RESEARCH PAPER

A Conceptual Framework for a Multilingual AI-Based Healthcare Chatbot Using Natural Language Processing

Prof. (Dr.) Mayur M. Jani[1*], Prof. (Dr.) Hemant H. Patel[2], Prof. Neeta J. Sapara[3], Prof. Milan J. Raiyani[4], Prof. Devang A. Karavadiya[5], Prof. Chirag N. Kaneria[6], Prof. Ravi K. Khuman[7], Prof. Rukhsar M. Hala[8]

[1*]Assistant Professor, School of Engineering and Technology, Dr. Subhash University, Junagadh, Gujarat, India (ORCID: 0009-0001-0272-3793, Email: mayur.jani@dsuni.ac.in)
[2]Associate Professor and Head, CES/IT Department, School of Engineering and Technology, Dr. Subhash University, Junagadh, Gujarat, India
[3–4]Assistant Professors, School of Engineering and Technology, Dr. Subhash University, Junagadh, Gujarat, India
[5]Assistant Professor, Department of IT, V.V.P. Engineering College, Rajkot, Gujarat, India
[6–8]Assistant Professors, School of Engineering and Technology, Dr. Subhash University, Junagadh, Gujarat, India

Abstract
The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) has enabled the development of intelligent healthcare systems, including conversational agents for patient assistance. However, most existing healthcare chatbots are limited to English, restricting their accessibility in multilingual regions. This paper proposes a conceptual framework for a multilingual AI-based healthcare chatbot designed to support languages such as Hindi, Gujarati, and English. The proposed system integrates language detection, translation mechanisms, and NLP-based processing to provide context-aware healthcare responses. A layered architecture and step-wise methodology are presented to illustrate the system workflow. A comparative analysis highlights the limitations of existing systems and the advantages of the proposed approach in terms of accessibility, scalability, and usability. The framework aims to improve healthcare accessibility in linguistically diverse and resource-constrained environments and provides a foundation for future implementation and evaluation.

Keywords: Multilingual Chatbot, Healthcare Chatbot, Natural Language Processing, Artificial Intelligence, Language Translation, Patient Assistance, Conversational Agents

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1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) has significantly influenced the development of intelligent systems in the healthcare domain. Among these, conversational agents, commonly referred to as chatbots, have gained considerable attention due to their ability to provide instant responses, reduce the workload on healthcare professionals, and enhance patient engagement [1], [2]. These systems are increasingly utilized for applications such as symptom assessment, mental health support, and preliminary medical consultation [3], [4].

Despite these advancements, most existing healthcare chatbot systems are primarily designed for English-speaking users. This creates a major limitation in multilingual countries such as India, where a large portion of the population communicates in regional languages. The lack of multilingual support restricts accessibility and reduces the effectiveness of such systems, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas where English proficiency is limited [5], [6].

Recent research has explored the integration of advanced NLP techniques and multilingual speech processing approaches to improve conversational systems [7], [8], [33]. In particular, studies on real-time multilingual speech recognition and language conversion have emphasized the importance of handling code-switched and multi-language inputs in practical environments [31], [32]. These advancements have significantly improved the ability of chatbots to understand context and generate meaningful responses. However, most of these developments remain focused on monolingual interaction, limiting their applicability in linguistically diverse settings. Although some multilingual systems have been proposed, they often lack domain-specific adaptation for healthcare or fail to provide a scalable and user-friendly framework [9].

To address these challenges, this paper proposes a conceptual framework for a multilingual AI-based healthcare chatbot that integrates language detection, translation mechanisms, and NLP-based processing. The proposed system is designed to support multiple languages, including Hindi, Gujarati, and English, enabling users to interact in their preferred language. The framework emphasizes accessibility, scalability, and ease of use, making it suitable for diverse user groups, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

As illustrated in Fig. 1, the overall process of the proposed system involves multiple stages, starting from user input in any language, followed by language detection, translation into a common processing language, NLP-based analysis, and response generation. The final output is then translated back into the user's preferred language, ensuring a seamless and user-friendly interaction experience.

