

Deepfake: New Era in The Age of Disinformation & End of Reliable Journalism

ABSTRACT

From the very first moment of journalism, it is obvious that there are fake news and therefore reliable journalism problems. However as in many fields, rapid technological developments in the last century have had dramatic results in the field of journalism too. The perception of trust in journalism has changed and is changing. Therefore, our age is started to be mentioned as an age of disinformation. It is possible to call deepfake (video-audio manipulation technology based on artificial intelligence) as a new era in this age. As a matter of fact, with deepfake, it has become easy for even ordinary users to display it as if someone has said something they have never said or went to a place they have never been to. Although this situation has the potential to provide wide benefits in various fields, it is possible to say that it will cause big problems in many fields including journalism. Thus, in this article, using descriptive analysis method the general social problems caused by deepfakes are briefly mentioned and it is claimed that reliable journalism is at risk of disappearing if fast and effective measures are not taken.

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Deepfake: Dezenformasyon Çağında Yeni Dönem ve Güvenilir Haberciliğin Sonu

ÖZET

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Haberciliğin var olduğu ilk andan itibaren sahte haberlerin ve dolayısıyla güvenilir habercilik probleminin var olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Ancak son yüzyılda yaşanan hızlı teknolojik gelişmeler birçok alanda olduğu gibi habercilik alanında da dramatik sonuçlar doğurmuştur. Haberciliğin güven algısı değişmiş ve değişmektedir. Bu nedenle çağımız artık bir dezenformasyon çağı olarak anılmaya başlamıştır. 'Deepfake' olarak bilinen yapay zekâ tabanlı video-ses işleme teknolojisini ise bu çağ içerisinde yeni bir dönem olarak adlandırmak mümkündür. Nitekim deepfake ile bir kişinin hiç söylemediği bir şeyi söylemiş gibi veya hiç gitmediği bir yere gitmiş gibi gösterilmesi artık sıradan kullanıcıların bile yapabileceği şekilde kolaylaşmıştır. Bu durum çeşitli alanlarda geniş faydalar sağlayacak bir potansiyele sahip olmakla birlikte, habercilik de dahil birçok alanda ise büyük problemler doğuracağını söylemek mümkündür. Böylelikle bu makalede betimsel analiz yöntemi kullanılarak 'deepfake'in doğurduğu toplumsal sorunlara kısaca değinilmekle birlikte hızlı ve etkin önlemler alınmadığı takdirde güvenilir haberciliğin tamamen ortadan kalkma riski ile karşı karşıya olduğu iddia edilmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Deepfake, güvenilir habercilik, sahte haberler, dezenformasyon, gerçek ötesi

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 20th century, it has been widely accepted that we are in “the communication age.” Developments in information technologies have provided great conveniences in the storage and distribution of information. In this respect, the developments in the last 100 years for humanity have been a great leap forward compared to the point reached in the past thousands of years. However, according to Newton's third law of motion “to every action there is always an equal and contrary reaction” (Browne, 1883, p. 391). So called the information age, had to face the same problem immediately. Nowadays it is thought that this age is an age of disinformation rather than age of information.

Thus, this age also started to be called an age of lies. “Of course, lying is hardly new, but the deliberate propagation of false or misleading information has exploded in the past century, driven both by new technologies for disseminating information—radio, television, the internet—and by the increased sophistication of those who would mislead us” (O'Connor & Weatherall, 2019, p. 9). As technologies are developing for making lies seem right, it has become almost impossible to understand what's right for ordinary people. With each new technology developing, ethical values, social destruction and social engineering issues have been frequently discussed. Ultimately, our age is no longer considered as an information age, but an age of a post-truth, fake news, misinformation, disinformation and lies.

Due to the new technologies, it has become almost impossible to distinguish between real and false content. One of the latest examples of this is hyper-realistic videos (deepfakes) based on artificial intelligence (AI), which can show as if someone had said something which actually, they didn't, as if they had done something which actually, they had not (Westerlund, 2019, p. 39). Deepfake technology, which recently gave the signals that a new era of disinformation age has begun and it was striking enough to terrify communication researchers. Although the existence of such a thing has been known for many years, it has recently revealed that this technology has reached a stage that can be used by everyone due to the rapid developments in this area. Accordingly, this article discusses the deepfake technology and the possible consequences of these technologies especially in terms of journalism. Since deepfakes are a very new concept, descriptive analysis method was used in the research. Implications have been made using a limited literature directly related to the subject. It is claimed that this is new era in the age of disinformation which may cause to end of reliable journalism.

