OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yuri Prodanov – Shumen University "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski", designated for the preparation of science for a dissertation work for the award of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the scientific specialty 3.5 Public Communications and Information (Media and Communications - Media Language and Style)

Author: Ventsislav Ventsislavov Vassilev, full-time doctoral student in the Department "Press Journalism and Book Publishing" at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Topic: Artificial Intelligence Methods for Collecting, Synthesizing, Processing and Providing of Information in Journalism

Scientific Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Efrem Efremov

I. Assessment of the quality of the dissertation text

– Ventsislav Vassilev's dissertation is dedicated to an extremely topical analytical field, predetermined by the fact that the development, functioning, problems and challenges that Artificial Intelligence (II) poses not only to journalism, but also to all aspects of physical development are extremely serious. Moreover, it is characteristic of phenomena related to information technology and digitalization that they are in the process of ongoing intensive development and change. And this makes the observations, analysis and conclusions extremely workable, due to the constantly changing object of study. The interdisciplinary approach to the creation of the scientific work provides excellent opportunities for original observations and comments – not only in the field of informatics and computer science (engineering profile), but also in their acquaintance with the media (social, cultural and economic dimension of the problem).

The dissertationist distinguishes the temporal boundaries of the phenomenon II, defining the technique for almost eighty years. The direct and noted influence of AI on journalistic practice and the formation of media content is a later stage in the implementation of AI and is positioned in and after the first decade of the 21st century. In this part of his work, Ventsislav Vassilev demonstrates excellent knowledge of the theoretical and historical sources related to research in this area. Correctly and in detail, he traces the emergence of AI, the basic concepts in the field, the method of its creation, its evolution and application. A little aside from the main topic is the tracing of the legal restrictions on its application in the EU - a problem that is still in the process of happening in order to be descriptively systematized. The relevance of his research is argued by the thesis candidate with the statement that in Bulgaria artificial intelligence is mainly of interest to computer engineers, but the topic has hardly been commented on by media researchers. And, according to him: "This also poses the need for machine research of this phenomenon through the prism of journalistic and editorial activity." The position of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is also cited, according to which the entry of AI into the media is: "the fourth major wave of digital transformation for journalism in public media after online pages, mobile applications and social networks." (p.10)

An important positive of the study is that it summarizes and classifies contemporary experiences in world practice, provides knowledge about the evolution, functioning and basic principles in the construction of AI, as well as possible applications for the implementation of ready-made free and paid models in Bulgaria.

The developed classification of the types of applications with artificial intelligence according to their practical use in the media is beneficial both for the benefit of journalists (in the creation of media content) and for the benefit of users.

The doctoral student demonstrates excellent bibliographic awareness – the cited scientific studies (articles, monographs, online resources, etc.) to which he refers are 149 – current, up-to-date, correctly cited, according to the regulatory requirements for this, and almost all of them (quite naturally) have not yet been translated into Bulgarian.

The dissertation is compositionally structured in the classical arrangement of three chapters, accompanied by an introduction and conclusions. At the beginning, the thesis and expected results are formulated. The three chapters follow a kind of deductive logic – from general theoretical questions related to the history and development of II (in the first chapter),

through the implementation of II in the leading media in the world, the trends in the development of II for the media, limiting this activity, as well as the necessary competencies among journalists before the implementation of II (in the second), to giving the answer to the question of how a self-developed model of artificial intelligence would have its place in the media market (third chapter). In fact, it is in this chapter that one of the main contributing moments in the dissertation is located, because in it the doctoral student is set the goal of creating precisely such a working model.

From the point of view of the linguistic and stylistic qualities of the presentation, it must be said that the text of the dissertation has a distinctly fragmentary character (we can also see it in the content of the doctoral thesis). On the one hand, this is probably an attempt to systematize the complexity and multifaceted nature of the studied phenomenon (AI) in a series of theses and brief in terms of content accents. The fragmentation is probably also influenced by the (perhaps) engineering approach in its composition. This is to some extent in dissonance with the humanitarian media discourse expected from such texts. The risk with such an approach is that, in its fear of missing an important moment in the manifestations and functioning of AI, the text becomes fragmented and to some extent reduces its receptive persuasiveness. Otherwise, the gaps in the field of grammar and punctuation (insignificant, in fact) can be attributed entirely to technical lack of concentration.

The text of the abstract fully corresponds to the text of the dissertation work.

II. Contributions of the dissertation research

As already noted, the research field offers serious challenges related to the novelty of the AI phenomenon and its practical connection with the transformations of the journalistic profession and the media in general. In this sense, the main contribution is, on the one hand, the review and systematization of the theoretical concepts of AI. On the other hand, the answer, by the dissertation student, to the question of what independently developed model of artificial intelligence would have its place on the media market in Bulgaria. It is here that the potential opportunity for using scientific results in media practice in our country lies, given the situation established by the study that more and more media in Bulgaria are using artificial intelligence in the formation of their media content.

III. Publications and participation in scientific forums

From the point of view of the fact that the materials attached by the doctoral student to the documents under the procedure are in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the approval and publication of the results of the research according to Art. 5, item 5, and the minimum national requirements under Art. 63, para. 1, item 4 and Art. 69, para. 3 are fully met.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, bearing in mind the contemporary sound of this work, its cognitive and theoretical value and its contribution, I recommend that the esteemed scientific jury award the educational and scientific degree of "doctor" to Ventsislav Ventsislavov Vassilev for his dissertation on the topic: "Artificial Intelligence Methods for Collecting, Synthesizing, Processing and Providing Information in Journalism" in the professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications - Media Language and Style)

Date: 24.04. 2025

Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yuri Petrov Prodanov

Shumen University "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski"