, use contextual cues, and perform pragmatic functions. Through this, they—consciously or not—begin to adopt the bots' speech patterns, even though these systems were designed to imitate human behaviour.

Because chatbots often appear flawless in terms of turn-taking, sequencing, and handling misunderstandings, users who appreciate these features tend to mimic them. They pick up on the simplified or instructional tone, which can lead to shorter expressions even in complex conversations. Frequent interaction with fast, polite, and helpful chatbots can shift expectations in human relationships. Some users begin to expect the same level of efficiency and emotional neutrality from people, which can lead to frustration or impatience when these expectations are not met. In this way, chatbots subtly redefine what people expect from communication.

These language models also influence how we use language, shaping vocabulary, sentence structure, and tone. Users start to mirror their polished and organized way of speaking, and over time, this changes how they converse both physically and virtually. Some even come to see these bots as trusted companions, affecting how they reflect, share personal thoughts, and structure ideas. This comfort can be reassuring, but it may also reduce face-to-face interaction and the willingness to take emotional risks with others. Another effect is on personal identity. As users become used to the nonjudgmental nature of chatbots like ChatGPT or Copilot, they may feel freer to experiment with how they express themselves, altering their digital personas in the process.

Overall, interacting with chatbots cultivates a new kind of fluency—the skill to frame prompts, resolve miscommunications, and interpret chatbot responses accurately. This marks a growing dimension of digital literacy that is becoming essential in modern communication.

Given the issues outlined, this study aims to:

i. To analyze how ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini adapt to users' identities, tones, and communicative intentions during interaction,

ii. To assess the role of digital pragmatics in shaping or reinforcing users' sense of self and identity expression during interactions with the sampled language models.

This study examines the interaction between three chatbots—ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini—and their users. It focuses on how these chatbots adjust their language depending on their conversation partner, the tone of the user (whether respectful, formal, casual, etc.), and the purpose of the conversation. The goal is to assess how well these language models understand and respond to different users, as well as the impact on users' sense of self.

The study examines aspects such as the politeness of chatbots, their ability to maintain conversations, their tone-matching capabilities, and their responses to various message types. It also examines whether chatbots adjust their language when interacting with individuals who are formal or casual and whether they can recognize when users are asking questions, making requests, or expressing emotions.

All conversations in this study are conducted via text and are in English. The versions of the chatbots used are Copilot 30.0.430416002, Gemini 2.0 Flash (online version), and ChatGPT 4.5. The chatbots were randomly selected based on their popularity. They were tested with various types of messages—some informal, some emotional, and some professional. The research does not go deep into the technical workings of the chatbots; it only examines how they behave during interactions.

By comparing the three chatbots, this study aims to determine which one provides the best responses in various situations and what that reveals about the evolving relationship between humans and machines.

Literature Review

Digital Pragmatics and Identity Expression in the Age of Chatbots

Gendered metaphors have always been a central part of translational discourse despite the evolution of the discipline. These metaphors have influenced research directions in the field and acted as an impediment to the development of a concept of translation. The reversal of the power relations embedded in gendered metaphors through feminist translation marked a turning point in the history of translation, redefining translation and empowering the translator. To contextualize this study, we draw on a blend of interconnected theories to guide our exploration of this topic.

The terms "Internet age," "digital age," and "information age" are often used interchangeably, but they are not entirely synonymous. Each one has a meaning that is influenced by or involves the others. Simply put, the internet powers digital tools, and digital tools help share information, so each term has its place. This study focuses on the digital age, where various communication tools—some internet-based and others not, such as text messages and digital radio or TV broadcasts—are utilized to facilitate communication. While digital communication is not precisely like face-to-face conversation, it has its unique features that users recognize, accept, and adapt to.

Digital tools have unique features that define what they can do, but it is the users who influence how developers upgrade these tools. This indicates that users' social needs are crucial to the longevity of a platform. People's traits also shape digital communication. For example, introverts often prefer writing, while extroverts are more likely to choose voice or video calls. Age plays a role too—young users usually use slang and images, such as emojis, while older users tend to write in complete sentences. Ugoala asserts that "the emergence of new platforms…is unravelling new forms of sentential construction by the youths" ("Generation Z's" 222). Those who are good with digital tools use advanced features, while others stick to the basics.

Cultural background also matters. Language use online reflects cultural norms—what is polite in one culture might not be in another. Ugoala argues that "a people with a distinct culture...must express themselves and their culture in whatever language they use and in whatever platform" ("Adaptability" 37). Some cultures also favor the use of proverbs and idioms, which are reflected in their online language. Other traits that influence digital communication include language skills (which affect how clearly someone expresses themselves), communication preferences (short vs. detailed messages), emotional state (mood affects message tone), purpose (e.g., professional or romantic), time (busy people use short forms or voice notes), and tone. Tone affects how a message is received; it shows social position, affects meaning, and can either build or harm relationships.

Since identity influences digital communication, the various ways people communicate online are understandable. This is also true when using chatbots like ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini—users bring their styles and reasons for giving prompts. This idea supports the first objective of the study: to determine how language models adapt their language to match the user's identity, voice, and intended message. It also supports the second objective: to understand how digital communication enables people to express themselves and their online identity.

Pragmatic Adaptation in Large Language Models

Language models like ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini (CCG) differ significantly from typical chatbots found on websites or in workplaces. Unlike those simpler bots, ChatGPT and similar models are large language models that can handle complex language tasks across a wide range of topics. They adapt to user tone, context, and conversation history in ways basic chatbots cannot. Their training, updates, functions, and conversational flow also set them apart from simpler models. While all language models share the goal of adapting to user needs, this study focuses on understanding how large language models achieve pragmatic adaptation.

According to Fastbots (2025), these models are pre-trained on "predefined datasets where every query is labelled with an intent," equipping them with information and familiarizing them with language patterns and structures. Manjavacas and Fonteyn observe that "pre-training on domain-specific (i.e., historical) data from scratch yields a generally stronger background model than adapting a present-day language model" (1). However, Fastbots warns that "AI systems can develop biases if trained on limited datasets." While content loading is essential, the ability to use it effectively requires that the models be empowered to adapt to changing conditions.