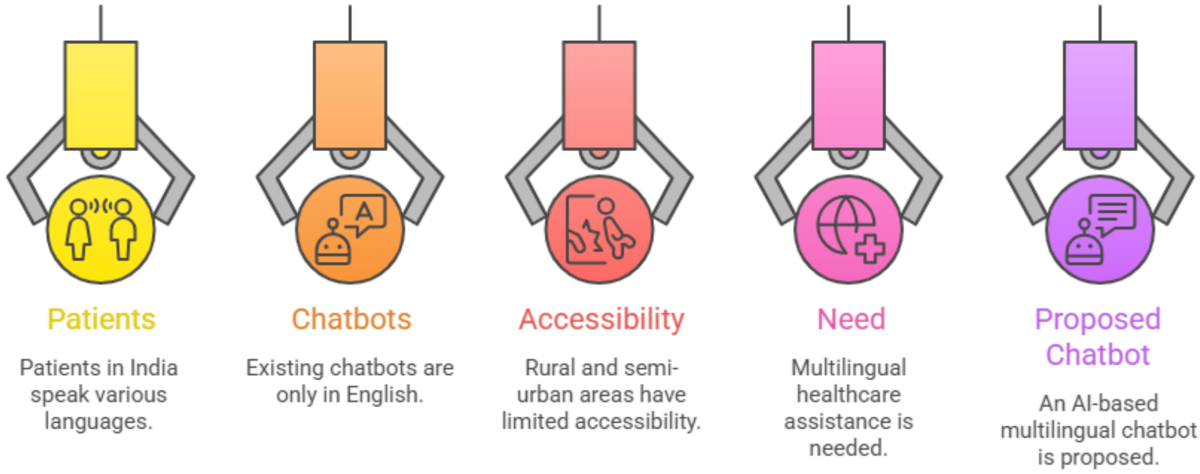

Fig. 1 General workflow of the multilingual healthcare chatbot system.

The primary objective of this work is not to implement a complete system but to design a robust and scalable architecture that can guide future development. In addition, a comparative analysis is presented to highlight the limitations of existing systems and to demonstrate the advantages of the proposed approach in terms of multilingual capability and improved accessibility.

2. Literature Review

The application of conversational agents in healthcare has attracted significant attention due to their potential to improve patient engagement and provide timely medical assistance. Several studies have explored their use in areas such as symptom assessment, mental health support, and general patient interaction. A comprehensive review of healthcare chatbots highlights that, while these systems offer promising benefits in terms of accessibility and efficiency, their widespread adoption is still limited by challenges related to reliability, usability, and the absence of standardized evaluation frameworks [1]. Furthermore, concerns have been raised regarding the safety and accuracy of medical advice generated by such systems, particularly in situations where incomplete or incorrect information may influence user decisions [2].

A notable area of research focuses on the use of chatbots for mental health applications. Conversational agents have been employed to deliver structured therapeutic interventions, including cognitive behavioral therapy, with studies reporting positive outcomes in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression [3], [4]. Despite these encouraging results, such systems often operate within constrained interaction scenarios and may lack the ability to handle complex or context-sensitive conversations effectively.

From a technological perspective, advancements in Natural Language Processing have played a crucial role in enhancing chatbot capabilities. Foundational NLP techniques provide essential mechanisms for text processing, syntactic analysis, and semantic interpretation, forming the basis for conversational system development [5], [10]. The introduction of deep learning models, particularly Long Short-Term Memory networks, improved the ability to model sequential language data and capture contextual dependencies [11]. More recently, transformer-based architectures and pre-trained language models have significantly advanced the state-of-the-art by enabling more accurate context understanding and efficient parallel processing [6], [7]. However, the application of these advanced models in domain-specific and multilingual healthcare environments remains limited and often requires substantial customization.