POST-TRUTH AGE (AGE OF DISINFORMATION)

The use of the concept of “Post-Truth (Definition of post-truth adjective, n.d.)” increased by 2000% in 2015 and it was chosen the word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries in November 2016. It is closely related to The UK's Brexit (McComiskey, 2017, p. 5) and Trump's US presidential candidacy and his speeches. Thenceforth it started to be used even more frequently. The prefix “post” does not have a temporal meaning as ‘after something’. It

indicates that “truth has been eclipsed.” However, post-truth is not just a term of lying. It is “irreducibly normative.” Post-Truth is the anxiety expression of the mass who regards the “truth” as important and thinks that it is under attack (McIntyre, 2018, s. 1-6). Post-truth is blurring of boundaries between fact and fiction (Keyes, 2004) as cited in (Kalpokas, 2019, s. 11).

Finally, contributing to the broader definition of post-truth politics, there is also the academic literature on disinformation and computational propaganda, which focuses on the role of political parties and movements, on the activities of agents officially or unofficially affiliated with State actors, as well as on the actions by terrorist organizations, in the production and distribution of false or misleading information for manipulative and propagandistic ends, often with the help of software automation (Benkler et al. 2018; DiResta et al. 2018; Woolley and Howard 2018) as cited in (Cosentino, 2020, p. 7).

The circulation of sophisticated (misleading) and false information consciously or unconsciously by a highly marginalized public against each other via online environments and all communication strategies of the state or non-state elements based on lie and manipulation and put forward with such tools as bots, trolls etc. can be given as communication examples of the post-truth period. As highlighted in these examples, post-truth follows a direction that encourages such “forms of strategic manipulations” and is increasingly focused on social media (Cosentino, 2020, pp. 3-4).

Nowadays post-truth has become a critical factor and seems to remain important in the near future. The possibilities to manipulate society with different tools and methods are gradually expanding. In terms of communication, post-truth is having its brightest days ever. As a matter of fact, messages can be received and sent instantly by large masses and reach an exponentially expanding domain (Sim, 2019, p. 11). Thus, it is possible to call the age we are in as “post-truth” or “disinformation” age. Deepfake, on the other hand, is a sign that a new era has begun in this age.

DEEFAKE TECHNOLOGY

Deepfake (a combination of two terms: deep learning and fakes) is the generic name for “the use of deep learning techniques to train visual manipulation algorithms.” It refers to an algorithmic method used to replace a real person in the video with another person. Despite this process, the video looks like the original (Words We're Watching, 2018). Digital fakes are not new but deepfakes uses artificial intelligence and machine learning (ML) technologies. In this way, they create deceptive video content that seems to be real. With this technology, fake content becomes more realistic and it becomes very easy to create such videos (Kietzmann J, Lee L W, McCarthy, & Kietzmann, 2020, s. 136).

There are four main types of deepfakes: face replacement, face re-enactment, face generation and speech synthesis (Farid, et al., 2019):

Face replacement in simple terms is to ‘stick’ someone’s face (the source) to another person (the target). In this way, the identity of the target person is shown as the source person.¹ Face re-enactment focuses on changing the features of facial movements. There is no displacement of the identity of the two people here. The aim is to manipulate facial expressions as necessary, making them look like they say something which they did not.² Face generation is creating entirely new facial images.³ Speech synthesis is one of the new branch in this field which is to creating an infrastructure that can read any text with the tone of the target person. Briefly, deepfakes are “synthetic videos that closely resemble real videos” (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020, p. 1) and constantly improving video-audio manipulation technology based on artificial intelligence.

The concept started to come to the fore when it was understood that the porn movies thought to be starring Hollywood stars in 2017 were deepfakes (Roettgers , 2018). Later, many deepfakes of famous politicians, artists and statesmen began to spread.



Figure 1. Deepfake: source, target and result. Sample frames for (a) the source; (b) the target (impersonator); and (c) result (face-swap). (Agarwal, et al., 2019, p. 44).