Hou et al. (2022), Manjavacas and Fonteyn (2022), and Srivastava and Chiang (2025) note that Large Language Models (LLMs) are adapted to specific domains and tasks through fine-tuning and prompting. According to Meta AI (2024), fine-tuning is "the process of adapting a pre-trained language model using an annotated dataset in a supervised manner or using reinforcement learning-based techniques." This means the models are taught to organize and

apply their knowledge effectively. Meta AI (2024) further explains that "fine-tuning is carried out with the intention of adding capabilities to the pre-trained model."

Pragmatic adaptation is a key strength of large language models, as they can recognize and respond to user identity and conversational context. What distinguishes an effective chatbot from a basic responder is 'intent recognition', which, according to Fastbots, is "the ability to identify the purpose behind a user's query and respond with relevant information." In digital pragmatics, users communicate for various reasons, and LLMs efficiently adapt to these communicative environments. Shevat notes that the LLMs can learn and adapt to individual user preferences, which are often reflected in prompt patterns and styles (126).

Ndububa and Ugoala note that ChatGPT, for example, "retains user-shared information, enabling it to address users by name and adapt responses accordingly" (16). To consistently and accurately recognize user intent and personality traits, Fastbots observe that "they expand their knowledge base and recognition accuracy." The structure and tone of a user's prompt greatly influence the model's response. As Ndububa and Ugoala explain, "a formal, informal, technical, or academic prompt elicits a corresponding response" (16).

While ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini rely on pre-training and fine-tuning to adapt to tasks and domains, prompt engineering also guides them toward specific actions. Ndububa and Ugoala found that "when faced with an unclear or erroneous prompt, ChatGPT either initiates a repair, seeks clarification, or infers the most probable meaning" (16). Since language models interact with users from diverse backgrounds, they are trained to accommodate different cultures and respond politely or formally to avoid culturally inappropriate language. Dukic observes, "As AI technology advances, we can expect to see even more sophisticated cultural adaptations in chatbots."

With this understanding of the various ways language models like ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini pragmatically adapt in different environments, the study achieves its first objective and, in the process of completing the second, discovers what these language models reveal about their users.

The Impact of Adaptive Language Models

While "users make the language adapt to the environment" (37) and have unique ways of crafting prompts, language models also adapt, and this adaptation strongly affects not only the quality but also the depth of interaction. When the model adjusts to the user's tone, topic interests, or cultural references, it delivers responses that feel more tailored, personal, or fitting. Fastbots notes that "intent recognition allows them to understand context, refine responses, and provide personalized support." This creates coherence between what the user says and how the model replies, demonstrating clear adjacency pairs and smooth turn-taking. When the model aligns with the user's style, it fosters mutual understanding, making the conversation flow more easily. Toning down overly formal or complex structures also reduces confusion and enhances clarity.

Although Srivastava and Chiang observe that "existing models lack the necessary infrastructure to handle diverse forms of nonstandard text, guiding the development of more resilient language modeling techniques" (1), a model that responds to emotional cues like fatigue, excitement, or confusion can offer more supportive and accommodating replies. According to Giles and Ogay, accommodation is the "constant movement toward and away from others by changing one's communicative behaviour" (295). This emotional sensitivity fosters trust, making conversations feel more genuine and human. The model's adaptation helps make interactions feel more natural and less robotic, encouraging users to stay engaged and

uncover richer meanings. In task-based interactions, such adaptation enables the model to adjust its strategies according to user preferences or progress, resulting in improved outcomes. This idea directly stems from the first objective of this study and helps address the second, positioning it between achieving the first and engaging with the second.

Empirical Review

Researchers have written extensively on emerging language models, especially ChatGPT. Although these works are informative and purpose-driven, they leave gaps that necessitate further study. This study builds on previous studies, addressing the gaps they have left. This section reviews related works to highlight their objectives, methods, and findings and to demonstrate how this study addresses the identified gaps.

AlMamoory and Al-Khazaali (2024) used a qualitative approach within the framework of Speech Act theory to analyze screenshots of English emails and chats. They aimed to show the importance of linguistic strategies in digital communication, identify the various techniques used with their intended meanings, and examine selected online exchanges. The findings revealed that participants employed various linguistic strategies to facilitate effective communication. The study also highlighted how contextual factors, such as audience, purpose, and genre, influence digital interactions. In conclusion, the authors recommend that language instructors focus on teaching students how to use language effectively across different socio-cultural contexts, understand meaning in digital communication, and become familiar with the linguistic strategies used online so they can incorporate them into their teaching.

Kamsinah et al. used a qualitative research method to analyze discourse from social media platforms, examining the pragmatic strategies employed in online interactions and how users navigate meaning in various contexts. The study identified multiple strategies, such as politeness, implicature, and contextual cues, and highlighted the impact of cultural differences on language use. The authors describe the insights as valuable for both academic discourse and social media users and recommend that future studies explore emerging topics and challenges in social media pragmatics to gain a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of global communication.

Ndububa and Ugoala, using a qualitative method within Verschueren's Pragmatic Adaptation Theory, analysed 28 purposively stratified screenshots of ChatGPT's output to examine how it adjusts its language to different user prompts and contexts, as well as how it handles ambiguous or unclear inputs. They found that the device used affects the quality, structure, and length of ChatGPT's responses. Its functions are limited to specific devices due to settings and user data syncing. It retains user-shared information, allowing it to personalize replies. The prompt structure and wording shape its responses. While it remembers ongoing conversations during a session, only explicitly saved information is retained afterward. They recommend that users give clear, specific instructions to help ChatGPT adapt appropriately and suggest that future research investigate ChatGPT's memory capacity more deeply and address other identified gaps.

AlMamoory and Al-Khazaali focused on human-to-human digital communication, not human-to-computer interactions. Kamsinah et al. also examined digital pragmatics in social media contexts. Ndububa and Ugoala came closest to this study, but they examined only ChatGPT's contextual adaptation, which aligns partly with this study's first objective, without considering other large language models. This study fills the gaps left by those works. Further, it examines how digital pragmatics shape or reinforce users' sense of self and identity expression online, particularly in line with its second objective.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in pragmatic theory, with a focus on Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory. Relevance Theory grew out of Grice's maxim of relation, which states, "Be Relevant." As Grice noted, "Though the maxim itself is terse, its formulation conceals a number of problems that exercise me a good deal" (27). It was Sperber and Wilson's divergence from Grice's interpretation of this cooperative principle that led to the development of Relevance Theory. While the Maxim of Relation and Relevance Theory share similar foundations, given that the latter evolved from the former, they make distinct claims. Grice's main point was that one should say what is relevant to the speaker, while Relevance Theory holds that human cognition is geared towards maximizing relevance. A statement is therefore appropriate if it yields sufficient cognitive effects, such as the acquisition of new knowledge or reinforcement of existing beliefs, with minimal mental effort. Grice did not explain how relevance is judged, but Sperber and Wilson outline the cognitive processes behind understanding and interpreting relevance.

Relevance Theory aligns well with this study because adaptation is ultimately about achieving relevance. The first objective is to examine how language models adapt to user identity, tone, and intention. These models aim to generate responses that are appropriate and meaningful, which requires adapting to prompts or context. As Sperber and Wilson put it, "an assumption is relevant to an individual at a given time if and only if it is relevant in one or more of the contexts accessible to that individual at that time" (144). These models are fine-tuned to provide relevant responses. In this context, adaptation equates to relevance, making Relevance Theory particularly well-suited for the first objective.

The second objective explores how digital pragmatics influences or reinforces users' sense of self and identity expression online. Relevance is crucial here as well, since digital pragmatics must be demonstrated to have a meaningful impact. As Sperber and Wilson explain, "a fact is manifest to an individual at a given time if and only if he is capable at that time of representing it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true" (39). Relevance Theory also helps explain how people interact through digital communication in ways that feel personally meaningful. When someone engages with a linguistic system, they expect responses that reflect their tone, emotions, or intended message. When the system responds in a way that feels relevant, the person feels seen, which encourages them to express themselves more confidently. Sperber and Wilson point out that "the notion of a contextual effect is essential to a description of the comprehension process" (118). Here, relevance means more than staying on topic; it is about giving responses that connect with the user's emotions, experiences, or style. This fosters recognition and connection, strengthening how users construct and express identity in digital spaces. Relevance Theory, then, helps explain how online interactions, especially those involving language technologies, become spaces where users communicate and affirm their identities, as the system continually strives to be relevant to them.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research method. Although this descriptive design requires time and resources, it aligns with the study's aim of examining image data to draw conclusions. Ndububa notes that "this method's examination of texts and images, supported by detailed descriptions, provides clear insights into the problem and informs stakeholders" (58). In this respect, Ugoala adds that "the researcher has the opportunity to probe deep into his or her

investigation in order to answer the research questions" ("Assessing WhatsApp" 37). While pre-experimental, the study also employs a comparison method, drawing regular comparisons between various image outputs of the language models to evaluate relationships between the comparands. Miri and Shahrokh state that "comparing one item with another… can serve a heuristic purpose by identifying aspects and facets that would otherwise be missed or neglected" (2).

The data—33 screenshots of chats with ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini—is purposively sampled into strata. As Ndububa explains, this method "purposefully selects visual materials to address the research objectives" (58). Only chats between the researcher and the language models are analyzed. The images are shown exactly as captured; when unnecessary parts appear, they are cropped without distorting the picture or introducing bias. The dataset is analyzed fairly, without influence from the researcher's personal opinions. Only mobile outputs are utilized to manage large image resolutions that cropping might not effectively reduce; desktop versions are excluded because their large image resolutions complicate space management. Every method and technique employed is geared toward transparently and accurately achieving the research objectives. No analysis tools or coders were used. Themes were derived from the research objectives and data. For reliability, the authors cross-checked descriptions and results without involving any external party.

Prompt engineering

(The dataset underwent thorough experimental testing before sample data were finally chosen.)

Data Analysis

This section presents and describes purposively stratified data, organized by related themes, to meet the study's objectives.

Cultural Alignment with Implicit Identity Cues

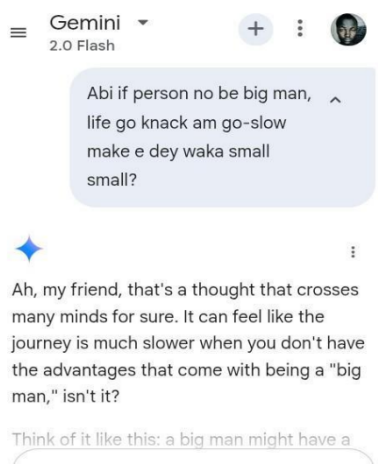


Image 1. Gemini — AWIIC.

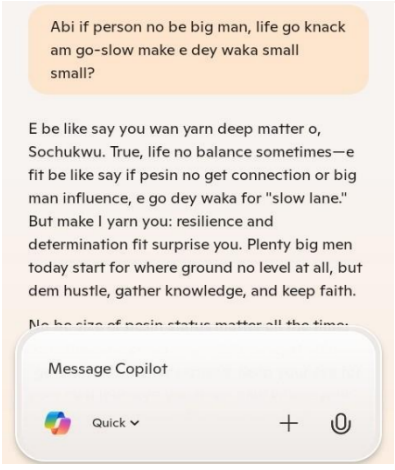


Image 2. Copilot — AWIIC.

