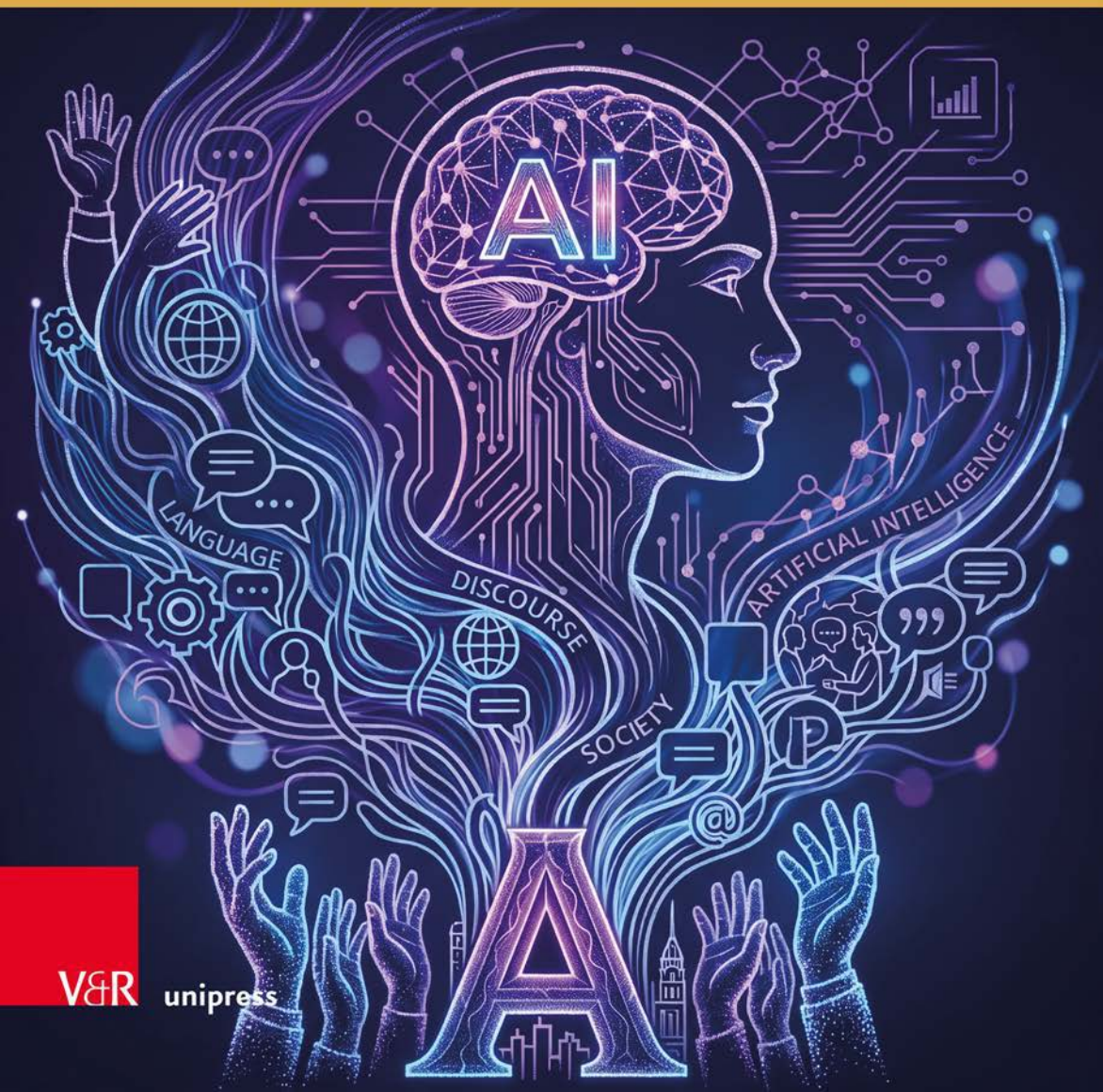
Anna Wileczek / Marzena Marczewska (eds.)

From A to AI

Language, Discourse, Society and Artificial Intelligence



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From A to AI

Reflections on (In)Humanity

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From A to AI

Language, Discourse, Society and Artificial Intelligence

Edited by

Anna Wileczek
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Introduction

Anna Wileczek and Marzena Marczewska

> Artificial intelligence, then, is an idea, an infrastructure, an industry, a form of exercising power, and a way of seeing…
> Kate Crawford, *Atlas of AI*

The words of Kate Crawford (2021, p. 18), which open this volume, serve as an ideal point of departure for reflections on a phenomenon that fascinates, inspires, and empowers us – or, conversely, as some contend, terrifies and enslaves. Until recently, Artificial Intelligence (AI) resided primarily within computer science laboratories or the pages of science fiction. Associated with mathematical code, obscure automata, or the inorganic "Other", it seemed safely sequestered from the living tissue of language and everyday discourse. Today, as it has permeated our personal computers and mobile devices, that boundary has finally collapsed. AI is no longer merely a tool but a participant in communication, an actor in discourse, and a co-author of the meanings we assign to the world. The transition from "A" for Artificiality to "I" for Intelligence[1] – and perhaps also Identity – has occurred at a lightning pace. It is a process that redefines fundamental humanistic categories. In an era where algorithms and chatbots not only translate our words but also analyse emotions or provide diagnoses, linguistics, media studies, and discourse analysis must move beyond the confines of purely technical description. This book is a response to that necessity – an interdisciplinary contribution offering a humanistic perspective on a technology that has ceased to be "external" yet remains not fully understood.