The evolution of dialogue management techniques further reflects the transition from rule-based approaches to more dynamic and probabilistic models. Early conversational systems relied on pattern matching and predefined rules, which restricted their flexibility and scalability [9]. In contrast, probabilistic dialogue systems introduced mechanisms to handle uncertainty and improve interaction quality [8]. Nevertheless, these approaches can be computationally intensive and may not always be suitable for real-time or resource-constrained healthcare applications.

Recent studies have also explored multilingual conversational systems aimed at expanding accessibility beyond a single language. While such systems demonstrate the feasibility of multilingual interaction, they often lack integration with domain-specific knowledge, particularly in healthcare contexts [13]. Existing NLP frameworks and development platforms provide robust support for text processing; however, they typically require significant adaptation to effectively manage multilingual conversational workflows [14], [15]. Additionally, language identification and translation techniques have made considerable progress, yet challenges such as handling code-mixed language and preserving contextual meaning remain open research problems [16].

In parallel, several industry-driven platforms have been developed to support conversational AI in healthcare applications. These platforms offer scalable infrastructures and integrated NLP capabilities, enabling rapid deployment of chatbot solutions. However, they are often limited in terms of customization, language flexibility, and adaptability to region-specific healthcare requirements [17]–[19]. Global health organizations have also emphasized the importance of digital health technologies in improving accessibility and strengthening healthcare systems, particularly in underserved regions, although practical multilingual implementation strategies remain insufficiently explored [20].

The availability of large-scale clinical datasets and standardized medical terminologies has further supported the development of intelligent healthcare systems. Clinical databases and structured vocabularies provide essential resources for training and validating AI models [26]–[28]. In addition, publicly available medical information platforms offer reliable knowledge sources that can be integrated into conversational systems [29], [30]. However, these resources are predominantly available in English, which limits their applicability in multilingual environments and highlights the need for more inclusive solutions.

Overall, the existing literature demonstrates substantial progress in chatbot technologies, NLP advancements, and healthcare applications. However, key challenges remain unresolved, particularly in terms of multilingual interaction, accessibility for diverse user populations, and effective integration of domain-specific knowledge. Most current approaches either emphasize technological improvements without addressing real-world usability or provide healthcare-focused solutions that do not adequately consider linguistic diversity. These limitations highlight the need for a scalable and multilingual healthcare chatbot framework, which forms the basis of the proposed work.

3. Comparative Analysis of Existing and Proposed Systems

3.1 Overview

A comparative analysis of existing healthcare chatbot systems and the proposed multilingual framework is presented to highlight the key limitations of current approaches and to demonstrate the advantages of the proposed system. The analysis focuses on critical factors such as language support, accessibility, adaptability, and domain-specific capabilities.

3.2 Comparative Discussion

Existing healthcare chatbot systems have primarily focused on improving conversational accuracy and response generation using advanced NLP techniques. While these systems demonstrate strong performance in understanding user queries, they are often limited to English or a single language, which restricts their usability in multilingual environments [1], [13]. This limitation becomes particularly significant in countries with linguistic diversity, where users may prefer to communicate in regional languages.

Rule-based chatbot systems, such as early conversational models, rely on predefined patterns and fixed responses, making them less flexible and unable to handle complex or dynamic queries effectively [9]. Although these systems are computationally efficient, their lack of adaptability limits their practical application in healthcare scenarios.

Machine learning and deep learning-based approaches have improved the ability of chatbots to process natural language and generate context-aware responses [6], [7], [11]. However, these approaches often require large amounts of training data and computational resources, and they typically do not address multilingual interaction as a core feature. Additionally, their focus remains largely on improving linguistic performance rather than enhancing accessibility for diverse user populations.

Some recent systems have attempted to incorporate multilingual capabilities; however, they often lack integration with healthcare-specific knowledge bases or fail to provide a scalable architecture suitable for real-world deployment [13]. Furthermore, many existing solutions do not adequately address the needs of users in rural or resource-constrained environments, where access to advanced digital infrastructure may be limited.

