

Title: Ukrainian Children's Magazines and Multiple Discursive Images of Childhood in Contemporary Ukraine

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The project described in this paper focuses on children's magazines in contemporary Ukraine. The aim is to analyze the relationship among media texts, language, the symbolic construction of childhood in juvenile media, and its relevance to societal issues. The research questions are

How do juvenile magazines construct the child?

What types of discursive images of childhood are realized at both verbal and visual levels? and

How do the various conceptions of childhood relate to wider societal practices?

The data consist of publications produced in Ukraine, targeting the 3–10 years of age group (8 Ukrainian-language magazines, 1 issue each, summer 2011).

In this study, the Critical Discourse Analysis framework (Fairclough 1995, Fairclough and Wodak 1997), an important theoretical mechanism for the study of media language and for addressing questions of social significance, is the principal theoretical and methodological tool. The visual analysis rests on premises of the social semiotic framework or the 'grammar of visual design' proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996). The linguistic analysis focuses on selected educational and entertainment texts comparable in each issue. The tools for linguistic analysis include how child identities are constructed through linguistic means, the child's involvement in a text (agency or objectivity), and two important grammatical notions: transitivity (the relationship between events/processes and subjects/objects) and modality (the participant's affinity to his/her statement). The visual analysis considers the most representative images in the media samples, specifically those that accompany the verbal texts studied. It complements the linguistic analysis and incorporates modality (the truthvalue presentation of people, places, and things) and colour (different colours signal different orientations).

The textual and visual analyses lead to a discussion of cultural practices and social change in contemporary Ukrainian society. Specifically, the discussion includes the multiple constructions of childhood presented in different publications in today's Ukraine.

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