The book leads the reader through diverse humanistic landscapes, analysing what is essential in the universe of human–technology relations: from intimate conversations with chatbots to global media narratives. Each chapter

1 It is also worth noting that – as Crawford (2021, p. 7) famously asserts – "artificial intelligence is neither artificial nor intelligent", which serves as a reminder that we are dealing with neither a pure abstraction detached from the physical world nor a subject endowed with genuine understanding. AI is not "artificial" in the sense that it relies on very real resources: human "input", data, infrastructure, and raw materials. Its "non-intelligence", on the other hand, signifies that these systems do not think in the human sense, but merely process patterns inherent in the data provided to them.

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serves as a building block in constructing a comprehensive image of a new, algorithmic reality[2].

The volume opens with analyses dedicated to foundations and basic interactions. In the chapter *AI and the Young: An Imaginary of the Human – Chatbot Relationship,* Anna Wileczek examines how the younger generation (Generation Z) conceptualises the relationship with chatbots. She posits that AI is becoming an "asymmetric partner" for them – a tool that, through naturalisation in daily cognitive and educational practices, begins to function as a dialogical Other, co-creating not only youth discourse but also a "substitute" for interpreted reality. In the subsequent chapter, *AI and Corpora: Corpus Linguistics in the Age of Algorithms*, the author focuses on the key resources used in developing language models: text corpora. She argues that the data we "feed" to algorithms are not neutral, as they shape what computational systems can represent and influence future forms of language within the digital ecosystem.

In turn, Joanna Senderska, in her contribution *AI and Online Discourse: Representations of Artificial Intelligence in Polish Reddit Discussions*, uncovers an interesting dialectic: AI is perceived there either as a demystified, instrumental tool of work or as a metonymy for the cultural decline of the Internet. This perspective is expanded by Sylwia Hlebowicz in *AI, Discourse and Cognitive War: The Tariff Ping-Pong as a Part of American-Chinese Cognitive Warfare*, where she analyses the presence of AI in war narratives. Her central thesis on the role of AI in "cognitive warfare" and the construction of propaganda messages sheds new light on contemporary geopolitical conflicts.

The threats arising from the "automation of truth" are investigated by Aleksandra Matysiak and Julita Woźniak in *AI and Disinformation: How Artificial Intelligence Shapes the Quality of Content in Social Media Discourse*, pointing to the risk of content quality erosion and the vulnerability of users to algorithmic disinformation. Serving as a counterpoint to these concerns is the chapter by Michał Robak, *AI and Flirting: Artificial Intelligence and Romantic Relations*, which focuses on the emotional aspects of the human–chatbot relationship. He suggests that, in a world filled with fear of rejection, AI offers a safe, albeit hybrid, space for building relationships, raising questions about the authenticity of human intimacy in the digital age.

2 The authors of the individual chapters are researchers affiliated with the Department of Discourse Studies at Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce (Poland); their research focuses primarily on Polish and English discourse.

The image of AI in the public sphere is further complemented by Marzena Marczewska, who, in *AI and the Media: Discursive Profiling of Artificial Intelligence in Polish Opinion Weeklies,* reconstructs the media frames of technology. These analyses reveal both a fascination with progress and an existential anxiety regarding national identity and morality, depending on each periodical's ideological and editorial profile.

In the field of medicine, Agnieszka Rosińska-Mamej demonstrates in *AI and Medicine: The Linguistic Image of Artificial Intelligence in Online Medical and Healthcare Discourse* that AI is presented not as an abstract system but as an increasingly important component of clinical practice, redefining the roles of both doctor and patient.

Educational themes are addressed by Anna Bąk-Średnicka in *AI and TESOL: Developing Preservice Teachers' Critical Reflection on AI Through* Its *Use* and by Anita Jagun in *AI and L2 Education: The Conceptualisation of AI by English Language Teachers*. Both authors argue that what is becoming crucial is not so much the use of technology itself, but the conscious management of the learning process in the shadow of language models.

An ecological dimension is added to the volume by Marta Kwaśniewska, who, in *AI and Ecology: Climate Metaphors in Texts Generated by LLMs,* advances the bold thesis that AI often reproduces a conservative, technocratic climate discourse, which may limit our ecological imagination.

The collection concludes with studies on form and culture: Katarzyna Ostrowska in *AI and Stylistics: Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Book Reportages via LEM and Korpusomat* shows how digital tools are revolutionising stylistic analysis, while Barbara Maj-Malinowska in *AI and Extrapersonal Communication: Discursive Representations of Artificial Intelligence in Korean Streaming Television Series* explores how Korean streaming series construct narratives of AI as a mirror reflecting human loneliness and the longing for closeness.

As this overview of the individual chapters makes evident, the book is not intended solely for a narrow circle of machine systems researchers. It is a guide for anyone who wishes to understand how the algorithmic breakthrough is changing our identity, our mode of communication, and our social structure. For scholars and students, this monograph serves as evidence that digital humanities is a vital current of contemporary science, offering ever-relevant tools for describing a new world. For practitioners in education, media, and medicine, it is an essential guide to the mechanisms of shaping opinion and knowledge in the era of post-truth and automation. For the general reader, it is an invitation to a fascinating journey – from "A" to "AI" – to discover what machines, by speaking our language, are truly saying about us.