¹ For detailed technical information, see: Dale K, Sunkavalli K, Johnson M K, Vlastic D, Matusik W and Pfister H (2011) Video Face Replacement, In Proceedings of the 2011 SIGGRAPH Asia Conference, 130, 1-10.

² For detailed technical information, see: Nirkin Y, Keller Y and Hassner T (2019) Fsgan: Subject Agnostic Face Swapping and Reenactment. In Proceedings of the IEEE International Conference on Computer Vision, 7184-7193.

³ For detailed technical information, see: Zhou H, Liu Y, Liu Z, Luo P and Wang X (2019) Talking Face Generation by Adversarially Disentangled Audio-Visual Representation. In Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence, 33, 9299- 9306.

A hacktivist named Bill Posters prepared a very realistic deepfake in which Zuckerberg said: “Imagine this for a second: One man, with total control of billions of people's stolen data, all their secrets, their lives, their futures, I owe it all to Spectre. Spectre showed me that whoever controls the data, controls the future” (Posters, 2019). Deepfake Nancy Pelosi (Member of the U.S. House of Representatives) videos, make her appear drunk (Harwell , 2019). Even a common belief occurred that deepfakes will influence the 2020 US election. As a result, although some social media platforms announced that they would remove deepfake videos until 2020 US election (Facebook to remove, 2020) and consequently deepfakes started to be seen as a big cyber threat against business, politics, identity, national security and democracy.

Today, deepfakes, which are mostly prepared by ordinary internet users for entertainment and prepared without requiring serious knowledge or technology, started to be considered real. In fact, these fake contents were thought to be true by some journalists and institutions too. For example, French charity published deepfake of Trump saying 'AIDS is over' (Skinner , 2019). Thus, it is possible to observe the dimensions of the danger area. If deepfakes, which are generally prepared for entertainment by ordinary internet users, are considered real, the contents to be prepared by professionals (intelligence organizations, states, big companies and even terrorist groups) are great cyber hazard against the business world, politics, identity, national security and democracy.

WHY JOURNALISM IS UNDER THREAT

Like most new technologies, deepfakes caused a great moral panic (Faragó, 2019, p. 14). But it is not possible to say that this panic is an undue concern. “Fake news has serious consequences for our ideals of democracy, liberty, and society” (Sunstein, 2018) as cited in (Qayyum, Qadir, Janjua, & Sher, 2019, p. 17). According to Beridze and Butcher “Deepfakes are a new dimension of the fake news problem” which might pose serious national security issues. Especially with the spread of social media, the number and effect of fake news increased. In addition, fake news occasionally causes great reactions and violence in the society (Beridze & Butcher, 2019, p. 332). Deepfakes “potentially intensify the already serious problem that fluency can be generated through familiarity, irrespective of the veracity of the video’s content” (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020, p. 5). False news can lead to anger, especially in issues where society is sensitive during disasters such as war, fire, earthquake, or protests.

Creating realistic fake videos was already possible for the advanced cinema industry, big companies and government actors. However, developments in deep learning have now made it very easy to create fake videos (Agarwal, et al., 2019, p. 38). This sensational method, which is a great threat to humanity even when it is only in the hands of state actors and large companies, will pose an even greater danger in the hands of terrorist groups, manipulators etc.

First of all, it is necessary mention the general benefits and harms of deepfakes. They can be listed as follows (Chesney & Citron, 2018, p. 1754):

Beneficial uses; education, art, autonomy and entertainment industry. Harmful uses; exploitation, sabotage, distortion of democratic discourse, manipulation of elections, eroding trust in institutions, exacerbating social divisions, undermining public safety, undermining diplomacy, jeopardizing national security, ease to deny the truth and undermining journalism. In addition, all these problems will create new legal problems (Yvorsky, 2019, pp. 134-143).

