

**PHD program «Mass Communications»**

**Representation of Sexuality in Ukrainian Press:**

**Construction of Sexual Norms in Newspapers and News Websites**

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Despite numerous academic works prove that sexuality is historical, socially constructed, and diverse, social common sense still considers sexuality to be a natural entity, and individual sexual preferences are still the subject of moral panics and discrimination. In previous research on sexual coverage in the media diverse normative aspects of sexuality were concerned; however, sexual norms rarely constituted an explicit object of the study. This paper presents results of the pilot study on discursive strategies of sexual normalization in two Ukrainian media: newspaper *Fakty i kommentarii* and news website *Obozrevatel.com.ua*. The sample consisted of 20 articles from *Fakty i kommentarii* over the period of three months (January – March 2012) and 25 articles from *Obozrevatel.com.ua* over the period of 15 days (January 2012, 1-15). The combination of two research methods was used, quantitative content-analysis and critical discourse-analysis. Three discursive strategies of sexual normalization were identified: hierarchization of sexual scripts, criminalization of inter-generational sexual relations, hetero-normativity of sexual portrayals. Also, the pilot study enabled to test methodological procedure proposed in PhD prospectus and to introduce genre-thematic structure as a descriptive model for analysis of media discourse on sexuality.

**Key words:** sexuality, sexual norms, discursive strategy, media, representation