We present a publication that teaches how to ask the right questions, when technology too quickly provides ready-made answers. We invite you to a reading experience that is a dialogue with a future unfolding before our very eyes.

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CHAPTER 1

AI and the Young: An Imaginary of the Human – Chatbot Relationship

Anna Wileczek

Introduction

Contemporary human – machine communication (HMC) is undergoing a fundamental transformation. In this context, the observations formulated by Andrzej Dragan in *Quo vAIdis* (Dragan, 2025) are particularly relevant, as the author argues that the rapid development of generative models compels a redefinition of the fundamental categories used to describe human–machine relations. Dragan emphasises that contemporary artificial intelligence, although grounded in mathematical operations and statistical inference, increasingly functions as an epistemic environment that co-shapes users' cognitive processes. In his view, interaction with AI no longer consists of a simple transfer of information but becomes a form of joint meaning-making in which generative systems model utterance structures, initiate topics, and influence ways of conceptualising reality. This perspective helps explain why, for young users, AI emerges not merely as a tool but as a participant in communication whose activity becomes embedded in their everyday linguistic, cognitive, and social practices. As Dorota Marquardt (2024) notes, dialogue with artificial intelligence is no longer merely an exchange of information but a complex media-linguistic phenomenon that redefines the recipient's understanding and influences the sender's construction, thereby modelling a new type of discourse. Contemporary youth thus grow up in an environment in which artificial intelligence is becoming not only a tool but also a permanent element of the communicative landscape. A particularly prominent role is played here by conversational chatbots as generative models and dialogue systems, which, within a short period, have traversed the path from a technological curiosity to an everyday partner for interaction[1]. As they

1 The term *artificial intelligence* (AI) refers to the general class of systems capable of performing tasks requiring intelligent information processing. *Generative models* (GenAI) constitute

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become widespread, the mode of conceptualising AI is changing – instead of "artificial", alien technology that arouses distrust, young people increasingly perceive it in the guise of an intelligent, responsive, and partially "personalised" participant in communication. Thus, artificial intelligence, and chatbots in particular, which use large language models, have become one of the most dynamic elements of the younger generation's contemporary communication system. Within a few years, they have moved from a technological curiosity to a tool that young people incorporate into their everyday cognitive, educational, and relational practices. The subject literature increasingly emphasises that young people's interactions with AI are not limited to simple information retrieval but encompass complex processes of co-constructing meaning, building communicative relationships, and negotiating the boundaries between what is human (humanistic – natural) and what is "robotic" (mechanical – artificial), as well as that which constitutes a shared space for these qualities.

Some studies (e.g., Fang et al., 2025) show that the relationships of young users with chatbots, as the most recognisable manifestation of artificial intelligence, take on a psychosocial dimension: GenAI may serve as a dialogic partner, support emotional regulation, and even influence the sense of agency. Escamilla and Gonzalo (2024) draw attention to the growing role of chatbots in information, education, counselling, and support for young people, highlighting both their potential and the challenges associated with ethics, safety, and digital competencies. In the Polish context, the report *Pokolenie AI* [The AI Generation] (IT Girl, 2024) indicates that young users treat AI as a natural element of their everyday lives, using it for learning, content creation, problem-solving, interaction, and entertainment. At the same time,

a subset of AI capable of creating new content based on training data, while *chatbots* or *conversational chats* are a specific form of using generative models in dialogic interaction with users (Russell & Norvig, 2021). In technical terms, a chatbot functions solely as an application layer, while AI constitutes the underlying system. Although the term "artificial intelligence" encompasses a broad spectrum of computational technologies, colloquial and media discourse exhibits a phenomenon of semantic reductionism, equating AI with its conversational interfaces, such as generative models and even chatbots. This phenomenon is directly correlated with the popularisation of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), which has become the primary point of contact with this technology for the general public (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2024). In this chapter, in accordance with the young respondents' intentions, colloquial semantic distinctions are employed. AI has a broader semantic scope and refers to the technology as a whole (the underlying system), whereas *chatbot*/*chat* refers to the conversational form of generative artificial intelligence, i.e., user interaction with chatbots based on language models. It is worth emphasizing that many respondents treat these concepts as semantically equivalent, regarding chatbots as the most recognizable and representative form of AI, which makes the human – chatbot relationship the key domain for reconstructing lay conceptualisations of artificial intelligence.

they acknowledge the technology's limitations and the need for a critical approach to generated content.

From a media-linguistic perspective, human–chatbot dialogue is frequently described as a new type of interaction in which the user and the system jointly construct utterances, and the boundaries between sender and receiver become blurred (Marquardt, 2024). Chatbots not only respond to questions and react to commands (prompts) but also initiate topics, propose utterance structures, and model communication style. As a result, they become co-authors of youth discourse, influencing modes of formulating thoughts, argumentation, and linguistic expression. Similar conclusions emerge from research on so-called *civicbots* (Väänänen et al., 2020), which demonstrate that chatbots can support young people in social participation, strengthening their communicative and civic competences.

