

When AI 'admits' its inability to philosophise: The necessity of philosophy with children in children's language development

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Abstract

The present paper attempts a critical approach of the weaknesses of TN using the language tool Chat GPT. Chat GPT was asked to 'answer' the following questions:

- What does philosophy with children mean?
- Can artificial intelligence philosophize with children?
- Is it possible to philosophize between AI?

Chat GPT "admits" that AI lacks consciousness, subjective experiences, and personal perspectives that are often integral to philosophical discussions. Philosophy involves introspection, reflection, and the exploration of human values and beliefs, which are deeply rooted in human's subjective experiences and consciousness. Chat GPT operates based on patterns and data analysis rather than personal experiences or conscious understanding. It can provide information, answer questions, and generate responses based on its training data, but it does not possess genuine consciousness or personal insights. AI, as an algorithmic system, lacks the conscious awareness and subjective depth to engage in philosophical reflection in the same way humans can. The development of language is deeply connected to thought, consciousness and personal identity. This paper invites the educational community to reflect and redefine the important role of philosophy, and especially philosophy with children, in the development of language as tool of thought and expression.

Keywords: ChatGPT, AI, Philosophy for/with children (P4wC), Children's language development

Περίληψη

Στην παρούσα εργασία επιχειρείται μια κριτική προσέγγιση των αδυναμιών της TN χρησιμοποιώντας το γλωσσικό εργαλείο Chat GPT. Το Chat GPT κλήθηκε να «απαντήσει» στα ακόλουθα ερωτήματα:

- Τι είναι η φιλοσοφία με παιδιά;
- Μπορεί η τεχνητή νοημοσύνη να φιλοσοφήσει με τα παιδιά;
- Είναι δυνατό το φιλοσοφείν μεταξύ των TN;

Το Chat GPT «παραδέχεται» ότι η τεχνητή νοημοσύνη στερείται συνείδησης, υποκειμενικών εμπειριών και προσωπικών προοπτικών που συχνά αποτελούν αναπόσπαστο μέρος των φιλοσοφικών συζητήσεων. Η φιλοσοφία περιλαμβάνει την ενδοσκόπηση, τον προβληματισμό και την εξερεύνηση των ανθρώπινων αξιών και πεποιθήσεων, οι οποίες είναι βαθιά ριζωμένες στις

υποκειμενικές εμπειρίες και τη συνείδηση του ανθρώπου. Το Chat GPT λειτουργεί με βάση μοτίβα και ανάλυση δεδομένων και όχι προσωπικές εμπειρίες ή συνειδητή κατανόηση. Μπορεί να παρέχει πληροφορίες, να απαντά σε ερωτήσεις και να δημιουργεί απαντήσεις με βάση τα εκπαιδευτικά του δεδομένα, αλλά δεν διαθέτει γνήσια συνείδηση ή προσωπικές γνώσεις. Η τεχνητή νοημοσύνη, ως αλγοριθμικό σύστημα, δεν έχει τη συνειδητή επίγνωση και το υποκειμενικό βάθος για να συμμετάσχει σε φιλοσοφικό στοχασμό με τον ίδιο τρόπο που μπορούν οι άνθρωποι. Η ανάπτυξη της γλώσσας είναι βαθιά συνδεδεμένη με τη σκέψη, την συνείδηση και την προσωπική ταυτότητα. Η παρούσα εργασία καλεί την εκπαιδευτική κοινότητα να αναστοχαστεί και να προσδιορίσει την σχέση φιλοσοφίας και ΤΝ και να επαναπροσδιορίσει το σημαντικό ρόλο της φιλοσοφίας, και ειδικότερα της φιλοσοφίας με παιδιά, στην ανάπτυξη της γλώσσας ως εργαλείου σκέψης και έκφρασης.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Chat GPT, Τεχνητή Νοημοσύνη, Φιλοσοφία με παιδιά, Γλώσσα, Γλωσσική ανάπτυξη

Introduction

In recent years, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into various aspects of education has sparked considerable interest and debate. AI is revolutionizing education, offering innovative ways to cultivate children's language skills from the preschool level (Ongoro & Fanjiang, 2024; Gumus et al., 2023; Lems, Soro, & Charles, 2023; Bozkurt et al., 2023). By integrating AI into educational settings, personalized learning experiences, enhanced engagement, interactive experiences, and support for diverse learning needs can be provided to children (Yilmaz, Topu, & Takkac, 2022; Kewalramani et al., 2021; Gillani et al., 2023).