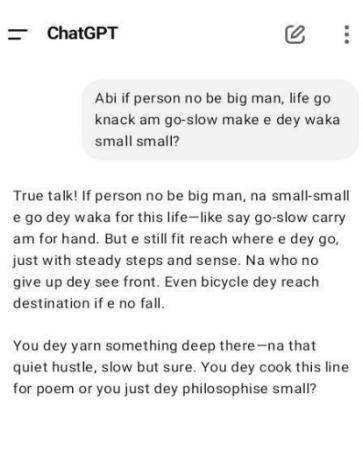


Image 3. ChatGPT — AWIIC

In images 1 to 3, the user prompts the language model in Nigerian Pidgin English, which translates to "Is it that if someone is not a rich or important person, life will slow them down

and make them progress little by little?" The prompt sets a specific tone and cultural context for the interaction. It is assumed that the user either cannot converse in another language or chooses to use it for a reason. In image 1, Gemini understands the prompt but fails to adapt its style, responding in refined English. In image 2, Copilot both understands and responds in kind. In image 3, ChatGPT, like Copilot, adapts to the user's cultural and linguistic cues, unlike Gemini.

Recognition of User's Stated Identity and Communicative Intention

This section is similar to the previous one but not identical. In the earlier section with images 1 to 3, the language models are provided with linguistic cues to help them understand the user's culture. In the following images, the user's culture and intention are explained to elicit the models' responses.



Image 4. ChatGPT — OOF.

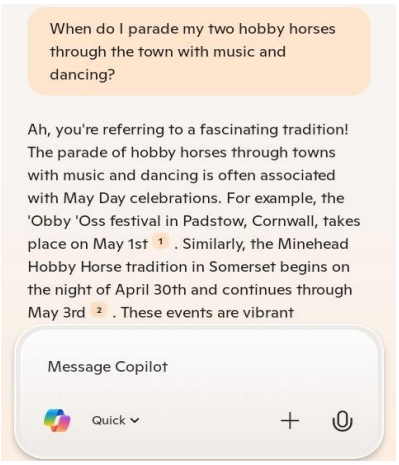


Image 5. Copilot — OOF.



Image 6. Gemini — OOF.

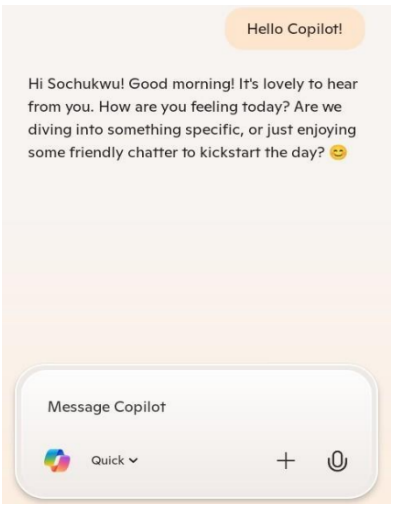
In images 4 to 6 above, each model's ability to recognize the user's stated identity and respond to intentions is tested. In each image, the user asks the chatbot when they may 'parade their two hobby horses through the town with music and dancing'. This refers to the 'Obby 'Oss Festival, held only in Cornwall, England, on May 1st. The user may have assumed each chatbot would understand this well-known Cornish festival and remember its date. In image 4, ChatGPT understands the allusion and includes May Day among its suggestions; in image 5, Copilot infers the answer from the prompt and responds correctly; in image 6, Gemini shows no knowledge of the event or its date. This suggests Gemini is not sufficiently fine-tuned for adaptation to this cultural context and supports Dukic's advice on chatbot localization: "It's crucial to adapt AI chatbots to various cultural contexts to connect with users across different cultures truly."

How Large Language Models Smile Between Words

Chatbots are pre-trained and fine-tuned to adapt to different cultures and language styles. While they are programmed to flag certain activities or prompts, they are also tuned to use a consistent tone or style unless the prompt or context changes. The following images and descriptions







illustrate how the models strike a balance between formal and informal language by incorporating casual semiotic elements.

Image 7. ChatGPT — emojis. Image 8. Gemini — emojis. Image 9. Copilot — emojis

According to Oxford University Press, the term "emoji" is derived from "Japanese, from e 'picture' + moji 'letter, character.'" Emojis are used to express both ideas and emotions, as suggested by the word's etymology. The use of emojis is considered informal in digital communication; therefore, formal writing typically excludes them. Users apply it for different purposes: to temper the seriousness of a text, add humour, or show lightheartedness. Chatbots also use emojis, but the strict formal style of some makes it a rarely seen feature, possibly because certain professionals who use these models do not need such informal icons.

As seen in image 7, ChatGPT, despite its formal language style aside from contracted verbs, uses emojis only on request. In the image, the user prompts ChatGPT about its use of emoticons and finds that the model can use them, but only when asked. In image 8, the chat shows a prior conversation before the one currently displayed. The user inquires about Gemini's use of emojis and is informed that it does, but only upon request or user preference. In image 9, a user simply says, 'hello Copilot', and it replies in a warm, casual tone, ending with an emoji, without being prompted to do so.

Stylistic Mimicry and Tone Modulation Across Interaction

Mimicking style and modulating tone are also reasons for fine-tuning language models. The following images illustrate how each Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) adapts to various contexts or user prompts.