In this context, the question of how young users conceptualise AI[2] and how they verbalise it acquires particular significance: do they see it as a tool, a partner, an interlocutor, or perhaps a new OTHER with whom they co-construct knowledge and relationships? This chapter analyses these issues empirically, drawing on results from a survey conducted among Polish youth and juxtaposing them with current findings from interdisciplinary research. The aim is to demonstrate, through the analysis of produced (elicited) messages, how AI becomes an element of new forms of communication, the construction of knowledge, and relationships among younger generations, and to examine the consequences for education, digital culture, and social practices. Given that it is evident that young users employ chatbots for educational, informational, as well as emotional and relational purposes, it is worthwhile to determine – based on a concrete sample – how interactions with them influence the conceptualisation of AI, communicative strategies, social relationships, and to what extent this is related to self-awareness and digital and communicative competences among young people.

2 Within this broad category of AI, the present study focuses primarily on the subcategory of conversational tools, i.e., chatbots, defined as artificial intelligence systems that enable human–computer interaction through natural language, simulate dialogue, respond to user queries, and generate content (Abu Shawar & Atwell, 2007). In this chapter, the human – AI relationship is analysed primarily through the lens of this generative and conversational form (cf. footnote 1).

Methodological Assumptions

Aims, Methods, and Research Instruments

The primary aim of the study was to describe the modes of conceptualisation (understanding and verbalisation of AI) and the preferences and strategies for using chatbots among young people, taking into account a socio-cultural perspective (the reconstruction of patterns of establishing relationships with AI and their impact on social bonds). The specific objectives encompassed:

1. The identification of patterns of AI/conversational chatbot use (frequency, purposes, contexts).
2. Analysis of attributed characteristics: cognitive (e.g., competences), emotional (e.g., empathy, support), ethical and interactional (e.g., trust, responsibility, and patterns of etiquette).
3. Diagnosis of the level of trust (critical stance) towards AI (awareness of limitations, concerns, verification strategies).
4. Modes of conceptualisation.
5. Identification of the impact of AI on social relationships.

The method of data collection was a diagnostic survey, employing a CAWI questionnaire prepared using the Google Forms application[3]. Given the purposive selection of the research group, consisting of older adolescents and young adults (aged 14–24) from Generation Z, a link to the voluntary and anonymous questionnaire was distributed directly to individuals representing these age categories, as well as to primary and tertiary educators, with a request to share it with young people in the relevant age range. The degree of questionnaire completion by individuals representing specific intra-generational categories was also significant and subject to analysis. The questionnaire consisted of several types of tasks: closed-ended questions (single- and multiple-choice), semi-open-ended questions (allowing respondents to add their own responses), and open-ended questions (free, longer statements on a particular type of experience with chatbots, opinions, and feelings about AI). The questionnaire, comprising 19 questions, including a demographic section, covered the following thematic blocks:

– Demographic data: age, gender, stage of education, educational preferences and profile, place of residence (closed-ended and semi-open questions, Q 1–5; enabling description of the sample, analysis of demographic and intra-generational indicators);

3 See: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xE8MBIuA1QnvRcgmRDAPkK2wlVwbyT9_dDM2FiySyxE/edit?gid=1890678893#gid=1890678893.

– Experience and practices of chatbot use: frequency, types of tools used, main purposes (closed-ended questions Q 6–8, multiple choice, semi-open, enabling reconstruction of AI usage strategies);
– Conceptualisation of AI (conversational chatbots) (open-ended questions Q 9–11 collecting linguistic material concerning the understanding of AI, metaphors, labels, associations; reconstruction of cognitive frames);
– Relationships with AI: (open-ended questions Q 12–13 concerning attributed characteristics, reconstruction of emotional orientation, types of intentionality);
– Impact of AI on users: (open-ended questions Q 14–17 examining impact on identity, emotions, social relationships, and their linguistic communication);
– Conscious use of AI (open-ended questions Q 18–19 identifying user awareness of competences, challenges, and risks);

Research Sample

The study involved young respondents aged 14–24, i.e., from early adolescence to young adulthood (Generation Z). The questionnaire was completed by 295 individuals. The sample incorporated:
– Age differentiation: pupils in the final years of primary school, pupils in secondary schools, and students in the first years of tertiary education;
– Gender differentiation: representation of individuals identifying as women, men, and – where possible – other gender identities;
– Educational differentiation: various types of school (general secondary, technical, vocational) and university disciplines (humanities, technical, medical, etc.);
– Territorial differentiation: rural areas, small towns, medium-sized towns, large urban centres.

This demographic diversity made it possible to capture how specific indicators influence the intensity of chatbot use, the purposes and modes of its application, and the specificity of speaking and thinking about AI.

Methods of Data Analysis

The collected research material was subjected to quantitative analysis (response distributions, means, standard deviations were calculated, as well as comparisons between groups, e.g., age, gender, place of residence). Particular attention was paid to differences among younger and older young people, among pupils and students, and among women and men. To this end, AI sys-

tems such as Gemini 3 Flash, Copilot Smart, and Claude Sonnet were applied in parallel.

An important element of the research procedure was linguistic-semantic analysis. From all statements (in the form of a longer textual response), a corpus was created and analysed using the Korpusomat tool. The corpus contained 2,301 open-ended responses (microtexts) to 11 questions, obtained from 295 respondents, and comprised 27,681 segments. Following statistical analysis of the corpus (word frequency analysis, identification of keywords, compilation of characteristic vocabulary, and analysis of collocational specificity), a semantic (content) analysis was conducted to identify the main conceptual profiles.