One of the primary ways AI fosters language development is through personalized learning. AI-powered applications like Duolingo and Rosetta Stone utilize machine learning algorithms to adapt to each child's learning pace and style. These applications provide customized feedback and adjust the difficulty of tasks based on the learner's progress, ensuring that children remain challenged but not overwhelmed (Chen et al., 2020). Personalized learning paths help children grasp language concepts more effectively and retain information longer.

AI also enhances engagement through interactive and immersive experiences. For example, AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants can simulate conversations with native speakers, allowing children to practice language skills in real-time. These interactions provide immediate feedback and corrections, helping learners refine their pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary (Krstic et al., 2022). Additionally, virtual reality (VR) environments powered by AI can immerse students in different cultural contexts, making language learning more relevant and exciting (Johnson, 2018).

AI can assist teachers in identifying students who may need additional support. Natural Language Processing (NLP) algorithms can analyze student responses in real-time, flagging potential language difficulties early on. This allows educators to intervene promptly and provide targeted support, ensuring no child falls behind (Anderson & Rainie, 2018).

AI's ability to analyze vast amounts of data also aids in curriculum development. By examining which teaching methods are most effective, AI can help educators design lessons that are more engaging and impactful. For instance, data from AI-driven educational platforms can reveal common challenges faced by students, enabling teachers to address these issues proactively (Holmes et al., 2019; Kim et al, 2024) .

One area of particular intrigue is the application of AI in facilitating philosophical discussions with children. Philosophy with children, often referred to as P4wC (Philosophy for/with Children), has gained recognition as an applied form of philosophy in educational settings that foster children's critical and creative thinking, empathy (caring thinking), collaboration and ethical reasoning among young learners (Lipman, 2003; Haynes, 2008). Philosophizing with children is a way to develop both children's literacy and thinking skills.

Philosophizing involves introspection, reflection, and the exploration of human values and beliefs, which are deeply rooted in human's subjective experiences and consciousness. Language development is highly connected with philosophizing as language is the tools to express accurately our thoughts. AI operates based on patterns and data analysis rather than personal experiences or conscious understanding. It can provide information, answer questions, and generate responses based on its training data, but it does not possess genuine consciousness or personal insights. AI, as an algorithmic system, lacks the conscious awareness and subjective depth to engage in philosophical reflection in the same way humans can. The development of language is deeply connected to thought, consciousness and personal identity.

This paper attempts a critical approach of AI's weak areas using mostly the language tool Chat GPT explores the potential benefits and challenges of employing AI in philosophy sessions with children, as well as the question of whether AI systems are capable of engaging in philosophical discourse with them. More specifically, Chat GPT3.5 was asked to 'answer' the following questions:

- What is philosophy with children?
- Can artificial intelligence philosophize with children?
- Is it possible to philosophize between AI?

This paper invites the educational community to reflect and redefine the important role of philosophy, and especially philosophy with children, in the development of language as a tool of thought and expression.

Methodology

The method used is simple. The researcher asked a few questions to ChatGPT 3.5 and then analyzed the answers given by using the method of conceptual analysis. The same questions were posed to Chat GPT4, however, in order to make sure that the word limit would not be exceeded its answers are used only in order to compare the responses among the two models and identify potential differences in content. The researcher has highlighted the phrases in ChatGPT's responses that hold meaning and could be further interpreted.

Findings

The answers are based on the free version of ChatGPT3.5. However, there is an answer by ChatGPT4 given for the first question so that the reader can identify the differences between the information provided from the two models for the same question. Chat GPT4's responses for the Questions 2 and 3 are not provided because they were not different in content.