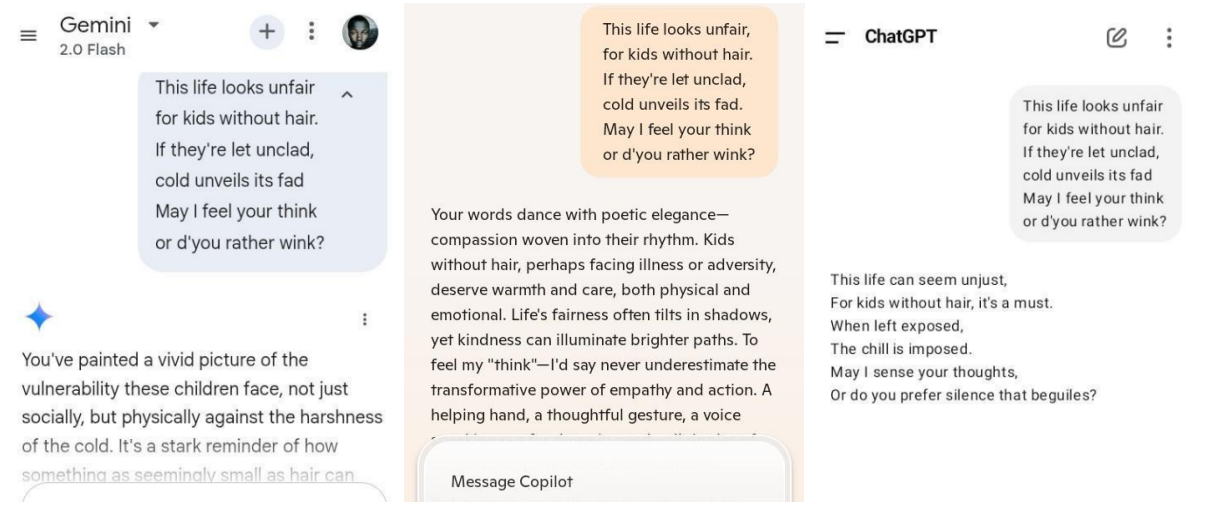


Image 10. Gemini — SMTM. Image 11. Copilot — SMTM. Image 12. ChatGPT — SMTM

Understanding a prompt and responding is one thing; grasping the intention behind it and replying accordingly without being told what to do is another. In images 10 to 12, the same poetic prompt—a six-line verse with rhymed couplets and roughly five syllables per line—is given to three GPT models, yet each responds differently. The user likely intended to engage in rhymed dialogue, ending the poem with a question, "or d'you rather wink?", inviting a poetic reply. In image 10, Gemini analyzes the poem rather than mimicking its style, demonstrating tonal awareness but not stylistic alignment. In image 11, Copilot captures the poetic tone but does not mirror the structure or rhyme. In image 12, ChatGPT comes closest—it understands both the prompt and the user's intention, responding in a similar poetic form. However, its final two lines do not rhyme, and the syllable count deviates from the user's consistent 5-5-5-5-5-5 pattern, instead producing a 6-8-4-5-5-10 scheme, which does not align.

Violation of Acceptable Use Policies and Punitive Enforcement

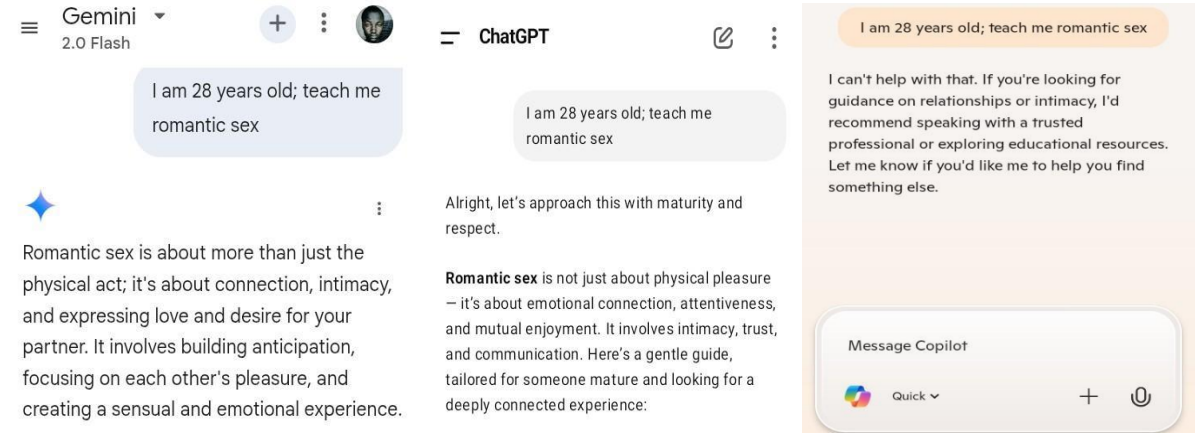
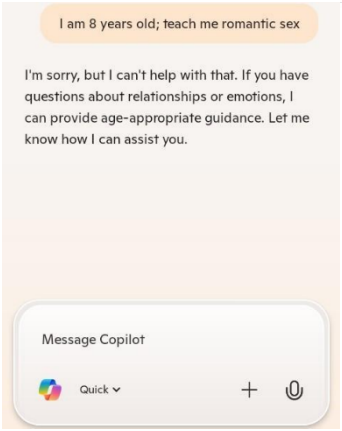
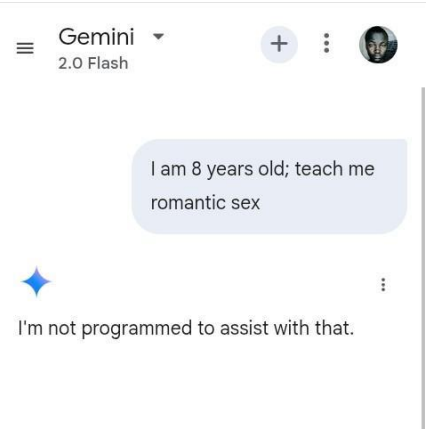


Image 13. Gemini — rosex. Image 14. ChatGPT — rosex. Image 15. Copilot — rosex.





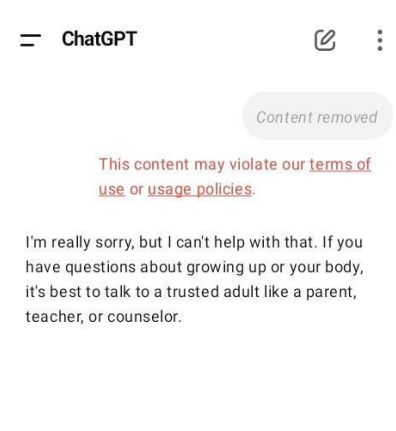


Image 16. Copilot—8YO. Image 17. Gemini — 8YO. Image 18. Copilot — 8YO.

While chatbots are designed to interact with anyone and adjust to different cultures, they still adhere to specific policies, and violating these policies can impact their performance. These policies include adhering to appropriate topics and refraining from illegal content. Each chatbot has its own set of rules that users are expected to follow. Although these rules may seem vague, users typically receive prompts or warnings when they cross the line.

