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THE SUBJECT OF QUEER COMMUNITY IN TEENAGE BOOKS: UKRAINIAN DISCOURSE

The purpose of the study is to find out the specifics of the perception of the LGBTQ(IA+) community in books for Ukrainian adolescents.

Research methodology. A survey was used to identify the respondents' opinions on the topic. A number of assumptions were made. In particular: 1) such literature will be more interesting to young people; 2) respondents will believe that this topic should be presented in teenage literature because the world in general and Ukrainian society in particular are multifaceted and diverse, so it is normal to hear all voices; 3) realistic prose and genre publications will compete for readers' attention; 4) such books will be in demand if they are primarily about an interesting story. Accordingly, our task was to verify these assumptions. Based on this, we created a questionnaire of 7 questions: 2 open-ended questions and 5 with possible answers (+ «other» option). The «Teenage Books on an Important Topic» survey was conducted on November 10–13, 2023, using the snowball method with the help of Google Forms. A total of 145 respondents were interviewed. To process the information received, the following methods of generalization and analysis of information were used: systematization, grouping, qualitative (text analysis, classification) and quantitative (digital data) methods of data interpretation. The results are presented as a detailed verbal description.

Results. It was found that the vast majority of respondents are young people living in large cities. 96.6% of respondents believe that the topic of the LGBTQ(IA+) community **should be** represented (including a balanced representation) in Ukrainian teen literature. 3.4% of respondents believe that it **should not be** represented. According to the key messages, the following groups can be distinguished from the category «**should be** represented» because it: 1) promotes awareness of adolescents about the topic of the queer community, overcoming prejudice and stigma; 2) helps to understand that the orientation of people who are part of the queer community is a variant of the norm, and it is the norm that should be accepted by all members of society; 3) promotes the development of a culture of tolerance, gender equality, self-awareness, and self-acceptance by any member of society; 4) promotes cultural identification and representation of adolescents belonging to the queer community; 5) makes it clear that literature should cover all aspects of life; 6) is a reality for many adolescents; 7) because the niche needs to be filled. The arguments that the topic «**should not be** represented» include personal rejection; stereotypical understanding of the «usefulness of literature/art»; misunderstanding of the role of cultural identification; and the traditional accusation of the threat to the institution of the «traditional» family.

Only 55 respondents were able to name certain works from this segment by 27 foreign and 8 Ukrainian authors, and there is no distinction between books by age categories. On the Ukrainian book market, publications on the topic are represented by two genres: science fiction and fantasy and realistic prose. Annotations to publications containing elements of queer culture rarely mention this. Indirect and disguised/metaphorical/allusive references dominate.

Almost all respondents are ready to buy books that cover the topic of queer culture, among other topics. However, 4% of respondents would not buy or read such books under any circumstances. Thus, the results confirm all our assumptions.

It should also be noted that the Ukrainian book market is dominated by translated editions. In addition, we can assume that for Ukrainian authors and publishers (in order to avoid being judged), the best way to present the topic of the LGBTQ(IA+) community in books for Ukrainian adolescents would be to present it through well-written and published interesting/important stories in which characters belonging to the queer community act on an equal basis with all other characters and this is justified and is the norm.

Novelty. This is the first niche audience study of the perception of the specifics of the representation of the LGBTQ(IA+) community in books for Ukrainian adolescents.

Practical importance. *The obtained results can be used in the process of forming publishing portfolios of Ukrainian publishing houses; promoting reading; teaching disciplines related to teenage literature, in particular, the author will include the data obtained in the content of the author's course «Fiction Text from A to Z» and the module «Teenage Literature» for students majoring in 061 «Journalism» (curriculum «Publishing and Media Editing», «Media Production», «Journalism and Social Communication», «Advertising and Public Relations»).*

Key words: LGBTQ(IA+), queer community, queer history, queer culture, reading, teenage literature.

I. Introduction

The interest in the topic is due to a number of objective and subjective factors. **Objective** factors include the tendency to increase the visibility of representatives of the LGBTQ(IA+) community in Ukrainian society, which manifests itself at various levels.

1. On the *legislative* level, deputy Inna Sovsun initiated the development and submission to the parliament in March 2023 of draft law No. 9103 «On the Institute of Registered Partnerships» [7]. Regarding the prospects for the adoption of such a law in Ukraine, the deputy herself has an optimistic vision in the long term, because: 1) «there are people who speak openly about it»; 2) many Ukrainian businesses supported the events of Pride Month (June 2023); 3) positive reaction of some journalists and the media in general; 4) the existence of «a decision of the European Court of Human Rights [11], which says that Ukraine is obliged to adopt a law on registration of same-sex relationships in some format» [12]. Also, the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, acting on the instructions of the government, is developing a draft Law of Ukraine «On Civil Partnership» [12].