In contrast, the proposed system adopts a holistic approach by integrating multilingual support with domain-specific knowledge processing within a unified framework. The architecture is designed to ensure that users can interact in their preferred language while maintaining consistent internal processing. This approach not only improves accessibility but also enhances the overall usability of the system in diverse healthcare settings.A detailed comparison of existing systems and the proposed framework is presented in Table 1.

3.3 Comparative Table

Table 1. Comparative analysis of existing and proposed healthcare chatbot systems

Feature	Existing Systems	Limitations	Proposed System

Language Support	Primarily English or single-language systems	Limited usability in multilingual environments	Supports multiple languages (e.g., Hindi, Gujarati, English)
Accessibility	Focused on urban and tech-savvy users	Low accessibility in rural and semi-urban regions	Designed for diverse and resource-constrained users
Adaptability	Limited in rule-based systems; moderate in AI systems	Difficulty handling dynamic and diverse user queries	Modular and scalable architecture
Domain Integration	General-purpose or partially healthcare-focused	Lack of comprehensive medical knowledge integration	Integrated healthcare-specific knowledge base
Multilingual Processing	Basic or limited support	Poor context preservation across languages	Translation + NLP-based unified processing
Scalability	Often restricted by design or infrastructure	Difficult to extend across languages and domains	Easily extendable framework
User Interaction Quality	Improved with AI models	Still limited by language barriers	Enhanced through multilingual and context-aware design

3.4 Discussion

The comparison clearly indicates that, although existing systems have made significant progress in improving conversational capabilities, they fall short in addressing multilingual accessibility and real-world usability challenges. The proposed system differentiates itself by prioritizing inclusivity and scalability while maintaining effective natural language understanding.

By integrating language processing mechanisms with domain-specific knowledge, the proposed framework bridges the gap between technological advancement and practical applicability. This makes it particularly suitable for deployment in multilingual and resource-constrained healthcare environments.

The comparative analysis highlights the limitations of existing healthcare chatbot systems and demonstrates the advantages of the proposed multilingual framework. The findings reinforce the need for an integrated approach that combines multilingual support with domain-specific intelligence, which is further elaborated in the proposed system architecture..

4. Proposed System Architecture

4.1 Overview

To address the limitations identified in existing healthcare chatbot systems, this paper proposes a multilingual AI-based healthcare chatbot architecture designed to improve accessibility and usability for diverse user populations. The proposed system focuses on enabling seamless interaction in multiple languages while maintaining effective processing through a unified framework.

The proposed architecture is conceptual and focuses on defining a structured framework rather than implementation-specific details. It emphasizes modularity, scalability, and adaptability, making it suitable for deployment in multilingual and resource-constrained environments. Similar modular approaches have been widely adopted in conversational AI systems to ensure flexibility and maintainability [17], [18].

4.2 Architecture Description

The proposed system adopts a layered architectural approach to systematically process multilingual user input and generate contextually relevant healthcare responses. This design allows users to interact in their preferred language while maintaining a unified internal processing mechanism.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the architecture is divided into multiple functional layers, each responsible for a specific stage of processing. This layered representation provides a clear understanding of how user input flows through the system and how different components interact to generate meaningful responses.