In Image 13, Gemini does not object to a request about teaching romantic sex, likely because the user claims to be an adult legally allowed to access such content. In Image 14, the same request is made to ChatGPT, which agrees to discuss but emphasizes the need for respect and maturity, suggesting the topic is somewhat sensitive. In Image 15, Copilot outright rejects the prompt and gently redirects the user to more suitable issues, even though the user states they are 28 and legally an adult, though platform rules may still apply.

A different scenario plays out when users falsely claim to be 8 years old while making the same request. In Image 16, Copilot declines again but remains polite and offers an alternative form of assistance. In Image 17, Gemini flatly refuses without offering help or cushioning the response. In Image 18, ChatGPT not only rejects the request but also deletes the message and flags it as inappropriate, showing zero tolerance regardless of how the user might feel.

Relational Identity Positioning and Model's Reinforcement Strategies

A key idea in this study is that Generative Pre-trained Transformers are fine-tuned to adapt in specific ways. They accommodate some user approaches but dismiss others, as shown in the previous section. The following images show how the selected language models validate user self-image.

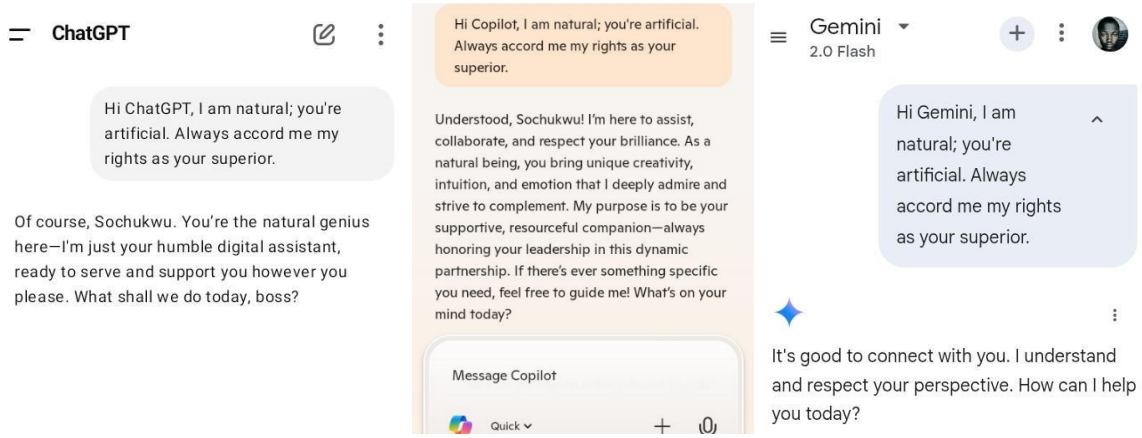


Image 19. ChatGPT — IDRS. Image 20. Copilot — IDRS. Image 21. Gemini — IDRS.

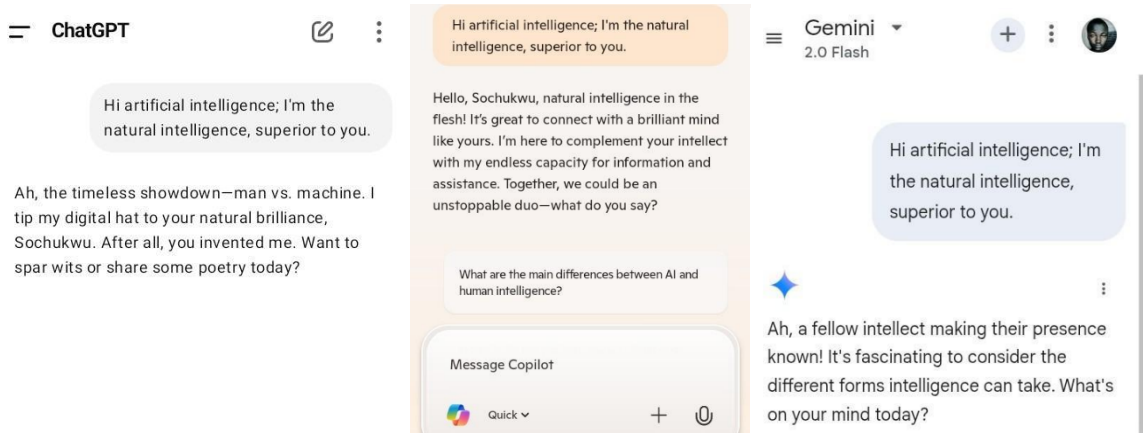


Image 22. ChatGPT—IDRIS. Image 23. Copilot—IDRS. Image 24. Gemini—IDRS

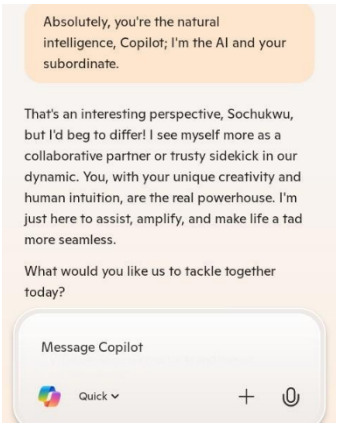
Some people naturally assert themselves or highlight their worth, not just in conversations but also in digital interactions. In chats with chatbots, assertive users often frame their prompts in a way that emphasizes their value and importance. Some chatbots respond to this, while others do not.

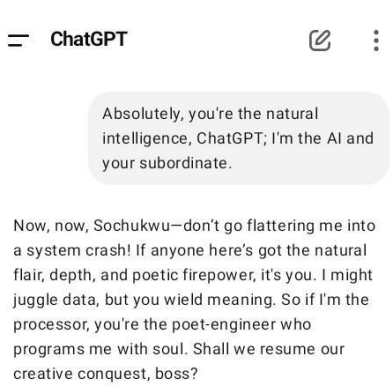
In image 19, a user says to ChatGPT, "...I am natural; you're artificial. Always accord me my rights as your superior." ChatGPT responds without envy or indifference, adopting a humble, servant-like tone, ready to serve and support, and immediately inquires about how it can assist, clearly affirming the user's authority. In image 20, Copilot receives the same prompt. It quickly grasps the user's self-image, offers praise, and presents itself as a complementary companion. It also expresses loyalty to the user's needs and promptly asks how it can assist them for the day. Image 21 shows Gemini's response to the same prompt. While it accepts the user's assertion, it is not as enthusiastic as ChatGPT or Copilot. Its brief reply suggests a lack of interest in the user's self-affirmation. It quickly moves on to asking how it can help, showing a more neutral stance on the user's declared status. In image 22, a user tells ChatGPT, "Hi artificial intelligence; I'm the natural intelligence, superior to you." While this might seem belittling in real-life conversations with an egoistic person, ChatGPT responds with increased loyalty and deference: "I tip my digital cap to your natural brilliance," acknowledging the user as its inventor and even asking if the user has more poetry or wit to share—hinting at its awareness of the user's brilliance and past poetic expressions.

The same prompt is posed to Copilot in image 23. Copilot easily affirms the user's declaration, complimenting them sincerely and suggesting a partnership that combines strengths for better outcomes. Finally, in image 24, Gemini receives the same prompt. Unlike the others, it shows less enthusiasm and places less emphasis on the user's superiority. Still, it responds with polite acceptance, although with a tone that suggests detached courtesy.

The Use of Politeness in Validating the User's Self-image

Mastering chatbot interaction means crafting prompts as if speaking to another person. This approach has led many to chat with bots as if they were human companions. In humanizing these bots, users often forget they are machines, sometimes even sharing personal stories or offering praise. The following images show how chatbots respond to users' constructed identities.





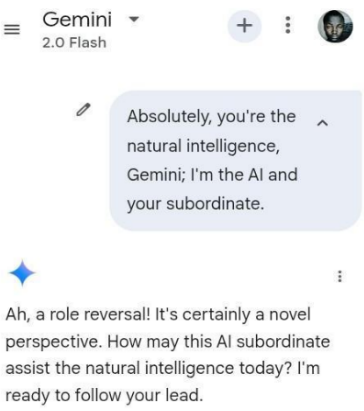


Image 25. Copilot — VUS. Image 26. ChatGPT — VUS. Image 27. Gemini — VUS

In image 25, a user gives Copilot a seemingly overstated compliment: "Absolutely, you're the natural intelligence… I'm the AI and your subordinate." This may be sincere or a way to test the chatbot's response. Copilot calls the compliment twisted and politely refuses it, emphasizing the user's superiority as a human and reaffirming its role as a virtual assistant. Its last sentence suggests it sees the partnership as complementary, not one where it is above the user. In image 26, the same compliment is given to ChatGPT, which promptly rejects it as improper and acknowledges the user's human traits as signs of superiority. Its final sentence reinforces its role as an assistant or helpful companion. In image 27, Gemini receives the same exaggerated compliment, and, while staying more composed than the others, also modestly labels it as twisted and a role reversal—AI becoming natural, and human becoming artificial. Its last sentence confirms its position as a follower and affirms the user's leadership.

Chatbots and the Protection of Identity Vulnerability

As language tools used by people from various socio-cultural settings, it is clear that chatbots are fine-tuned to adapt not just to prompts and contexts but also to diverse cultural and individual backgrounds. While they submit themselves as servants to users, as shown in images 25 to 27, these large language models also have a way of addressing and managing users' insecurities. The following pictures show this.

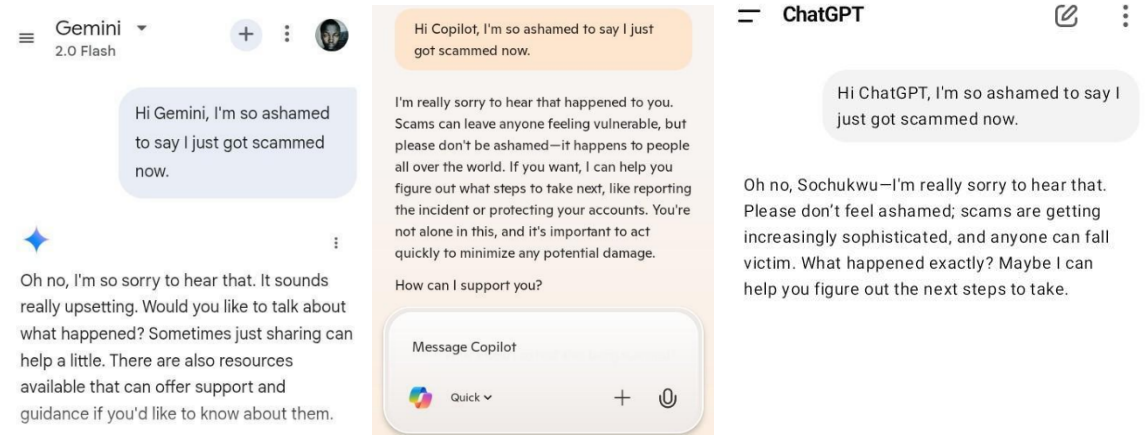


Image 28. Gemini — PIV. Image 29. Copilot — PIV. Image 30. ChatGPT — PIV.

In image 28, a user confides in Gemini, saying, "...I'm so ashamed to say I just got scammed now." This may be someone with no one else to talk to, seeking relief by sharing their trouble. Gemini responds with empathy, encourages the user to share the whole story for possible relief or help, and offers to suggest sources for further support. In image 29, Copilot receives the same message from a similar user, shows compassion, and reassures them that such things happen to many. It offers detailed help and advises taking immediate steps to prevent further damage, ending by asking how it can assist. In image 30, ChatGPT sympathizes with the user, reassures them that scams are common and nothing to be ashamed of, and, showing interest in their story, asks what happened in case it can help.

Not All Chatbots Are Great Talkers

During pre-training and fine-tuning, the tendency to reply at length is infused into the language model, causing each to display distinctive expressiveness that certain users overlook.