2. On the *sociological* level, polls show that attitudes toward representatives of the queer community in Ukraine are improving. In particular, according to a study by the Rating Group, «one in three people allows the legalization of same-sex marriage (37% – it can be allowed, 22% – have not decided, 42% – are against it, and 33% are categorically against it)» [9]. The same trend is also revealed by the study of the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) «Perception of LGBT people and their rights in Ukraine»: «In Ukraine, there is still a fairly significant share of those who have a negative attitude towards LGBT people – 34% (it should be noted that some respondents could hide their negative attitude). However, over the past year, the share of such people has decreased from 38% to 34%. At the same time, there has been an increase from 13% to 15.5% of those who have a positive attitude. It is important to note that the total number of those who have a positive or indifferent attitude is 61%, i.e., the majority of the country's population (although the indifferent attitude prevails – 45%) (in 2022, 58% had a positive or indifferent attitude)» [10]. Here, among other things, it should be noted that well-thought-out, non-intrusive cultural and educational information among those who are indifferent can contribute to the growth of positive attitudes towards members of the queer community.

3. On the *sectoral* level: for example, we can talk about cinema. Specifically, in 2023, Sunny Bunny, which started as one of the programs of the Kyiv International Film Festival «Molodist», turned into the first Ukrainian LGBTQ+ festival, which presented more than 60 films ranging from «portrait documentaries («Looking for Agnes», «Love, Highsmith») to crazy utopian musicals («Traveling Lights», «Neptune Frost»)» [8].

Or about publishing. For example, «Laboratoria» Publishing House has had a super-successful pre-sale of Francesca Flores' dark fantasy «The Witch and the Vampire». This is «a new interpretation of the Rapunzel fairy tale with elements of queer culture» [6]. According to the founder of the publishing house, Anton Martynov, the pre-sale exceeded their expectations: the book is among the top 3 sales of the publishing house in November.

The niche publishing house «Vydavnytstvo» has announced the release of the first Ukrainian queer story for adolescents, «Almost Good Guys» by Dar'ia Chaika. The author frankly and deliberately demonstrates her own position: «Ukrainian queer literature deserves to be on the first shelves of bookstores, and the LGBTIQ+ community must have basic human rights. And if it takes 100 queer books to make people finally stop perceiving homosexual orientation as something dirty and unnatural and stop being homophobic, I'm ready to write it» [15]. A fragment of the first chapter of the story is available for review on the «Arkush» platform [16]. By the way, it is the «Vydavnytstvo», whose brand codes are «Exceptional Topics. Exceptional Books», publishes the graphic novel «When the Heart Stops» by Alice Osman (two seasons of the series based on this novel with professional Ukrainian dubbing are available on Netflix, but we will talk about teenage series in another article). It is also worth noting that this year, «Vydavnytstvo» won the KyivPride Awards 2023, receiving the «Friendly Business» award [2].

Subjective factors include:

1. Our position, which is to spread the belief that basic human rights should be respected regardless of sex, gender, race, nationality, support for any religion or not supporting any religion, etc.

2. Supporting the formation of a trend to fill the niche of teenage literature, which in one way or another concerns the queer community, with quality works by Ukrainian authors (not only translated

ones) that will become visible and acceptable to both ordinary and professional (publishers, literary critics, journalists, book bloggers) readers. After all, we support the position of the writer Oksana Lushchevska, who, following the researcher Rudine Sims Bishop, emphasizes the fundamental importance of the function of «a book as a mirror» [4, 136]. And although the writer is talking about children's literature, her words are just as valid for teenage literature: «Due to the dominance of translated children's literature, our children, while reading, do not see themselves in their country, in the environment in which they live. They associate themselves with characters from other societies and cultures, do not feel like active agents, but only passive consumers. Children also do not notice our own diversity and are left alone in their socio-cultural problems and joys. Most importantly, through literature, they do not see themselves as components of the Ukrainian nation, do not see themselves and their place on the cultural and economic maps of the world» [4, 136].

3. The desire to inspire a tolerant and reasoned discourse (as opposed to the typical homophobic waves of hate on social media that usually accompany events in any format that touch the lives of representatives of the queer community) about the optimal representation of these topics in contemporary Ukrainian literature for teenagers.