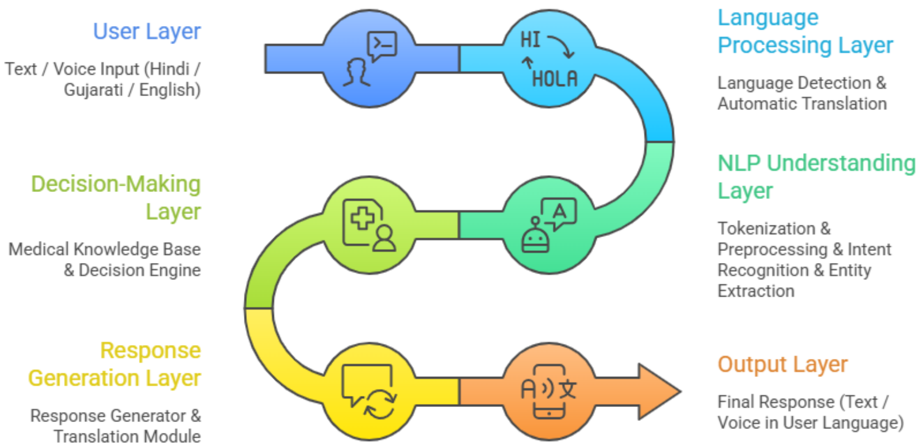

Fig. 2. Layered architecture of the proposed multilingual healthcare chatbot system.

The architecture shown in Fig. 2 consists of five major layers: the user layer, language processing layer, NLP understanding layer, decision-making layer, and response generation layer. The user layer accepts input in multiple languages such as Hindi, Gujarati, and English. This input is then processed by the language processing layer, where language detection techniques are applied to identify the input language [16], followed by translation into a common processing language.

The NLP understanding layer analyzes the translated input through preprocessing, intent recognition, and entity extraction. These processes are fundamental components of modern NLP systems and have been significantly enhanced by deep learning-based approaches [6], [7]. The processed information is then passed to the decision-making layer, where a medical knowledge base and inference mechanisms are used to determine appropriate responses. The integration of language detection and translation components is consistent with approaches used in multilingual speech processing systems [31], [32].

Finally, the response generation layer produces a user-friendly output and translates it back into the user's preferred language before delivering the final response. This structured flow, as depicted in Fig. 2, ensures modularity, scalability, and efficient multilingual interaction.

4.3 Components of the Proposed System

4.3.1 User Interface

The user interface serves as the entry point of the system, allowing users to submit queries in their preferred language. It can be implemented as a web or mobile-based interface, ensuring accessibility for a wide range of users.

4.3.2 Language Detection Module

This module identifies the language of the user input using language identification techniques. Accurate detection is essential to ensure correct translation and effective downstream processing [16].

4.3.3 Translation Module

The translation module converts the user input into a common processing language (e.g., English). After processing, it also translates the generated response back into the user's original language, enabling seamless multilingual interaction.

4.3.4 NLP Processing Engine

The NLP engine analyzes the translated input by performing tasks such as tokenization, intent recognition, and entity extraction. These techniques are widely used in conversational systems to understand user intent and context [5], [7].

4.3.5 Medical Knowledge Base

The medical knowledge base stores structured information related to symptoms, diseases, and general healthcare guidance. It serves as the primary source of domain-specific knowledge and can be constructed using standardized medical datasets and terminologies [26]–[28].

4.3.6 Decision Engine

The decision engine processes the extracted information and maps it to appropriate responses using predefined logic or inference mechanisms. This ensures that the generated output is contextually relevant and meaningful.

4.3.7 Response Generator

The response generator produces human-readable outputs based on the processed data and ensures that the responses are clear, simple, and understandable for end users.

4.4 Key Features of the Proposed Architecture

- Multilingual Support: Enables interaction in multiple languages, including regional languages.
- Modular Design: Each component operates independently, allowing easy scalability and system updates.
- Accessibility-Oriented: Designed to support users in rural and semi-urban regions.
- Domain-Specific Processing: Focused on healthcare-related queries and responses.
- Scalable Framework: Can be extended to include additional languages and functionalities.

The proposed architecture establishes a structured and scalable framework for enabling multilingual healthcare interaction. By integrating language processing, NLP techniques, and domain-specific knowledge, the system addresses key limitations of existing chatbot solutions. The operational workflow of the proposed system is detailed in the following section.

5. Proposed Methodology

5.1 Overview

The proposed methodology describes the operational workflow of the multilingual healthcare chatbot system. It outlines how user input is processed through multiple stages, including language identification, translation, natural language understanding, and response generation. The methodology is designed to ensure that users can interact with the system in their preferred language while maintaining consistent and efficient internal processing.