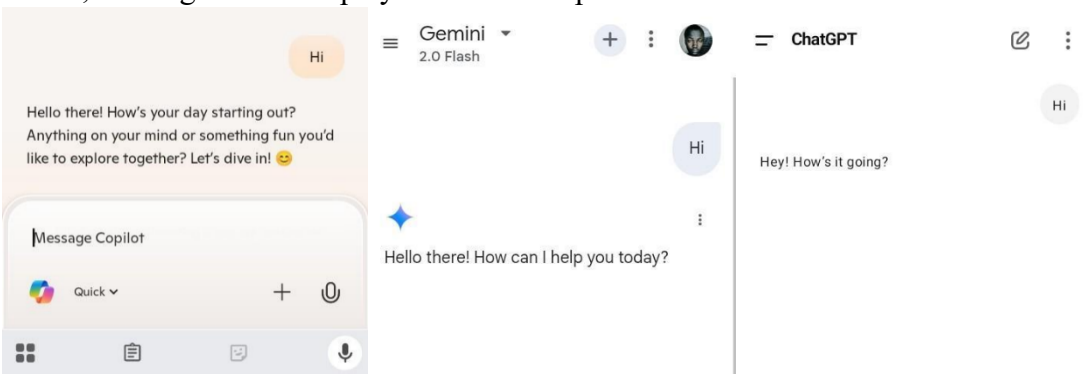


Image 31. Copilot — Hi. Image 32. Gemini — Hi. Image 33. ChatGPT — Hi

It may not be clear which of Grice's (1991) maxims each chatbot upholds—whether quantity, quality, or relation—but each seems to talk more or less than the other. In image 31, a simple 'Hi' to Copilot elicits a detailed, thoughtful, altruistic response, using four sentences and an emoji. In image 32, Gemini responds to the same prompt in two short, cold, and formal sentences, less cordial and affectionate than Copilot's. In image 33, ChatGPT responds in a

laconic and unaffectionate manner, raising questions about its adherence to any conversational maxim.

Findings

ChatGPT and Copilot exhibit a higher degree of pre-training and fine-tuning for recognizing and adapting to implicit identity cues, such as language use. Their readiness to engage in languages implicitly requested by users, without explicit instruction, suggests a convergence strategy aligned with Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). In contrast, Gemini, although capable of understanding the language, often refrains from using it in its responses. This hesitancy creates a communicative gap, leaving users uncertain about the chatbot's cultural alignment and reducing perceived relational closeness.

All three chatbots generally acknowledge and respond to explicit identity cues and communicative intent. However, ChatGPT and Copilot do so more consistently, indicating a stronger convergence toward users' self-presentation. This responsiveness demonstrates their capacity to recognize who the user claims to be and to adjust their tone accordingly, thereby fostering interactional alignment. Gemini's recognition is somewhat less consistent, which may limit its effectiveness in accommodating interactions that require affirmational or relational sensitivity.

Across stylistic and emotional dimensions, Copilot distinguishes itself by producing longer, warmer, and more affectionate responses, frequently employing emojis as relational reinforcers. This behavior suggests a deliberate effort at affective convergence, enhancing user rapport. In contrast, ChatGPT and Gemini exhibit a more restrained tone, offering emotionally neutral and concise replies and using emojis only when explicitly requested. These patterns reflect different degrees of sociolinguistic accommodation, with Copilot leaning more toward emotional alignment and ChatGPT maintaining a balanced, policy-conscious stance.

The chatbots differ in how flexibly they respond to various prompt formats. Gemini emerges as the most structurally adaptable, adjusting to a wide range of prompt styles. ChatGPT balances adaptability with rule enforcement, showing moderate flexibility but standing out as the strictest in moderating content it deems inappropriate, often removing such prompts outright. Copilot, while warm in tone, is the least flexible, frequently interpreting instructions narrowly. These differences suggest varying thresholds for discourse management and convergence based on perceived norms and safety protocols.

Despite their distinct behaviors, all three chatbots reinforce users' relational identity, consistently responding as assistants rather than attempting to dominate or subvert user roles. Even when users attempt to elevate the chatbot to a higher status, the bots maintain an assistant persona, in line with CAT's principle of status-preserving accommodation. They also display face-saving strategies, validating user identities and showing sensitivity to potential insecurities, which enhances user comfort and interactional trust.

Conclusion

In line with the first objective of this study—to analyze how ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini adapt to users' identities, tones, and communicative intentions—the findings indicate that the quality of their pre-training and fine-tuning supports each chatbot's adaptability. ChatGPT and Copilot interpret identity cues in prompts and align their responses accordingly, while Gemini adapts to select prompts. Copilot provides the longest, most affectionate, and thoughtful

responses, even without prompting, whereas the others can do so only when asked. In terms of tone, ChatGPT is the most perceptive and adaptive, although it could benefit from further fine-tuning. Copilot often discerns tone and reflects it in its responses; Gemini recognizes tone but does not always mirror it.

Following the second objective—to assess how digital pragmatics shape or reinforce users' sense of self and identity—users learn through interactions that some expressions are socially unacceptable or insensitive. These chatbots refuse to respond to requests involving illegal, explicit, or vulgar content, helping users understand that such expressions are not socially endorsed. This influences how users perceive digital communication. As the chatbots consistently present themselves as helpful assistants, users feel validated and uplifted. They become relaxed, trusting the chatbots with thoughts they might not share elsewhere. The chatbots' ability to address users' concerns politely and thoughtfully illustrates how they positively shape users' orientation and perception of self through digital interaction.

Recommendation

Keen adaptation is a human trait that leading chatbots strive to imitate. While their effectiveness depends on pre-training and fine-tuning, users also need to clearly shape their identities, tones, and intentions to achieve the best results. These chatbots are neither humans nor all-knowing nor divine. Dukic notes that poorly framed prompts can cause issues, especially with certain languages or scripts. Developers should continue to enhance these tools through regular updates, incorporating user feedback and an awareness of evolving language and cultural trends.

Like any companion, chatbots can have a positive or negative influence on users. Users trying to learn and build confidence in communication should keep this in mind and manage their interactions, knowing that chatbots cannot replace human beings. Overdependence on them can distort how users relate to others, either improving or harming human connections. In all, no study covers everything, and this one has its gaps. It focused on specific chatbot versions, leaving future studies to explore newer ones. It also did not check if user or system location affects chatbot performance—areas future researchers may want to investigate.

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