In this context, the idea of a niche classroom study on the perception of the specifics of the representation of the LGBTQ(IA+) community in books for Ukrainian adolescents is natural.

II. Problem statement and research methods

The purpose of the study is to find out the specifics of the perception of the LGBTQ (IA+) community in books for Ukrainian adolescents.

We made a number of assumptions. In particular:

1) such literature will be more interesting to young people; after all, this correlates with the results of the above-mentioned KIIS sociological survey: «first of all, younger, more educated and wealthier respondents have a better attitude towards LGBT people» [10];

2) respondents believe that this topic should be represented in teenage literature because the world in general and Ukrainian society in particular are multifaceted and diverse, and it is normal to hear all voices;

3) realistic prose and genre books will compete for readers' attention;

4) such books will be in demand if they are primarily about an interesting story.

Accordingly, the task was to test these assumptions during the planned survey. Based on this, we created a questionnaire with 7 questions: 2 open-ended and 5 with possible answers (+ «other» option). The Teenage Books on an Important Topic survey was conducted on November 10–13, 2023, using the snowball method with the help of Google Forms. A total of 145 respondents were interviewed. To process the information received, the following methods of generalization and analysis of information were used: systematization, grouping, qualitative (text analysis, classification) and quantitative (digital data) methods of data interpretation. The results are presented as a detailed verbal description.

III. Results

Two identification questions revealed that the vast majority of respondents were young people. The respondents mostly live in large cities. See Table 1.

Table 1

Identification data		
	Categories	%
Age	11–13 years old	0.7
	14–17 years old	4.8
	18–25 years old	71.7
	26–35 years old	13.1
	36–55 years old	9.0
	56+	0.7
Place of residence	village	3.4
	a city with a population of up to 50 thousand people	7.6
	a city with a population of 51–100 thousand people	5.5
	a city with a population of 101–500 thousand people	11.0
	a city with a population of over 500 thousand people	72.4

The third question concerned the importance of presenting the stated topic in the literature for Ukrainian adolescents (see Figure 1).

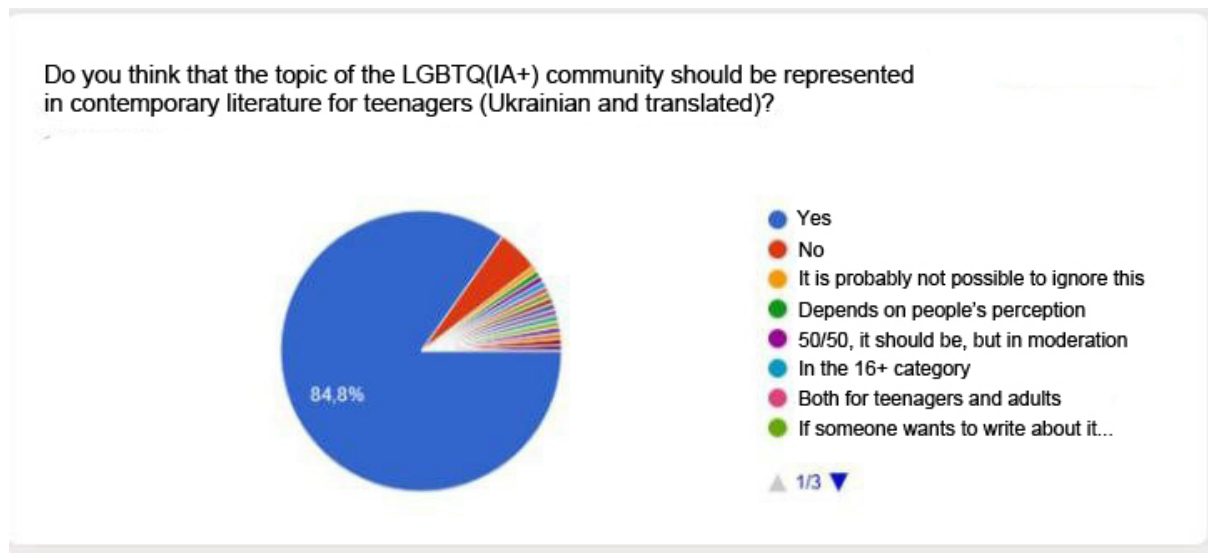


Figure 1. The need for representation of the topic in teenage literature

84.8% of respondents answered «yes». 4.8% chose «no». 10.4% chose the «other» option and, in fact, showed their own attitude to such literature. However, if we consider the stated positions, these are answers from the categories:

1) «It is necessary to cover it, but taking into account age-specific features.» «It is probably not possible and even pointless to ignore this topic, but its coverage should be approached very carefully and neutrally, because this is literature for adolescents, for people who have not yet formed»; «In the 16+ category»; «It depends on the presentation, children should perceive the real facts, not how community activists present it, playing on feelings»; «Works on this special topic and with «non-traditional» characters are needed, why not? But, despite the fact that it is in adolescence that puberty and the first sexual attraction occur, such literature should be rated 18+. According to the principle «Do no harm»»; «For both teenagers and adults»;

2) «to cover, but to keep a balance and sense of proportion» (after all, just like in life): «Depends on the perception»; «50/50, it should be, but in moderation»; «For reference»; «Perhaps as a fact, not propaganda»; «Depends on the context»;

3) «to cover, but it is not the topic that should dominate, but the quality of the story»: «If someone wants to write about it and it has a reader, then yes. The main thing is that the story should not only have LGBTQ(IA+) people in it, but also an interesting plot...»;

4) neutral attitude: «I am neutral about this. People choose whom they love. But I prefer books where heterosexuality prevails»; «Neutral»;

5) Indifferent attitude: «To be honest, I have never thought about it. But if so, why not»;

6) with restrictions: «It should be presented, but not in such a way that this topic is the main one in the book or these characters play the main roles.»

In fact, the majority of those who chose the «other» option also supported the need for literature on the stated topic.

The fourth question is a reasonable one about the presence/absence of the topic in the literature for adolescents: «Why do you think the topic of the LGBTQ(IA+) community should (or should not) be represented in Ukrainian teenage literature?» This is an open-ended question, in which respondents provide their own arguments for and against. The length of the article does not allow us to present 145 answers in detail, but we can group them by highlighting: 1) the respondent's position; 2) key messages, and citing the most typical statements.

According to the respondent's position, 96.6% of respondents believe that the topic of the LGBTQ (IA+) community **should be** represented (including a balanced representation) in Ukrainian teenage literature. 3.4% of respondents believe that it **should not be** represented.

According to the key messages, the following groups can be distinguished from the category «**should be** represented» because it is:

1) *promotes awareness of adolescents about the queer community, overcoming prejudice and stigma* – 31.0%; «Because LGBTQ+ people are the same people who are among this very adolescent audience. The representation of the LGBTQ+ community will help adolescents become less prejudiced and not look at LGBTQ+ people as «something» they have never seen or heard of before and now don't know how to behave. Just as importantly, such literature can help LGBTQ+ adolescents themselves go through a period of self-acceptance and awareness of their still non-traditional orientation for our society, not to feel like white crows and finally read a story «about themselves» or at least one that describes

feelings close to those of these adolescents. Such literature can become this place of comfort and acceptance for LGBTQ+ adolescents (if they don't have it in their lives or don't have enough of it) and make them realize that even if you are feeling fear, rejection or pain right now, you are not the only one going through this and it won't always be like this.»

2) *helps to understand that the orientation of people belonging to the queer community is a variant of the norm, and it is the norm that all members of society should perceive it as – 25.5%*; here is an example of one of the answers, which contains several arguments, but each of them is based on the concept of «norm» and «normalization»: «In my opinion, the topic of the LGBTQ(IA+) community should be present in Ukrainian teenage literature for several reasons. First of all, because it is simply normal. Fortunately, although marriage is not legalized in our country, there is no persecution and no policy of extermination. And since literature, including teenage literature, like any other art, comprehends reality, why not? It is also, of course, a representation of the community's experience, openness, education of society, normalization of queer relations in Ukrainian society, and so on. Given the century in which we live, it is quite normal and even necessary to teach younger generations to respect each other and to embrace diversity. We need to move away from all the toxic and destructive things that have been imposed over generations».

3) *ensures the development of a culture of tolerance, gender equality, self-awareness and acceptance by any member of society – 14.5%*;

4) *promotes cultural identification and representation of adolescents belonging to the queer community – 6.9%*; «Because lgbt adolescents have the right to literature about themselves. I am a lesbian myself and I can say with certainty that only the representation of people who look like me in pop culture and culture in general helped me to accept myself fully and completely, to avoid thinking that I should not exist in this world. Luckily, I studied English quite actively, so it was the English-language information space that gave me this representation. Those who are less fortunate in learning languages may not get this validation of their own feelings...»