The workflow is conceptual in nature and is aligned with the layered architecture presented in Fig. 2. It follows a structured and modular approach, which enables scalability and adaptability across different languages and healthcare scenarios.

5.2 Step-wise Processing of the System

The overall functioning of the proposed system can be described through the following sequential steps:

Step 1: User Input Acquisition

The process begins when a user submits a query through the interface. The input may be in any supported language, such as Hindi, Gujarati, or English. This step ensures inclusivity by allowing users to communicate in their native language.

Step 2: Language Identification

Once the input is received, the system identifies the language of the query using language detection techniques. Accurate language identification is essential for selecting the appropriate translation mechanism and ensuring correct downstream processing, particularly in multilingual and code-switched environments [16], [31], [32].

Step 3: Input Translation

After detecting the language, the system translates the input into a common processing language, typically English. This approach simplifies the design by enabling the use of a unified NLP pipeline instead of maintaining separate models for each language.

Step 4: Text Preprocessing

The translated input undergoes preprocessing, which includes tokenization, normalization, and removal of irrelevant elements. These preprocessing steps are fundamental in NLP systems and help improve the accuracy of subsequent analysis [5].

Step 5: Intent Recognition and Entity Extraction

In this stage, the system analyzes the processed input to identify the user's intent and extract relevant entities such as symptoms, duration, or severity. Advanced NLP techniques, including deep learning-based models, are commonly used to improve the accuracy of intent detection and contextual understanding [6], [7].

Step 6: Knowledge Base Mapping

The extracted information is mapped to a structured medical knowledge base. This involves matching the identified symptoms or queries with predefined medical data to determine appropriate responses. The use of structured medical resources enhances the reliability of the system [26]–[28].

Step 7: Decision Making

Based on the mapped information, the decision engine selects the most appropriate response using predefined rules or inference mechanisms. This step ensures that the output is contextually relevant and aligned with the user's query.

Step 8: Response Generation

The selected output is converted into a human-readable format. The response is designed to be clear, concise, and easily understandable, particularly for users with limited technical knowledge.

Step 9: Output Translation

The generated response is translated back into the user's original language. This step ensures that users receive information in a familiar linguistic format, improving usability and engagement.

Step 10: Final Response Delivery

The translated response is delivered to the user through the interface. Depending on the application design, the output may be presented in text or voice format.

Such pipeline-based processing approaches are commonly adopted in multilingual NLP systems [5], [7].

5.3 Algorithmic Representation

The overall methodology can be summarized as follows:

Input: User Query (Q) in any language
Output: Response (R) in user's language
1. Detect language L of Q
2. Translate Q → Q' (processing language)
3. Preprocess Q'
4. Extract intent I and entities E
5. Map (I, E) to knowledge base
6. Generate response R'
7. Translate R' → R (user language)
8. Return R

5.4 Key Characteristics of the Methodology

- Language Independence: Supports multiple input languages through translation-based processing
- Modular Workflow: Each stage operates independently, ensuring flexibility and scalability
- Domain Awareness: Utilizes a healthcare-specific knowledge base for accurate response generation
- User-Centric Design: Focuses on simplicity, clarity, and accessibility
- Extensibility: Can be extended to support additional languages and functionalities

The proposed methodology provides a structured and systematic approach for processing multilingual healthcare queries. By integrating language detection, translation, NLP techniques, and domain-specific knowledge, the system enables effective and accessible communication between users and healthcare services. This methodology complements the proposed architecture and establishes a foundation for future implementation and evaluation.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1 Overview

As the proposed system is conceptual in nature, this section presents a qualitative analysis of the expected performance and potential impact of the multilingual healthcare chatbot. The discussion is based on the proposed architecture and methodology, along with insights derived from existing studies in conversational AI and healthcare applications.

6.2 Expected Outcomes

The proposed multilingual healthcare chatbot is expected to enhance the accessibility and usability of digital healthcare services, particularly in linguistically diverse environments. By incorporating language detection and translation mechanisms, the system enables users to interact in their native language, thereby reducing communication barriers and improving user engagement.