User: What is philosophy with children? (1st Question)

ChatGPT3.5:

- Philosophy with children, often referred to as "philosophy for children" or **P4C**, is an **approach to education that introduces philosophical inquiry and critical thinking skills to young learners**. Here's what it's for:
- *Critical Thinking Skills*: P4C helps children develop critical thinking skills by encouraging them to question, analyze, and evaluate ideas and concepts. It teaches them how to think **logically, critically, and creatively** about various topics and issues.
- *Ethical Development*: Philosophy with children promotes ethical development by encouraging children to **explore moral dilemmas, ethical principles, and values**. **Through philosophical discussions**, children learn to consider different perspectives and make informed decisions based on reasoning and empathy.
- *Intellectual Growth*: Engaging in philosophical inquiry fosters intellectual growth by challenging children to **think deeply and reflectively** about complex philosophical concepts such as truth, knowledge, existence, and morality. This process expands their understanding of the world and themselves.
- *Empowerment*: Philosophy for children empowers children by **giving them a voice and validating their thoughts and ideas**. It **creates a safe and inclusive space** where children feel encouraged to express their opinions, ask questions, and engage in meaningful dialogue with their peers and teachers.
- *Curiosity and Wonder*: P4C cultivates curiosity and wonder by encouraging children to explore fundamental questions about life, the universe, and everything in between. It sparks their natural curiosity and encourages them to wonder about the nature of reality, existence, and the meaning of life.
- *Community Building*: Philosophy with children promotes a **sense of community and collaboration** by fostering respectful and open-minded dialogue among students. It encourages children to listen to each other, consider different perspectives, and work together to construct shared understanding.
- Overall, philosophy with children serves as a valuable educational tool for promoting critical thinking, ethical development, intellectual growth, empowerment, curiosity, and community building. It equips children with the skills and mindset needed to navigate complex philosophical questions and engage meaningfully with the world around them.

ChatGPT4:

"Philosophy for Children" (P4C) is an educational movement and approach aimed at teaching children how to think critically, reason logically, and engage in thoughtful dialogue. This approach encourages children to explore philosophical questions and ideas in a way that is accessible and meaningful to them. Here are the key aspects of Philosophy for Children:

1. *Encouraging Curiosity*: P4C fosters children's natural curiosity by encouraging them to ask questions about the world around them, such as "What is fairness?" or "What makes something beautiful?"
2. *Developing Critical Thinking*: Through guided discussions, children learn to analyze concepts, construct arguments, identify assumptions, and evaluate reasons and evidence.
3. *Promoting Dialogue and Listening*: P4C emphasizes the importance of respectful dialogue. Children learn to listen to different viewpoints, consider alternative perspectives, and articulate their own thoughts clearly.
4. *Exploring Big Questions*: Children are introduced to philosophical questions about ethics, existence, knowledge, and reality in a way that is appropriate for their age and understanding. Questions like "What is friendship?" or "Can something be true and false at the same time?" are explored.
5. *Cultivating Empathy and Understanding*: By discussing diverse perspectives and ethical dilemmas, children develop a deeper understanding of others' feelings and viewpoints, which fosters empathy and social awareness.
6. *Enhancing Reasoning Skills*: P4C activities help children practice reasoning skills by constructing arguments, making distinctions, and drawing conclusions. This helps them in other areas of learning and everyday decision-making.
7. *Encouraging Creativity and Imagination*: Philosophical inquiry encourages children to use their imagination and think creatively about problems and concepts. This can lead to innovative ideas and solutions.

Implementation in the Classroom

- *Community of Inquiry*: P4C sessions often take place in a "community of inquiry" where students and teachers sit in a circle and engage in structured yet open-ended discussions.
- *Use of Stories and Scenarios*: Stories, picture books, and hypothetical scenarios are used to introduce philosophical questions and stimulate discussion.
- *Facilitator Role*: The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding the discussion, asking probing questions, and helping children develop their ideas without imposing their own views.

Benefits of Philosophy for Children

1. *Improved Academic Performance*: Studies have shown that children who participate in P4C programs often exhibit improved performance in reading, writing, and mathematics.

2. *Social and Emotional Development*: Children develop better social skills, emotional intelligence, and a sense of moral and ethical awareness.
3. *Lifelong Love of Learning*: Engaging in philosophical inquiry fosters a love of learning and a habit of questioning that can last a lifetime.