Deepfakes can increase the interest in education. Especially video-based distance education systems can be made more interesting. Imagine Einstein teaching physics, or Immanuel Kant teaching philosophy. Deepfake will be an interesting element in preparing educational material. Deepfakes are already used in the field of art and have proven their effectiveness. For example, the face of the lead actor Paul Walker, who died during the shooting of *Fast and Furious 7*, was placed in his brother and the movie was completed in this way (Wan, 2015). In terms of autonomy this technology may be used “to facilitate avatar experiences” for the disabled (Chesney & Citron, 2018, pp. 1754-1771). According to Chandler (2020) although they have a bad title like “threatening democracy” these days, deepfakes on the whole, will be “only a positive for humanity”. Thanks to them, people will have a chance to see “things that no longer exist, or that have never existed.”

Deepfakes benefits to humanity can be increased, but not as much as its losses. Deepfakes will be effective for exploiting and sabotaging people or institutions. Stealing people’s identities for various bad purposes will be easier. Deepfakes will be an easy way to organize sabotage in politics, in business, in sports and in every field where there is competition. There are many areas where it can be harmful to the society. Deepfakes could feature anything humiliating, bribery, adultery etc. Politicians can now be shown as gone to places they have never been or as if they said things they had never said. In the near term, in the absence of deepfake yet, many politicians and famous people humiliated with similar video content in Turkey, they were forced to resign or were made to lose credibility. Many of them had argued that the videos in question were ‘montage’. Soldiers in a warzone can be portrayed as villains and it can form an empire of fear by showing as if there were terrorist organizations that actually never existed. Examples can be extended. May reach fake news phenomenon to unpredictable dimensions. Trust in institutions will decrease. Deepfakes might be used to increase social conflicts and to provoke actions. They will “disrupt diplomatic relations and roil international affairs.” Deepfakes might be used to create contents which threatens national security and harm international relations. On the other hand, deepfakes “will make it easier for liars to deny the truth in distinct ways” (Chesney & Citron, 2018, pp. 1771-1787). With deepfake offering the possibility to make something fake look real, it is now easier to claim that a real is fake. It may cause endless problems in politics, law and social life. It is a known fact that politicians love to deny what they said before. The spread of deepfakes will provide great convenience to such politicians. Now you can deny every conversation unless you directly serve it to the public yourself.

“We should never assume that any claim is too outrageous to be believed” (McIntyre, 2018, s. 155). Because “False news is more novel, and people are more likely to share novel information” (Kleinman, 2018) and despite being disapproved, fake news turns viral very quickly. After this stage, even if they proven to be false or they retracted, the damage caused

by them cannot be completely eliminated. Also, fake news remains in the digital archive one way or another (Ckooke, 2018, p. vii).

When it comes to journalism, the problems that deepfakes will cause are not few. Today is already distrust to journalism reached quite high levels worldwide (Otto & Andreas, 2018, p. 75) and some of the society has made little progress, not to trust every photo and every news. Nevertheless, we often witness that intentional or unintentional contents of written or photo news which are actually fake are shared as if they were real. Moreover, not only so-called social media users but also well-established news organizations often make this mistake or this deliberate conspiracy. For example, the famous humor or made-up news producer Zaytung's⁴ contents are often believed to be real. Famous names, politicians, scientists, government agencies and news organizations are among those who think these fake humor contents are real.

The situation is not much different worldwide. There are many real news about fake news. Although it is common to think that content created for humor is true, the main danger is deliberate fake news. In the recent period, a perception has been tried to be created on the world agenda with many fake photographs about Operation Peace Spring (Barış Pınarı Harekatı , 2019). The photo of the killed dogs in Russia before the World Cup which was very busy on the agenda turned out to be fake (SMİ Razoblachili Feyk, 2018). The examples are almost unlimited. Therefore, some of the people and journalists are accustomed to be skeptical of written or photographic content, although it does not apply to most. However, video news was almost unquestionable until now. Conversations made in front of the camera are very important for news and journalism. Considering the content of all the news about political leaders, terrorists, experts, etc. are suitable for deepfake. This situation takes the problem of trust and speed to a new stage in journalism and even indicates that the end of reliable journalism has come to an end.

As the capacity to produce deep fakes spreads, journalists increasingly will encounter a dilemma: when someone provides video or audio evidence of a newsworthy event, can its authenticity be trusted? That is not a novel question, but it will be harder to answer as deep fakes proliferate. News organizations may be chilled from rapidly reporting real, disturbing events for fear that the evidence of them will turn out to be fake (Chesney & Citron, 2018, p. 1784).