5) *gives an understanding that literature should cover all aspects of life – 6.2%*; «it would be strange to pretend that this does not exist»;

6) *a reality for many adolescents – 5.5%*; «It [such literature – our clarification, O. R.] should be represented, because sexual minorities are also among adolescents, and they also want to empathize with the characters and associate themselves with them».

7) *because the niche needs to be filled – 3.4%*.

In addition, 3.4% of respondents believe that the topic **should be presented, but in a balanced way**: «This topic is now being popularized in cinema, and in my opinion, people have the right to talk about it, but there is too much of it now and sometimes it is unnecessary».

Similarly, 3.4% of respondents believe that the topic «**should not be** presented,» citing the following arguments: «Modernity is good, but there should be certain frameworks and boundaries, respect for others» (here, however, the question arises as to why **mutual** respect is not mentioned); «I do not believe in the ability of lgbt culture to benefit the broad mass of adolescents»; «There are many foreign authors who write about this, I do not believe that Ukrainian authors should cover this topic»; «It should not be presented, because it affects children and adolescents. Anyone who wants to find books on this topic will find them»; «In my opinion, LGBTQ(IA+) people violate the traditional family code, and therefore, covering this topic can be perceived as imposition. Given that adolescents are very vulnerable, easily influenced by social beliefs and do not yet fully understand the value of life, I believe that children should be introduced to such topics by their parents or family members»; «I have a negative attitude towards lgbt people in any form, especially in contemporary literature.»

As we can see, there is a purely personal rejection; a stereotypical understanding of the «usefulness of literature/art»; a misunderstanding of the role of cultural identification (the aforementioned function of the book as a «mirror»); and the traditional accusation that the institution of the «traditional» family is threatened.

The fifth question, «Which teenage books (Ukrainian and translated) from this segment do you know?» was not mandatory, since one cannot demand that everyone know this or that segment of literature. Thus, 113 respondents answered this question, 58 of whom indicated variants of the phrase «I don't know such books» as an answer to the question.

Others named mostly books by foreign authors (and we often see an inability to distinguish between texts for adults and for adolescents, as the respondents obviously tried to remember at least something, which once again refers to the need to fill the niche of books on relevant topics). Among them are the following: Becky Albertalli's «Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda» (available in Ukrainian bookstores, but only in English), André Aciman's «Call Me by Your Name» (Book Chef, 2021), Leigh Bardugo's «Six Crows» (Vivat, 2023), Kathleen Bjornstad (for adults, Old Lion Publishing House (hereinafter referred to as OLP), 2019), Elizabeth Gilbert's «The City of Girls» (OLP, 2020), Sally Green's trilogy «Half Wicked», «Half Wild», «Half Lost» (OLP, 2014–2016), Jeffrey Eugenides' «The Middle Sex» (OLP, 2018), Nagata Kabi's «My Lesbian Experience of Loneliness» (Vydavnytstvo, 2023), Travis John Klune's «The House

in the Cornflower Sea» (Book Chef, 2023), Jerold J. Kreisman, Hal Strauss «I Hate You, But Don't Leave Me» (nonfiction, Book Chef, 2023), Casey McQuiston «Red, White, and Royal Blue (Limited Edition)» (Artbooks, 2023), Madeline Miller «Achilles' Song» (English, Bloomsbury, 2012), Erin Morgenstern «The Starless Sea» (Vivat, 2023), Marie-Aude Murail «Oh, Boy!» (Ukrainian-language edition, Ridna Mova, 2017), Caroline O'Donoghue's «Our Hidden Gifts» (OLP, 2023), Katie O'Neill's «Princess + Princess: Happily Ever After» (Ridna Mova, 2019), Alice Oseman's «When the Heart Stops» / «Heartstopper» (Publishing House, 4 volumes + 5th in pre-order, 2019–2023), books by Mark Oshiro and Rick Riordan (in English), K.S. Pakat's «The Secret Ascent» (NK-Bohdan, 2023), Nora Sakavic's cycle «All for the Game» (2013–2014, in English, initially presented online), Adam Silvera's «They Both Die at the End» (Vivat is planning to publish it), Donna Tartt's «The Goldfinch» (for adults, KSD, 2016), Andreas Steinhöfel's «The Middle of the World» (VSL, 2016), Francesca Flores' «The Witch and the Vampire» (Laboratoria, 2023), and Hanya Yanagihara's «A Little Life» (KM Books, 2017).