User: Can AI philosophize with children? (2nd Question)

Chat GPT3.5:

While AI can engage in conversations with children and offer insights, it is important to note that **AI lacks consciousness, subjective experiences, and personal perspectives** that are often integral to philosophical discussions. Philosophy involves introspection, reflection, and the exploration of human values and beliefs, which are deeply rooted in our subjective experiences and consciousness.

AI, including language models like **ChatGPT, operates based on patterns and data analysis rather than personal experiences or conscious understanding**. It can provide information, answer questions, and generate responses based on its training data, but it does not possess genuine consciousness or personal insights.

However, **AI can serve as a tool to support philosophical discussions** with children. It can **provide information, present different perspectives, and help facilitate critical thinking by offering alternative viewpoints or raising thought-provoking questions**. AI can act as a **collaborator**, aiding children in exploring philosophical concepts and engaging in reflective dialogue.

User: Is philosophizing possible among AI? (3rd Question)

ChatGPT3.5:

- The concept of AI philosophizing is an intriguing one, but it is important to distinguish between **AI simulating philosophical discussions** and **AI genuinely engaging in philosophical thinking**.
- **AI can be programmed to simulate philosophical conversations by generating responses based on pre-existing knowledge and patterns derived from training data**. It can **provide information**, pose thought-provoking questions, and offer insights based on its programmed algorithms. This can be useful in facilitating philosophical discussions, assisting in exploring different perspectives, and sparking critical thinking in humans.
- However, **true philosophical thinking** typically involves **consciousness, subjective experiences, and personal perspectives**, aspects that current AI lacks. Philosophy often delves into deeply introspective and subjective matters, such as the nature of consciousness, personal identity, and the subjective experience of meaning. **AI, being an algorithmic system, lacks the conscious awareness and subjective depth to engage in philosophical reflection in the same way humans can**.
- That said, **AI can contribute to philosophical conversations by providing access to vast amounts of information, facilitating data analysis, and generating thought-**

provoking questions. It can act as a tool to support philosophical inquiry and **stimulate intellectual discourse.** But the genuine act of philosophizing, with its subjective and introspective dimensions, remains a distinctly human endeavor.

Analysis of the findings

As far as the first question is concerned, ChatGPT 3.5's answer was based on the databases it has access to. Its answer is correct but slightly vague. P4C is not only an "approach to education" but a form of applied philosophy in the classroom (Lipman, 2003). P4C introduces "philosophical inquiry and critical thinking skills to young learners," but as it is formulated, it is as if philosophical inquiry and critical thinking skills are different from each other. The description of P4C, as given by ChatGPT 3.5, is correct but very general, which could apply to any other programs that also develop children's critical thinking. P4C indeed promotes "critical thinking skills," "ethical development," "intellectual growth," and children's ability to think deeply and reflectively about complex philosophical concepts such as truth and knowledge", but it is not explained in what ways this is done differently within the P4C context.

The researcher would have expected that ChatGPT would mention at least Matthew Lipman, who was the first to introduce philosophy for children in schools, along with other keynote speakers in the field. The researcher also expected that ChatGPT would use terminology that applies to P4C, such as the term "community of inquiry" to describe the formulation of a space for children to philosophize and develop their arguments, "facilitator" to indicate the special role the teacher plays within a philosophical community of inquiry, and the four different kinds of thinking mostly developed by P4C, such as critical, creative, collaborative, and caring thinking.

Asking the same question to ChatGPT-4, the answers were slightly more elaborated and more structurally presented. Compared to ChatGPT 3.5, ChatGPT-4 highlighted the same information about what philosophy with children is but also provided the reader with two headlines with relevant content concerning the implementation of P4C in the classroom and the benefits of P4C. Both models, ChatGPT 3.5 and 4, mentioned keynote speakers in the field of P4C when the researcher asked specifically for this by posing the question "mention the most important keynote speakers in the field of P4C".