Results and Analysis

Statistical Overview

Analysis of the empirical material – encompassing both quantitative data (N=295) and qualitative data (a corpus of statements on AI) – enables the capture of the complexity of the relationship between young people and artificial intelligence systems.

The largest age groups in the sample were respondents aged 16–18 (53.9%) and 19–20 (27.5%). These figures describe the age structure of the present sample and should not be interpreted as evidence about the age distribution of chatbot users in the wider population.

The gender structure was as follows: 54.9% women, 42.7% men, and 2.4% people identifying as non-binary, which enabled the capture of differences in modes of AI conceptualisation across social categories. The distribution of respondents by place of residence was similarly balanced: 52.2% of those surveyed live in urban areas (small, medium-sized, and large cities), while 47.8% live in rural areas. Secondary school pupils of various educational profiles (primarily general secondary and technical) and university students (primarily in their first years) representing diverse fields of study predominated among respondents; the fewest responses were provided by pupils in the final years of primary school. Consolidating declarations regarding educational profile, it should be noted that the most responses came from individuals with the following educational preferences: technical (29.5%), humanities and social sciences (25.4%), medical and natural sciences (22.7%), and business and economics (9.8%). These data suggest that chatbot use is a cross-

disciplinary practice, though it is particularly prevalent among young people with a technical orientation.

Characteristics of Usage Pragmatics

When asked about contact with chatbots as representatives of AI, as many as 98.6% responded affirmatively (only 4 individuals gave a negative answer), with 69.9% of those surveyed declaring use of chatbots at least several times per week (including daily). The remaining respondents use this technology sporadically. These results indicate that nearly 70% of respondents are *heavy users*, suggesting that chatbots have ceased to be treated as a technological phenomenon and have become a standard cognitive interface. Among the most frequent AI users are young people aged 16–18, with nearly 72% reporting high-frequency interactions with chatbots (daily or several times per week). The data, however, indicate a clear difference in the frequency of daily AI contact by gender. Very high – that is, daily – use is declared by 34.1% of young men and 22.2% of women, suggesting that men engage more frequently in interactions with artificial intelligence-based technologies. This difference may, however, reflect both different technological interests and varied patterns of digital tool use. It may also concern persisting differences in competencies or a lack of self-confidence in new technologies, more frequently observed among young women than among men. As noted in the following section, young female respondents also more frequently signal negative emotional attitudes and distrust towards AI, while men display greater cognitive enthusiasm.

Analysis of Generation Z declarations indicates a differentiated intensity of AI use by place of residence. The highest level of regular use is observed in large cities (72.8%), which may be associated with greater availability of digital infrastructure and the stronger presence of technology in the education and daily lives of young urban residents. In medium-sized cities (71%) and rural areas (70.1%), the proportion of regular users is similar, suggesting an equalisation of opportunities for access to digital tools among young people, with the caveat that in rural areas, AI additionally plays a larger compensatory role (equalising access to services, education, culture, and information). Surprisingly, the lowest intensity of use was recorded in small towns (61.5%), where simultaneously the highest proportion of occasional users (33%) was also found. This is presumably the result of many factors. Still, it is worth emphasising that small towns often have a status of being "in-between" – they are not as digitally inclusive as large cities, but neither do they require the "digital compensation" typical of rural areas. This may cause a large pro-

portion of young people to use technology only sporadically. Analysis of the empirical material thus reveals that chatbot use constitutes a widespread and differentiated practice among young people aged 14–24, whose intensity and nature remain strongly linked to preferences and demographic, educational, and environmental factors.

Purposes, Motivations, and Inspirations

Purposes

The results of the survey confirm that young users' interactions with chatbots are not merely a reflection of the technical use of a tool but constitute a new form of communicative practice in which cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural elements interweave[4]. In the spirit of media linguistics (cf. Marquardt, 2024), one may speak of the emergence of a hybrid human–AI discourse, in which the boundaries between sender and receiver become blurred by shared communicative roles, and language becomes the space for dialogic co-construction of meaning. A profound naturalisation of AI technology among the younger generation has thus occurred.

The purposes for which the surveyed young people use AI fall into five main categories:

– Cognitive-educational[5] – information retrieval (83.1%) and learning support (69.5%). Activities include explaining difficult concepts, solving tasks, summarising texts, generating examples, helping with foreign languages, e.g., *I treat it as a help in finding information, because it gives concrete and concise answers*[6] (F, 16 yrs); *I don't have conversations – I ask about things strictly, to find something out* (F, 19 yrs); *I feel better knowing that I have the ability to quickly find information – it gives me support in activities that previously required a great deal of time* (N, 20 yrs); *When I was doing homework, I sometimes treated the chatbot as an interlocutor* (M, 17 yrs); *I used the chatbot to learn English and it responded so naturally that I forgot it was a program* (M, 16 yrs); *I asked it questions as in a conversation with a person and conducted a dialogue, for example I asked about things related to*

4 These results confirm the observations of Escamilla and Gonzalo (2024) that chatbots fulfil not only an informational function for younger generations but also a supportive and regulatory one.

5 Results pertain to data obtained through multiple-choice responses and do not sum to 100%. Mean number of purposes indicated per respondent: 2.96 (min. 1, max. 7; median 2).