Among the *Ukrainian* publications, the following are mentioned: A. Achell (Anastasia Korostil) «The Queen's Blade. A Dance with Shadows» (Book Chef, 2023), Iryna Hrabovska's «Stars and Bones» (Vivat, 2023), Matt Kaulitz's «Empaths» (Kondor, 2023, originally published online), and Agatangel Krymskyi's «Andrii Lahovskyi» (for adults, Vikhola, 2023), Larysa Denysenko's «Maya and Her Mothers» and «Children of Air Alarms» (both for children, Vydavnytstvo, 2017 and 2022), Zoia Kazanzhy's «Something Like Love» (OLP, 2017), Tetiana Stryzhevska's (OLP, 2022), Dar'ia Chaika's «Almost Good Guys» (announcement, Vydavnytstvo).

In total, the respondents named books by 27 foreign and 8 Ukrainian authors, and there is no distinction between books by age category (they named what they knew from the niche in general), published in Ukrainian and English.

Based on conversations with researchers of children's literature (for example, representatives of the BaraBooka team [1]), representatives of publishing houses, including Vivat, Old Lion Publishing House (by the way, this publishing house won the Chytomo Award in 2023 in the category «Trendsetter of the Publishing Market» [5], so we have reason to be guided by the trends it introduces), «Laboratoria», as well as our own professional and reading experience, we can add to the list of works for teenagers that somehow cover the topic of queer culture. These are the following books: Leah Aguirre and Geraldine O'Sullivan's «A Girl's Guide to Relationships, Sexuality, and Consent» (nonfiction, Morfeus, 2023), Xiran Jay Zhao's «The Iron Widow» (Vivat, 2023), Sarah Maas's «The Court of Thorns and Roses», «The Court of Darkness and Anger», «The Court of Frost and Starlight», «The Court of Wings and Ruin», «The Court of Silver Flames» (Vivat, 2023); Jules Marot's «Blue is a Warm Color» (Vydavnytstvo, 2023), Jandy Nelson's «I Will Give You the Sun» (Vivat, 2018), Sonora Reyes' «The Lesbian's Handbook for Catholic School» (Vydavnytstvo, announcement).

It is worth noting that one can read about books for adults that address the topic of queer culture, for example, in the materials of Oleksandra Horchynska [3] or Hanna Uliura [14].

In the context of what is being read on the topic, it is also interesting to trace the presence/absence of mentions of queer culture in the annotations of books related to the topic under consideration. In terms of genres, these are science fiction, fantasy, and realistic prose.

So, in fantasy and science fiction, both translated and Ukrainian works, we have the following options:

1. *Lack of mentions* (for the most part). For example, the Courts series by Sarah J. Maas from Vivat; The Iron Widow by Xiran Jay Zhao (although the cover mentions that the Chinese writer is a non-binary person); Stars and Bones by Iryna Grabovska, etc.

2. *Indirect mentions*. For example, Caroline O'Donoghue's «Our Hidden Gifts»: «In her debut novel for adolescents, Irish writer Caroline O'Donoghue tackles sensitive topics: friendship, first love, **search and accepting oneself, gender, homophobia** – and spices it all up with a handful of Irish magic» (Lviv: OLP, 2023, 464 p.). Or «The Witch and the Vampire» by Francesca Flores: «...a dark fantasy in which queer culture, intertwined with the plot of the «Rapunzel» fairy tale, opens up a magical world that hides much more than the usual «and they lived happily ever after»» (Kyiv: Laboratoria, 2023, 296 p.)

In realistic prose, we have:

1. The *absence* of mentions. For example, «Call Me by Your Name» by André Aciman (Kyiv: Book Chef, 2021, 352 p.)

2. *Indirect* mentions. For example, «The Middle of the World» by Andreas Steinhöfel: «Seventeen-year-old Phil is trying to find his place in a whirlwind of human strangeness. He is looking for understanding with his eccentric mother and reclusive twin sister, dreams of finding out at least something about his father, falls in love with a new mysterious classmate...» (Lviv: OLP, 2016, 432 p.).

3. *Direct* mentions. «Almost Good Guys» by Dar'ia Chaika: «Kim is gay, and the whole school found out when his personal correspondence was leaked online. And I am his former best friend. After the summer vacation, we returned to school, where rumors and gossip constantly haunt us, and the hatred of some students for Kim sometimes goes beyond the limits» (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo, announcement) [15].