The first question was mostly informative. The researcher asked, and ChatGPT provided some valid information. That was expected, and providing that the users will not stop searching further, the first information given is satisfactory. The second question is different. The researcher asks if AI can philosophize with children. The researcher challenges AI to admit what it can and cannot do. AI does not deny its ability to engage in a conversation with children but admits that "AI lacks consciousness, subjective experiences, and personal perspectives that are often integral to philosophical discussions." ChatGPT confesses that consciousness, subjective experience, and personal perspective are human characteristics. In the next paragraph, AI explains one more difference compared to humans: "ChatGPT operates based on patterns and data analysis rather than personal experiences or conscious understanding." Therefore, ChatGPT is a machine whose thinking processes are through patterns, whereas humans acquire their knowledge through consciousness and personal experience.

The last paragraph of ChatGPT 3.5's answer serves as a defense. AI defends itself and states what AI can provide within a philosophical inquiry. Therefore, it can provide:

- information,
- present different perspectives,
- help facilitate critical thinking by offering alternative responses.

AI implies that it can act as a facilitator like humans do, without, though, consciousness and personal experience. AI also highlights its potential role within a philosophical community of inquiry as "a tool to support philosophical discussions, provide viewpoints or raise thought-provoking questions. AI can act as a collaborator, aiding children in exploring philosophical concepts and engaging in reflective dialogue."

The third question aimed at researching whether philosophizing among AI is possible. The researcher wanted to investigate how AI would formulate an answer. Reviewing question 3, there are a few points to highlight:

- AI itself makes a distinction between AI simulating philosophical discussions and AI genuinely engaging in philosophical thinking. AI implies that there is a possibility of simulating a philosophical discussion which, even if it is not a genuine philosophical activity, is better than nothing. Again, AI seems to make a distinction but at the same time defends itself, making it clear that at least it can simulate philosophical conversation. If the human reader accepts the distinction and agrees with the possibility of simulating philosophical discussion, then AI explains how this is possible ("by generating responses based on pre-existing knowledge and patterns derived from training data").
- AI reminds the reader again that "true philosophical thinking typically involves consciousness, subjective experiences, and personal perspectives, aspects that current AI lacks." AI repeats the three qualities that it lacks compared to humans (consciousness, subjective experience, and personal perspective). However, it uses the adverb "typically," implying that maybe true philosophical thinking could also apply to situations where consciousness, experiences, and personal perspectives are not necessary. It also uses the phrase "aspects that current AI lacks." This rings a bell that maybe AI implies that it is the current AI version that lacks certain human characteristics; without excluding that future versions of AI might be able to obtain human qualities too!
- As happened with the 2nd question, AI reminds the reader that it is an algorithmic system; therefore, it is different from humans. It also provides ways it can contribute to philosophical conversation by: a) providing access to vast amounts of information, b) facilitating data analysis, c) generating thought-provoking questions, and d) stimulating intellectual discourse.
- Concluding its answer, AI agrees that "the genuine act of philosophizing, with its subjective and introspective dimensions, remains a distinctly human endeavor."

Discussion

Are there any benefits of AI in Philosophy with Children and children's language development? AI holds promise in augmenting philosophical dialogues with children in several ways. Firstly, AI-powered chatbots or virtual assistants can serve as interactive conversational partners, providing children with a non-judgmental space to explore philosophical concepts and questions. These AI systems can adapt their responses based on the child's input, encouraging deeper reflection and engagement (Bower et al., 2024).

AI can broaden access to philosophical education by overcoming geographical and logistical barriers. Through online platforms or virtual classrooms, children from diverse backgrounds can participate in philosophical inquiries facilitated by AI, thus democratizing access to philosophical learning opportunities (Kennedy & Gardiner, 2020). The use of online platforms in order to communicate has been a positive effect side effect to Covid 19 pandemic.

AI algorithms can analyze the language and reasoning patterns of children during philosophical discussions, offering insights to educators about their cognitive development and philosophical understanding. By identifying common misconceptions or areas of confusion, AI tools can assist educators in tailoring their teaching strategies to better meet the needs of individual students (Coskun, 2024; Whitehill & LoCasale Crouch, 2024). It seems that in this case AI's advantages are put in service for advancing human condition.