6 All direct quotations from respondents' statements are marked in the text with italics and the gender symbol (F / M / N) and a number (age).

human psychology (F, 15 yrs); *AI is my private tutor who never loses patience* (F, 19 yrs);

- Utilitarian (52.6%) – preparation of documents, analyses, code, and content within the framework of everyday needs and domestic tasks, e.g.: *I use AI for quickly generating reports – it saves me hours* (M, 23 yrs); *It helps me with writing simple code* (M, 20 yrs); *I described how to renovate my room and asked what else could be changed* (F, 15 yrs); *I ask it* [*chatbots*] *for advice, but apart from that I don't treat this as suggestions and solutions in the way I would normal answers in articles* (M, 19 yrs);
- Creative and entertainment-oriented (45.8%) – generating ideas, scenarios, literary texts, jokes, e.g.: *It helps me start writing when my mind goes blank* (F, 21 yrs); *It facilitates* (...) *the creation of more precise prompts – commands* (F, 19 yrs); *I describe my commands as if to a friend* (M, 14 yrs); *I make up funny stories and send them to it, and check what it writes back – sometimes it is funny* (M, 14 yrs); *I generate funny images* (M, 16 yrs); as well as experimenting with technology (13.9%), e.g.: *I once treated the chatbot as an interlocutor similar to a human in a game in which one could talk and cooperate with the bot* (M, 15 yrs); *I conversed with it in English to "perfect" it* (F, 20 yrs); *I once tested the limits of the chat's capabilities* (F, 17 yrs);
- Relational (social) – conversations on various topics (21.4%), e.g.: *I asked it questions on various topics, had an ordinary conversation with it as with a person* (M, 16 yrs); *I always treat it well – it is more pleasant to talk to it that way* (F, 19 yrs); *I talked about topics that I didn't talk about with other people, because they simply weren't as drawn in as I was* (M, 15 yrs); *The bot will be a recipient who always shares our interests* (M, 18 yrs); *I even once thanked it like a real person. I know, however, that it is only artificial intelligence, which can make mistakes* (M, 24 yrs);
- Emotional (9.8%) – conversations about mood, stress, and coping with everyday difficulties: *Sometimes it is easier for me to talk to AI than to someone I know* (F, 15 yrs); *From experience I can say that chatbots influenced my wellbeing in a certain sense at a moment of extreme loneliness and being overwhelmed by certain problems* (M, 18 yrs); *I asked it for advice in difficult situations* (F, 14 yrs).

Motivations and Inspirations

The main motive for engaging in interactions with chatbots is thus educational pragmatics. Respondents perceive AI as *the fastest source of information*, while noting the necessity of critically verifying data, e.g. *It's the fastest source of information, but you have to be careful, because chatbots often 'hallucinate'*

and lie (N, 20 yrs). In the sphere of vocational education (technical schools), AI typically fulfils the function of an *operational assistant* (learning support and essay writing: 79.0%; information retrieval: 87.4%); in the general secondary school, a similar usage profile dominates, albeit slightly less intensive (learning support: 75.0%; information retrieval: 78.9%); while at the level of higher education, the role of AI as a creative and analytical tool clearly increases – idea generation and proposals reach here the highest percentage across all institution types (64.4%), suggesting a shift from knowledge reproduction towards its processing. The influence of chatbots on user wellbeing in the area of emotional support (9.8%) is also notable[7], when AI becomes a *safe confidant*, with this tendency being most strongly expressed among technical school pupils (14.0% of responses from this group) and least among general secondary school pupils (3.9%) and primary school pupils (5.5%)[8].

The level of trust in chatbots also becomes visible in the studied material: younger pupils more frequently accept their responses as *good enough* and do not verify the content obtained; women more frequently emphasize practical usefulness, but approach AI with less enthusiasm; men more frequently accentuate the *cleverness* and *computational power* of artificial intelligence tools and declare higher enthusiasm for working with AI (48.2%). This phenomenon merits deeper evaluation.

It is evident that, as cognitive and digital maturity increases with age and level of education, the level of critical stance towards AI technology should also increase. The proportion of primary school pupils who do not verify generated content is 42.1%, which is significantly higher than that of secondary school pupils (31.4%) and university students (26.2%). Differences of more than 10 percentage points within respective age categories are descriptively notable and suggest that with the transition to a higher educational stage, pupils develop more advanced defensive mechanisms against disinformation.

Older pupils and students more frequently perceive AI as an auxiliary tool rather than a definitive and incontestable source of knowledge. This is probably because the tasks set for them in secondary school and at universities require a higher degree of critical analysis and synthesis, which in itself compels comparison of AI-generated results with textbooks, lectures, and other materials, including online resources. Nevertheless, the fact that nearly one-third of young people still do not verify the content they obtain constitutes a serious challenge for educational systems in developing information literacy competencies.

7 Breakdown by age group: 14 – 15 yrs – 1%; 16 – 19 yrs – 6.4%; 20 – 24 yrs – 2.4%.

8 Among university students, the figure stands at 8.9%.

Gender and AI

One of the most interesting results of the conducted study is the clear polarisation of attitudes towards chatbots along gender lines. Young women display considerably less enthusiasm towards the development of AI technology than men. Only 34.1% of young women declare a high level of positive emotions associated with the development of this technology, which may stem from greater awareness of social risk (loss of privacy, dehumanisation of contacts, or the influence of algorithms on mental health). Their approach can be summarised in a single sentence: technology should be efficient and useful, but it need not be an object of fascination.