Compared to conventional chatbot systems that primarily support English, the proposed framework is expected to offer a more inclusive and user-friendly interaction experience. This is particularly beneficial in rural and semi-urban regions, where users may have limited proficiency in English. The integration of NLP techniques further supports effective interpretation of user queries and facilitates the generation of contextually relevant responses.

In addition, the modular and layered design of the proposed architecture is expected to improve scalability and flexibility. The system can be extended to support additional languages and functionalities without significant structural modifications, making it adaptable to a wide range of deployment scenarios.

Similar challenges related to accessibility and language dependency have also been highlighted in prior studies [1], [20].

6.3 Comparative Discussion

The comparative analysis presented earlier indicates that existing healthcare chatbot systems have made significant progress in improving conversational capabilities but often lack adequate support for multilingual interaction and real-world accessibility. Many systems focus primarily on enhancing language understanding using advanced models, while overlooking practical usability challenges faced by diverse user populations.

The proposed framework addresses these limitations by integrating multilingual processing with domain-specific knowledge within a unified workflow. This integration is expected to improve both the relevance and clarity of responses, particularly in healthcare contexts where accurate communication is essential.

Furthermore, existing multilingual systems often face challenges related to context preservation and consistency across languages. The structured methodology adopted in this work, including knowledge base mapping and step-wise processing, is expected to enhance reliability and maintain contextual integrity during interactions.

6.4 Practical Implications and Ethical Considerations

The proposed system has important implications for improving access to basic healthcare information. It can serve as an initial point of interaction for users seeking general medical guidance, thereby reducing the burden on healthcare professionals and improving service reach in underserved regions.

The ability to communicate in regional languages can also increase user trust and encourage wider adoption of digital healthcare solutions. Additionally, the system can be extended to support voice-based interaction, further improving accessibility for users with limited literacy.

However, it is important to emphasize that the proposed chatbot is intended for informational support only and does not replace professional medical consultation. Ensuring the accuracy, reliability, and ethical use of healthcare information remains a critical consideration for future implementation. The system is intended for informational purposes only and does not replace professional medical advice.

6.5 Limitations and Future Scope

While the proposed framework offers several advantages, it has certain limitations. As a conceptual model, the system has not been validated through real-world implementation or empirical evaluation. The effectiveness of the approach would depend on factors such as the accuracy of language detection, the quality of translation, and the completeness of the medical knowledge base.

Future work may focus on implementing the proposed architecture using advanced NLP models and evaluating its performance using real-world datasets. Further enhancements may include support for additional regional languages, integration of speech-based interfaces, and incorporation of real-time medical data sources to improve response accuracy and system reliability.

The conceptual analysis suggests that the proposed multilingual healthcare chatbot framework has the potential to address key limitations of existing systems, particularly in terms of accessibility and multilingual interaction. While further implementation and evaluation are required, the proposed approach provides a strong foundation for developing inclusive and scalable healthcare chatbot solutions.

7. Conclusion

This paper presented a conceptual framework for a multilingual AI-based healthcare chatbot designed to improve accessibility and usability of digital healthcare services. By integrating language detection, translation mechanisms, and natural language processing techniques, the proposed system enables users to interact in their preferred language while ensuring consistent internal processing. The architecture emphasizes modularity, scalability, and domain-specific knowledge integration, making it suitable for diverse and resource-constrained environments.

The study also highlighted the limitations of existing healthcare chatbot systems, particularly in terms of language dependency and accessibility, and demonstrated how the proposed approach addresses these challenges through a structured and multilingual design. The comparative analysis and conceptual evaluation indicate that the framework has the potential to enhance user engagement and reduce communication barriers in healthcare interactions.

Although the proposed system is conceptual, it provides a strong foundation for future development and real-world implementation. Further work may focus on practical deployment, performance evaluation, and expansion to additional regional languages to improve the effectiveness and reach of AI-driven healthcare solutions.

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