Deepfakes will create a big problem of trust in journalism. As for how to overcome this problem, a definitive solution cannot be proposed at the moment (Andrews, 2019). According Chudinov et al. (2019, p. 1851) deepfakes “violates the main principle of journalism- it’s impossible to show what doesn’t exist.”

In study conducted by (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020, p. 9) with 2,005 respondents, the rates of deceived, not deceived and uncertain participants are given in the table below. The authors evaluated the result of this analysis as follows: “political deepfakes may not necessarily deceive individuals, but they may sow uncertainty which may, in turn, reduce trust in the news on social media.”

⁴ Website (www.zaytung.com) clearly states that all content on the site is made up. However, as its contents are shared on social media without reference, they thought to be real by some.

The implications of the study can be criticized. First of all, it should be claimed that reduce trust in news will appear not only on social media but on all media. Because now we should not approach social media and traditional media as completely different fields. These two areas are affected by each other (mostly the social media agenda affects traditional media). Traditional media frequently uses the content in social media. Due to a cutthroat time race, mostly the authenticity of the news is not confirmed. It is relatively easy to prove whether a video of Obama is deepfake. However, it is much more difficult to prove, for example, a deepfake, which seems to have taken place in introverted country at the other end of the world. Therefore, even if the origin of such content is social media, it is quite likely that it will take place in traditional media. Therefore, if deepfakes create a sense of distrust against the media, it will occur against all media.

It should also be noted that the data obtained from this research (whether people are fooled by the political deepfakes shown to them) is also closely related to the quality of the content. It is possible to say that more professionally prepared deepfakes will deceive more.

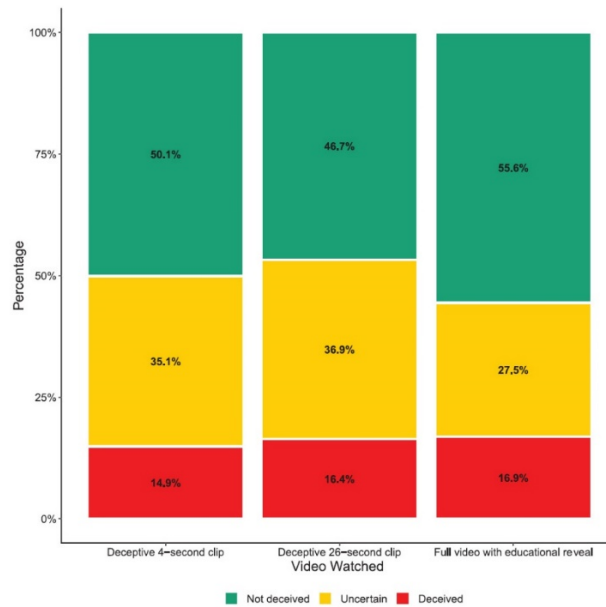


Figure 2. Table of the data that Vaccari and Chadwick obtained. (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020, p. 7).

Considering the undeniability factor mentioned earlier, journalism is in a deadlock. Of course, it is possible to say that reliable journalism has not come to an end, and that only primary sources and reliable sources should be used. But now it is not clear what is real and reliable. In addition, reporting only from primary sources makes journalism trivial. It turns it into a brochure rather than a news. When you report the speech of a party leader, you can get it from the party's own source or from the agency that obtained it from there. After all, other sources are not very reliable. In this case, however, investigative journalism disappears. Also, for example, when a newsworthy speech of a terrorist leader is broadcast as a video, from which safe source should the reporter obtain it? Although there are exceptions, terrorist organizations do not have an official website or organizations that provide information. It is also very

important that this technology works in real time too. Real-time content in journalism has a huge impact on society. Now as real-time content can also be deepfake, journalism faces a great danger.

Nowadays, many studies have been carried out to detect deepfake videos.⁵ However, most people do not have the opportunity and need to make such a determination. In addition, waiting for such determination for all content is a great waste of time for the journalists. In order to take precautions in this regard, it is essential that the authorized institutions take action immediately.