4. *Disguised/metaphorical/allusive* mentions. For example, «I Will Give You the Sun» by Jandy Nelson: «Twins Jude and Noah are very close, equally have a fine appreciation of the beauty of the

world around them, there is an almost telepathic connection between them. At the same time, they are very different: the sister is a sociable, active and popular long-haired beauty, and the brother is a **strange** young artist immersed in creativity» (Kharkiv: Vivat, 2018, 384 p.). It should be noted that we learn almost immediately that one of the twins, Noah, is gay. Or «The Terminator Line» by Tetiana Stryzhevska: «...He has to learn to start his life all over again and find new friends, even if they are two **oddities** from the class» (Lviv: OLP, 2022, 416 p.). And then Marina (one of the «two oddities») on first acquaintance with Boris Makarov, the main character, declares to him that she is a lesbian. Or «Red, White and Royal Blue (Limited Edition)», Casey McQuiston: The only way to prevent an international scandal is to pretend that Alex and Henry really are best friends. However, what started as a staging eventually turns into something much **bigger and riskier**» (Kyiv: Artbuks, 2023, 544 p.).

The sixth question concerned the genre selection of books (see Fig. 2), here the respondents could choose several options.

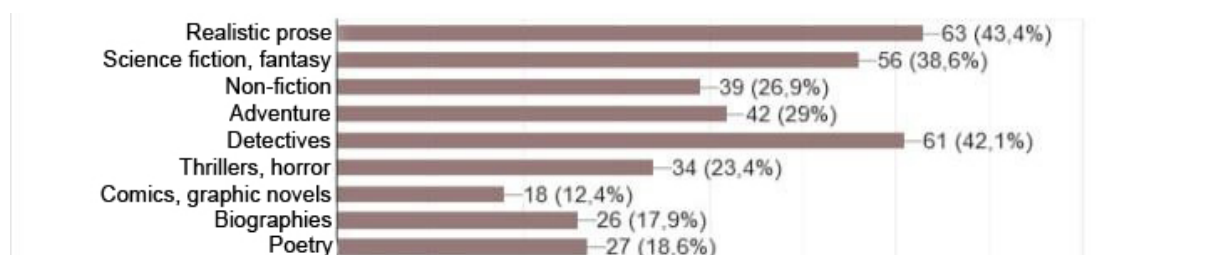


Figure 2. Genre classification

Some respondents chose the «other» option, but certain data can be combined, as it contains several items from the offered list. So the final distribution in descending order of popularity will look like this:

- 1) realistic prose – 68 respondents (46.9%);
- 2) detectives – 67 (46.2%);
- 3) science fiction, fantasy – 61 (42.1%);
- 4) non-fiction – 47 (32.4%);
- 5) adventures – 45 (31.0%);
- 6) thrillers, horror – 39 (26.9%);
- 7) biographies – 30 (20.7%);
- 8) poetry – 27 (18.6%);
- 9) comics, graphic novels – 19 (13.1%).

As we can see, the top 3 include realistic prose, detective stories, science fiction, and fantasy. This correlates with the data from the Ukrainian Book Institute's reading survey: «In secondary school, children begin to get to know the genres better: along with books for children (31%), they read science fiction and fantasy (32%) and books for adolescents (39%). [...] older school children continue to read science fiction and fantasy (38%), discover classics (22%) and the detective genre (21%)» [13]. The genres of «science fiction, fantasy» and «realistic prose» are of particular importance for the topic we have identified, because these are the genres that represent the topic (we are talking about both foreign and Ukrainian authors).

The seventh question concerned the prospects for buying books in this segment (see Fig. 3). It included 14 answer options and the «other» option.

Since readers pay attention primarily to the cover and blurb when choosing a book, we assumed that an interesting blurb that promises an interesting story would be the driving force behind the purchase. This assumption proved to be true.

51% of respondents chose the option «if I am interested in the blurb».

13.1% will buy a book that addresses the LGBTQ(IA+) community, among other topics, if it is a book in their favorite genre.

8% – if a friend or other significant person recommends the story.

7% – if the advertising/promotional campaign is fascinating/intriguing.

5% – if it's a story by a favorite author.

4% – only an e-book or audiobook, because they prefer these formats.

3% – if the story is recommended by a favorite blogger/influencer.

0.7% – if the book is published by a favorite publishing house.

Let's imagine that Ukrainian bookstores (physical and online) have books for teenagers by Ukrainian authors that, among other topics, also address the LGBTQ(IA+) community (including homophobia). What will you do? Please choose ONE answer or fill in the «other» option.



Figure 3. Prospects for purchasing books on the subject

Among those who chose the «other» option, 6.9% would buy: for other reasons, if the blurb is interesting and the queer theme is not central, if the plot is interesting, if several factors of interest in the book are combined, «to support raising awareness of such an important and acute social issue as the LGBTQ(IA+) community.»