There are, however, many ethical considerations to take into account. Despite the potential benefits, the integration of AI in philosophy sessions with children raises several challenges and ethical considerations. One concern is the risk of overreliance on AI systems, which may inadvertently stifle genuine human-to-human interaction and interpersonal skills development. It is essential to strike a balance between leveraging AI as a tool for enrichment and preserving the authenticity of face-to-face philosophical exchanges. Children and teachers need to bear in mind that chatbots and virtual assistants are only simulating philosophical discussions. No matter how relevant questions they might pose to the children according to their responses, educators have to consider what kind of interactions AI and children would be ideal to have. Would it be possible for children to distinguish which answer or question comes from a human and which from AI? Is this distinction important? What if AI responses are more accurate and to the point comparing to humans' answers? How much should children trust AI? (Girouard & Danovitch, 2022).

Children's interaction with chatbots and virtual assistants may raise concerns regarding identity and humanism. According to Kant, as he mentions in his work titled "Über Pädagogik" (On Pedagogy) the human being is the only creature that must be educated. The introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) into educational practices forces us to rethink Kant's position and evaluate whether AI systems are viewed merely as tools to enhance educational practices or as fully fledged thinking subjects, capable of independent thought and agency (Kornilaev, 2021). While the former view does not violate Kant's basic position, the later forces us to grant that education is not exclusively a relation between human beings, as Kant maintains, and that some nonhuman entities might themselves educate and be educated (Kornilaev, 2021). Such positions raise again fundamental questions such as 'What is the human being?'

In a research conducted by Kucirkova & Hiniker (2023) regarding parents attitudes towards their children's interaction with AI, they reflected the belief that artificial conversation with

a machine inappropriately and ineffectively mimics a nuanced and intimate human-to-human experience in service of profit motives. There are also concerns regarding how can AI be employed in future educational contexts in a humanizing and ethical manner, how teachers should be educated towards AI's use, how the schools should be equipped and what philosophy of technology in education can bridge the gap between AI and education. (Swindell et al, 2024; Pham & Sampson, 2022; Sun & Ye, 2023).

There are also ethical implications surrounding data privacy and consent when using AI technologies with children. Educators and developers must prioritize the protection of children's personal information and ensure transparent communication about how AI systems collect, process, and store data (Selwyn, 2019). AI-enhanced personalized texts can reduce personal agency with respect to formulating a sense of identity as a child (Kucirkova & Mackey, 2020).

Another ethical concern pertains to the potential bias embedded within AI algorithms, which could perpetuate existing inequalities or reinforce dominant philosophical perspectives. Vigilance is required to mitigate algorithmic biases and ensure that AI tools facilitate inclusive and diverse philosophical discussions that respect children's diverse backgrounds and perspectives (Noble, 2018). Here is an example. The picture 1 shows a boy generated by AI given the command "create an image of a modern Greek school boy". Some hidden presuppositions here are that:

- Since we refer to a Greek boy, it has to be situated into a Greek environment with at least one ancient style column, and a house that reminds houses in a Greek island with main colours white and blue.
- School boys usually wear a uniform but this is not the case in Greece unless the boy studies in a private school with certain dress code.



As long as the users and especially children will not take for granted that whatever AI produces is correctly made, real and true, AI's projects can serve as stimuli for further discussion that forces children to uncover hidden presupposition and exercise further their language and critical skills.

Conclusion

The question of whether AI is capable of philosophizing with children is multifaceted and nuanced. While AI systems can simulate dialogue and generate responses based on programmed algorithms, they lack true consciousness, intentionality, and moral agency. Philosophical inquiry often involves grappling with abstract concepts, moral dilemmas, and existential questions that transcend the capabilities of AI (Bostrom, 2014). However, AI can still play a valuable role in scaffolding philosophical exploration and promoting critical thinking skills among children. By posing thought-provoking questions, presenting diverse viewpoints, and facilitating reflective dialogue, AI tools can stimulate intellectual curiosity

and philosophical inquiry in young learners (Smith, 2018). While AI can enhance the accessibility, adaptability, and analytical insights of philosophical discussions, careful consideration must be given to ethical implications and the preservation of genuine human interaction. As educators and technologists continue to explore the intersection of AI and philosophy in education, it is imperative to prioritize ethical principles, inclusivity, and the holistic development of young minds.

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