CONCLUSION

In addition to the benefits that deepfakes will provide in some fields, they will harm to society and it is possible to say that especially undermining journalism will cause great losses. “Deep fakes raise the stakes for the fake news phenomenon in dramatic fashion (quite literally)” (Chesney & Citron, 2018). Increasing academic studies on the subject and efforts of various platforms to remove political deepfakes from their databases as they affect the election results in one way or another are an indications that deepfakes should be taken into account especially in the field of journalism.

It is time to change Orwell's expression: “In a time of deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act” (Barry, 1984, p. 5). In the age of disinformation reliable journalism is an extremely difficult revolutionary act. Righteous doubt about the video content will marginally change the way journalism or eliminate reliable journalism. It is important to analyze and take measures against the problems that deepfakes will cause.

Governments, companies, academics, journalists, and all parties of the issue should strive to raise awareness of the individuals about artificial intelligence, including deepfakes, in terms of news security. It would be beneficial to prevent the use of these technologies for ‘malicious purposes’ legally (Anderson, 2018; Atodiresei et al., 2018; Britt et al., 2019; Cybenko and Cybenko, 2018; Figueira and Oliveira, 2017; Floridi, 2018; Spivak, 2019) as cited in (Westerlund, 2019, p. 47).

In the era called post-truth, fake news, misinformation, disinformation or age of lies, reliable journalism is very important for the good of all world societies. Keeping up with the age should not be isolated from the common values of humanity. Instead, it is necessary to try to serve these values with the technological possibilities of the age. Including deepfake technology there is nothing inherently good or bad.

⁵ For detailed information, see: Güera D and Delp E J (2018) Deepfake Video Detection Using Recurrent Neural Networks, 15th IEEE International Conference on Advanced Video and Signal Based Surveillance (AVSS), Auckland, New Zealand, 1-6., Li Y and S L (2018) Exposing Deepfake Videos by Detecting Face Warping Artifacts, eprint arXiv:1811.00656., Hasan H R and Salah.K (2019) Combating Deepfake Videos Using Blockchain and Smart Contracts, IEEE, 7, 41596-41606.

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

20. yüzyılın başlarından beri “iletişim çağında” olduğumuz söylenegelmektedir. Zira bilişim teknolojilerindeki hızlı gelişmeler bilginin depolanması ve iletiminde büyük kolaylıkları beraberinde getirmiştir. İnsanlık son yüzyılda geçmiş binlerce yıla nazaran hızlı bir teknolojik atılım gerçekleştirmiştir. Ancak Newton’un üçüncü hareket yasasının da dediği gibi “Her etkiye karşılık eşit ve zıt bir tepki vardır.” Böylelikle “bilgi çağı” olarak adlandırılan bu çağın yakın zamanda “dezenformasyon” veya “yalanlar çağı”na dönüştüğü düşünülmeye başlanmıştır.

Yalan söylemek yeni bir şey olmamakla birlikte, yanlış ve yanıltıcı bilginin yeni teknolojiler sayesinde kasıtlı olarak bu denli hızlı yayılması bu çağın ortaya çıkardığı bir neticedir. Yalanları doğruymuşçasına göstermeye yarayan teknolojiler geliştikçe sıradan insanlar için neyin doğru, neyin yanlış olduğunu anlamak giderek imkansız bir hale gelmektedir. Gelişen her yeni teknoloji ile etik değerler, sosyal tahribat ve sosyal mühendislik gibi konular sıklıkla tartışılır hale gelmektedir. Nitekim yeni teknolojiler nedeniyle sahte içeriği gerçeğinden ayırt etmek oldukça zorlaşmıştır. Bunun en son örneklerinden biri deepfake olarak adlandırılan ve yapay zekaya dayanan hiper gerçekçi videolardır.

Dezenformasyon çağı içinde yeni bir dönemin başlangıcı olduğunun sinyallerini veren deepfake teknolojisi iletişim araştırmacılarını dehşete düşürecek kadar çarpıcıdır. Böyle bir şeyin varlığı yıllardır bilinmesine rağmen, son zamanlarda bu teknolojinin alandaki hızlı gelişmeler nedeniyle herkes tarafından kullanılabilir bir aşamaya geldiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu makalede deepfake teknolojisi ve bu teknolojilerin özellikle habercilik açısından olası sonuçları tartışılmaktadır. Deepfake çok yeni bir kavram olduğu için araştırmada betimsel analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Çıkarımlar doğrudan konuyla ilgili sınırlı bir literatür kullanılarak yapılmıştır. Deepfake, dezenformasyon çağı içerisinde güvenilir haberciliğin sona ermesine yol açabilecek yeni bir dönemi başlatabileceği iddia edilmektedir.