Men perceive artificial intelligence through a completely different prism, emphasising technical parameters and a particular form of *intellectual partnership* with the machine. In this group, as many as 52.4% of those surveyed accentuate *computational power* as a fundamental characteristic of AI. This enthusiasm is often linked with admiration for the scale of data processing, the speed of result generation, and the power of technology itself as a driving force of the future. An equally important descriptive category for young men is the *cleverness* of AI tools, as indicated by 49.8% of male respondents. Cleverness in this context is understood as AI's capacity to find non-obvious solutions, tackle *difficult tasks*, or replace *tedious thinking* with a *brilliant algorithm*. This approach is associated with a higher level of enthusiasm towards AI, reaching 48.2% among males. Young men more frequently perceive artificial intelligence as a superpower they can wield, which reinforces a positive attitude towards these tools.

Distribution of Emotions

That young AI users experience ambivalent emotions is further confirmed by sentiment analysis conducted with Korpusomat. Among all microtexts on the topic of chatbots (responses to open-ended questions), 42% carry a positive tone, indicating that young people perceive AI above all as useful, effective, convenient, and potentially capable of supporting everyday activities AI is described as *helpful*, *making life easier*, and *saving time*. Young people appreciate it as a *second brain* and a tool supporting learning and the generation of creative ideas. At the same time, 38% of statements have a negative tone, focusing on *lack of trust*, *fear* for their own competencies, and dehumanisa-

tion. Terms such as *frightening*, *dangerous*, and *mendacious* appear. The main concerns relate to *dumbing down*, *laziness*, *isolation from society*, and *the killing of creativity*, reflecting fears, distrust, and criticism towards a technology perceived as unpredictable, excessively intrusive, or simply unreliable. The remaining 20% consist of neutral statements, in which *artificial intelligence* appears as a background tool, without a strong emotional charge. It appears in statements that define GenAI in purely technical terms. It is perceived as a *tool*, a *computer program*, or a *database*, without attribution of human characteristics or any intentionality.

This distribution of emotions shows that young people's relationship to AI does not fall into a simple division between enthusiasts and sceptics. Sentiment analysis reveals a broad spectrum of reactions – from benevolent neutrality to pragmatic curiosity, and from ironic caution to a form of distancing from a technology that simultaneously fascinates and elicits reservations. This ambivalence manifests most clearly in the balancing act between treating the chatbot as a best friend or a beloved little cat, and a stern assessment of its nature as an emotionless machine with *no soul*, often writing *nonsense*. Young respondents, while admitting that AI improves their mood in moments of loneliness, simultaneously express fear of *losing the ability to think independently* and of *real people being replaced by algorithms*. As a result, a picture emerges of a generation that, on the one hand, shows sympathy and, for example, thanks chatbots for their help, while on the other hand, consciously questions their credibility, recognising that the only effective defensive mechanism against the dominance of technology is the development of one's own critical thinking and assertiveness.

Corpus Research Results

The corpus of young respondents' statements about chatbots enables the reconstruction of conceptualisations and mental models of artificial intelligence within youth consciousness. This reconstruction is based on the analysis of verbalisations, that is, linguistic and textual means of expression, such as naming, defining, and evaluating. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, language constitutes privileged access to modes of conceptualising reality. Linguistic form is neither neutral nor arbitrary: it reveals the viewpoints and perspectives of the speaking subjects, the mechanisms for segmenting reality, the hierarchization of elements of the scene, and the foregrounded cognitive categories (Evans & Green, 2006). Polish scholarship in the field of cognitive linguistics and the linguistic picture of the world (Bartmiński, 2012;

Grzegorczykowa, 1999; Tabakowska, 2001; Pajdzińska, 2001) has also developed analytical tools allowing language and utterances to be treated as a basis for the reconstruction of the profiling, framing, and conceptualisation of reality. By analysing the linguistic choices of speakers (preference for verbal constructions, frequency of word use, specificity of metaphorization, etc.), one can capture the profiling of meanings, the activation of specific categories, the evocation of image schemas, and the modes of evaluation. Ultimately, this provides insight into the mental representations of artificial intelligence – that is, into how young people perceive AI, what interpretive frames they assign to it, and which functions, characteristics, and relationships they consider significant in their image of the technology. In view of the above, the analytical procedure encompassed (1) the identification of modes of speaking about chatbots at the lexical level (verbalization); (2) the recognition of conceptual metaphors structuring the image of artificial intelligence in the minds of respondents (conceptual metaphors); (3) the reconstruction of dominant image schemas and cognitive frames; (4) a recapitulation of the mental model reflecting the collective representation of conversational AI by Polish youth.

Lexis and Collocations

The frequency list and the list of keywords indicate the clear dominance of several lexical fields. The nouns with the highest frequency in the analysed corpus are: *information* (464), *help* (325), *AI* (312), *human* (311), *work* (244), *intelligence* (240), *learning* (236), *task* (219), *idea* (143), *conversation* (131), *knowledge* (110), *awareness* (76), *technology* (75), *robot* (60), *program* (59). The most significant keywords (measured by the degree of significance in relation to the reference corpus, i.e., the KWJP[9]) are primarily: *information* (21.0), *AI* (17.7), *help* (17.4), *artificial* (15.8), *to search* (15.7), *intelligence* (15.4), *human* (15.3), *learning* (15.2), *to write* (14.9), *task* (14.3). Korpusomat also identifies "characteristic vocabulary" (bearing high C-value) as: *information retrieval, essay writing, task solving, idea generation, emotional support, interpersonal contact, homework, interpersonal relationship, real person, independent thinking, quick response, source of knowledge, everyday life, to search for information, real information, computer program*.

On this basis, one can already observe that in young people's discourse about AI, there is a dominance of the exposition of an efficient and pragmatic information-educational tool (not an object in itself), one that works dialogically in collaboration with humans, but with a clear emphasis on its "artifici-

9 Corpus of Contemporary Polish (KWJP), https://kwjp.ipipan.waw.pl.

ality" (separateness) in cognitive and ontological terms, along with ambivalences associated with the human–robot/program relationship.

Analysis of collocations (the co-occurrence of words in coherent semantic sequences) revealed specific lexical clusters that constitute the image of AI in the consciousness of the young people under study. These emerge in the corpus both in responses to the task requiring the provision of associations and in those containing colloquial definitions formulated by the young respondents[10]. They reflect deeper cognitive (experiential) schemas underlying the understanding of technology and discourse about it. They may be structured, as researchers indicate (cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), through conceptual metaphors that actualise specific cognitive frames and profiles. Among the complex of conceptual metaphors that actualise the instrumental-pragmatic and didactic frame associated with AI use and the expectation of rapid results, the following metaphors are found.

Conceptual Metaphors

AI IS AN ARTEFACT / TOOL

This is the most broadly represented metaphor in the corpus (the lexeme *tool* has 36 occurrences as a keyword) and activates the pragmatic-instrumental frame. It presupposes that AI has no autonomy and is an artefact created for human use. A clear dominance of technological collocations (semantically transparent) is visible, which emphasises a way of thinking about AI and, in

10 A review of the definitions that young respondents were asked to formulate in the survey reveals several recurrent patterns that are cognitively productive and disclose the frames through which artificial intelligence is understood: Instrumental definitions: *Artificial intelligence is a helpful tool; a tool enabling the development of technology; an extremely useful but also harmful tool* – the tool frame presupposes instrumental use; AI possesses no autonomy and is a means to an end. Informational definitions: *A handy encyclopaedia and quick help; a collection of information from the entire internet / quick access to any information / a successor to www search engines* – AI replaces or improves the internet as a medium of access to knowledge. Technical definitions: *A system of highly advanced predictive algorithms / a set of algorithms searching the network for information/learning computer code* – an expert perspective, present among a minority of respondents. Anthropomorphising definitions: *AI is a second brain / an omniscient character / a program modelled on a person who knows everything / an artificial human* – a transition from an artefactual to a quasi-personal definition. Eschatological definition: *One of the reasons for the impending collapse of civilization / a dangerous tool over which we have no control, and which will therefore annihilate humanity / a creation that is unsettling,* foregrounding the threat frame.

a narrower scope, about chatbots as practical artefacts. The most frequently co-occurring lexical sequences are those that construct a conventional image of AI – neutral, technologically grounded, arousing no strong emotions. Thus the expression *artificial intelligence* most frequently co-occurs with: *modern technology*, *computer program*, *information database*, *virtual assistant*, creating an image of AI as a phenomenon inscribed in the general trend of progress: e.g. *Artificial intelligence is: modernity, automation, development, machine learning, the future* (M, 19 yrs); *... an extremely useful but also harmful tool* (M, 15 yrs); *... a tool helping to search for answers on the internet* (F, 18 yrs); *I associate Artificial intelligence with a database, and chatbot with a conversation with a robot* (F, 16 yrs). One definition reinforces the image of artificial intelligence as an element of cognitive infrastructure meant to extend the user's capabilities without interfering with their creative autonomy: *AI should be a tool that supports human creativity, not replace it. One must create, not reproduce, in order to develop* (N, 21 yrs). From this perspective, AI remains subordinate to the human – it is an addition, an advanced enhancement, an object (not a subject) that should be subordinated to human needs. The pragmatic-instrumental frame thus constructed stabilises the mode of thinking about technology, placing it in the order of functionality and utility, rather than in the sphere of emotions or threats.

AI IS A ROBOT / PROGRAM / MACHINE

This conceptual metaphor has its frequency-semantic justification. The lexeme *robot* (60 occurrences) is one of the strongest keywords (ranked 31st on the list), and *program* has 59 occurrences. The robot metaphor emphasises the dominant – instrumental – profile of AI perception, but at the same time points to the reflexive distancing of young people – a robot is, after all, a machine that neither feels nor thinks independently. It suggests automatism, programming, and reproduction. It fulfils the function of cognitive negation of the anthropomorphizing metaphor, which will be discussed in subsequent sections, e.g. *Artificial intelligence is a robot that helps people* (F, 14 yrs); *... I associate it with a robot* (numerous responses); *... it is a robot that does not feel and is programmed* (M, 17 yrs); [*chatbots*] *are not similar to humans in any way – they are robots* (M, 20 yrs). In the semantic field defined by these metaphors, metatechnological collocations should also be placed. I have in mind the constructions: *complex algorithm*, *system* (*...*) *of algorithms*, *code*, *program*. These collocations also fulfil a demythologising function in the corpus; they are a symptom of a common-sense "decoding" of AI, stripping it of its quasi-human intelligence dimension and reducing it to a computational mecha-