Deepfake (İngilizce derin öğrenmeye vurgu yapan “deep” ve sahte manasına gelen “fake” terimlerinin birleşimi) “görsel manipülasyon algoritmalarını eğitmek için derin öğrenme tekniklerinin kullanılması”na verilen genel isimdir. En basit haliyle bir videoda yer alan gerçek bir kişiyi başka bir kişiyle değiştirmek için kullanılan algoritmik yöntemi ifade eder. Netice itibari ile ortaya çıkan sahte video gerçek gibi görünmektedir. Dijital ortamda sahte video içeriği oluşturmak yeni bir teknoloji olmamakla birlikte deepfake yapay zeka ve makine öğrenimine dayanması açısından önemlidir. Bu sayede oldukça gerçekçi sahte video içeriği oluşturmak son derece kolay bir hal almaktadır. Kavram yoğun olarak ilk defa 2017 yılında Hollywood yıldızlarının oynadığı sanılan porno filmlerin sahte olduğu (deepfake) anlaşılınca gündeme gelmeye başlamıştır. İlerleyen dönemde ünlü politikacılar, sanatçılar ve devlet adamlarının çok sayıda deepfake videosu yayılmıştır.

Aslında gerçekçi sahte videolar oluşturmak ileri sinema sektörü ve devlet aktörleri için uzun bir zamandır zaten mümkündü. Ancak derin öğrenme konusunda yaşanan gelişmeler artık sahte videolar oluşturmayı çok kolaylaştırmıştır. Sadece devlet aktörlerinin ve büyük şirketlerin

elindeyken bile insanlık için büyük bir potansiyel tehdit olan bu sansasyonel yöntem, terörist grupların, manipülatörlerin, kısaca herkesin eline geçtiğinde daha da büyük bir tehlike oluşturacaktır. Deepfake “bazılarının başkalarını sömürmesi ve sabote etmesi için güçlü mekanizmalar olarak ortaya çıkacaktır”. İnsanların kimliklerini çeşitli kötü amaçlar için çalmak daha kolay olacaktır. Deepfake siyasette, iş dünyasında, sporda ve rekabetin olduğu her alanda sabotajlar düzenlemek için kolay bir yol olacaktır. Politikacılar artık gitmedikleri yerlere gitmiş gibi, söylemedikleri şeyleri söylemiş gibi gösterilebilirler. Deepfake videoların sahte bir şeyi kolaylıkla gerçek gibi gösterme imkanı sunmasıyla birlikte, gerçek bir videonun sahte olduğunun iddia edilmesi de kolaylaşmıştır. Bunun siyasette, hukukta sosyal yaşamda doğurabileceği sorunlar sonsuzdur. Kimi siyasetçilerin söyledikleri şeyleri inkar etmeyi sevdiği bilinmektedir. Deepfake videoların yaygınlaşması bu tip siyasetçilere büyük kolaylık sağlayacaktır.

Günümüzde, çoğunlukla sıradan internet kullanıcıları tarafından ciddi bir bilişim bilgisi olmadan eğlence için hazırlanan deepfake'ler bile çoğu kullanıcı tarafından gerçek sanılmaktadır. Bu türden sahte içeriklerin gerçek olduğunu sananlar arasında çeşitli köklü gazeteler, kurumlar vb. de bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle çoğu yeni teknoloji gibi, deepfake de uzmanların gözünde büyük bir ahlaki paniğe neden olmaktadır. Bu paniğin gereksiz bir endişe olduğunu söylemek ise mümkün değildir. Zira sahte içerik “habercilik, demokrasi özgürlük ve toplum ideallerimiz için” ciddi sonuçlar doğurabilir. Deepfake, habercilik alanının ulusal güvenlik sorunlarına ve sosyal medya ile birlikte düşünüldüğünde toplumda büyük tepkilere ve şiddete yol açma potansiyeline sahip yeni bir problemidir. Zira sahte haberler, özellikle savaş, yangın, deprem veya protestolar gibi durumlarda toplumun hassas olduğu konularda öfkeye neden olabilmektedir.

Esasında eğitim, sanat eğlence endüstrisi gibi çeşitli alanlarda faydalar sağlayabilecek olan deepfake öte yandan sömürü, sabotaj, demokratik söylemin bozulması, seçimlerin manipülasyonu, kurumlara olan güveni aşındırmak, sosyal bölünmeleri şiddetlendirmek, kamu güvenliğini zayıflatmak, diplomasiyi zayıflatmak, ulusal güvenliği tehlikeye atmak, gerçeği inkâr etmek ve haberciliği zayıflatmak için de kullanılabilir. Ayrıca tüm bu sorunlar yeni hukuki sorunları da beraberinde getirecektir.

Sadece habercilik açısından bakıldığında bile deepfake teknolojisinin neden olacağı sorunlar azımsanmayacak kadar çoktur. Dünya genelinde haberciliğe olan güvensizlik giderek artmaktadır. Aslında sahte olan yazılı ve görsel (fotoğraflı) haberlerin kasıtlı veya kasıtsız bir biçimde gerçekmiş gibi paylaşıldığına da sıklıkla şahit olmak mümkündür. Mizah amacıyla oluşturulan içerikler bile kimi zaman gerçek sanılmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, video haberlerin gerçekliği şimdiye kadar neredeyse tartışılmaz olarak kabul edilmekteydi. Kamera önünde yapılan konuşmalar haber ve habercilik için çok önemlidir. Siyasi liderler, teröristler, uzmanlar vb. ile ilgili tüm haberlerin içeriği göz önüne alındığında bunların hepsinin deepfake için oldukça uygun olduğu göze çarpmaktadır. Bu durum habercilikte güven ve hız sorununu yeni bir aşamaya taşımakta ve hatta güvenilir haberciliğin sonunun geldiğinin sinyallerini vermektedir. Nitekim deepfake haberciliğe karşı büyük bir güven sorunu yaratacaktır. Bu sorunun üstesinden nasıl gelmek için ise en azından şu an için kesin bir çözüm önerilmesi çok zordur.

Elbette güvenilir haberciliğin sona ermediğini ve sadece birincil kaynakların ve güvenilir kaynakların kullanılması gerektiğini söylemek mümkündür. Ancak artık neyin gerçek ve güvenilir olduğu pek de açık değildir. Ayrıca, yalnızca birincil kaynaklardan istihbarat toplama haberciliği önemsiz hale getirecektir. Örneğin bir parti liderinin konuşmasını partinin kendi kaynağından veya oradan alan ajanstan almak daha güvenilir olacaktır. Ancak bu durumda araştırmacı gazetecilik ortadan kalkar. Ayrıca, örneğin, bir terörist liderin haber değeri olan bir konuşması video olarak yayınlandığında, muhabir bunu hangi güvenli kaynaktan almalıdır? İstisnalar olsa da terör örgütlerinin resmi bir web sitesi veya bilgi sağlayan çalışanları yoktur. Bu teknolojinin gerçek zamanlı olarak da çalışması çok önemlidir. Habercilikte gerçek zamanlı içeriklerin toplum üzerinde büyük etkisi vardır ve artık gerçek zamanlı bir video yayınının da deepfake olma ihtimali söz konusudur.

Günümüzde, deepfake videoları tespit etmek için birçok çalışma yapılmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, çoğu insan böyle bir ayırım yapma fırsatına ve ihtiyacına sahip değildir. Buna ek olarak, tüm video içeriğin gerçekliğinin kontrol edilmesi haberciler için büyük bir zaman kaybıdır.

Hükümetler, şirketler, akademisyenler, gazeteciler ve konunun tüm tarafları, haber güvenliği açısından deepfake dahil yapay zeka konusunda bireylerin farkındalığını artırmak için çaba göstermelidir. Bu teknolojilerin yasal olarak “kötü amaçlar” için kullanılmasının önlenmesi yararlı olacaktır. Post-truth, sahte haberler, dezenformasyon veya yalanlar çağı denilen bu çağda, güvenilir habercilik tüm dünya toplumlarının iyiliği için çok önemlidir.

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