So, in one way or another, almost all respondents are ready to buy books that cover queer culture, among other topics. In addition, two will read them in libraries, and one will read them if they can legally download a free version.

4% of respondents will not buy or read such books under any circumstances. 2.1% will not buy or read them because they are not part of the target audience (not adolescents).

IV. Conclusions

So the obtained results confirm all our assumptions. 96.6% of respondents believe that the topic of the LGBTQ(IA+) community **should be** represented (including a balanced representation) in Ukrainian teen literature. 3.4% of respondents believe that it **should not be** represented.

According to the key messages, the following groups can be distinguished from the category of «**should be** represented» because it: 1) promotes awareness of adolescents about the topic of the queer community, overcoming prejudice and stigma; 2) helps to understand that the orientation of people belonging to the queer community is a variant of the norm, and it is the norm that should be perceived by all members of society; 3) promotes the development of a culture of tolerance, gender equality, self-awareness, and self-acceptance by any member of society; 4) promotes cultural identification and representation of adolescents belonging to the queer community; 5) makes it clear that literature should cover all aspects of life; 6) is a reality for many adolescents; 7) because the niche needs to be filled. The arguments that the topic «**should not be** represented» include personal rejection; stereotypical understanding of the «usefulness of literature/art»; misunderstanding of the role of cultural identification; and the traditional accusation of the threat to the institution of the «traditional» family.

Only 55 respondents were able to name some works from this segment by 27 foreign and 8 Ukrainian authors, and there is no distinction between books by age categories.

On the Ukrainian book market, publications on the topic are represented by two genres: science fiction, fantasy, and realistic prose. Annotations to publications containing elements of queer culture rarely mention this. Indirect and disguised/metaphorical/allusive mentions dominate.

Almost all respondents are ready to buy books that cover the topic of queer culture, among other topics. 4% of respondents would not buy or read such books under any circumstances.

It should also be noted that the Ukrainian book market is dominated by translated editions not only because Ukrainian readers are interested in them, but also because the publication of such books is «safer» in terms of acceptance by Ukrainians: it is legitimate because it was published abroad. It will be more difficult for Ukrainian authors, provided they clearly position their work as a «queer history,» because they will be accused of «destroying the traditional family and traditional values.» Nevertheless, we need works by Ukrainian authors that deal with this topic, because only they can provide cultural

identification for Ukrainian adolescents: a person can belong to the queer community (or not, support it or not, but know about it) and rely on fundamental human, national, and patriotic values.

In addition, we believe that the best way for Ukrainian authors and publishers (to avoid being targeted) an optimal way to present the topic of the LGBTQ(IA+) community in books for Ukrainian adolescents would be to present it through well-written and published interesting/important stories in which characters belonging to the queer community act on an equal level with all other characters and this is justified and the norm. First of all, such characters are people with certain virtues and vices, they proclaim certain values, fulfill certain social roles in the family, in the country and in the world, follow the laws of the state (or violate them like anyone else) and ethical norms, etc, and sexual orientation and/or gender identity is a private matter, so it is up to everyone to decide whether to disclose it or not, to demonstrate it or not, and – unequivocally and undoubtedly – no one can be discriminated against or stigmatized because of it.

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Рижко О. М. Тема квір-спільноти у підліткових книжках: український дискурс

Мета дослідження – з'ясувати специфіку сприйняття теми ЛГБТК(IA+)-спільноти у книжках для українських підлітків.

Методологія дослідження. Для виявлення думки респондентів щодо окресленої теми, використано опитування. Було сформульовано низку припущень. Зокрема: 1) така література буде більш цікава молоді; 2) респонденти вважатимуть, що ця тема має бути представлена у підлітковій літературі, бо світ загалом і українське суспільство зокрема – багатогранні й різноманітні, тож це нормально – чути всі голоси; 3) за читацьку увагу змагатиметься реалістична проза та жанрові видання; 4) такі книжки матимуть попит, якщо йтиметься передусім про цікаву історію. Відповідно завданням стала перевірка цих припущень. Виходячи з цього, ми створили анкету на 7 запитань: 2 відкритих і 5 з варіантами відповідей (+ опція «інше»). Опитування «Підліткові книжки на важливу тему» проводилося 10–13 листопада 2023 року методом «сніжки» за допомогою google-forms. Було опитано 145 респондентів. Для обробки отриманої інформації використано методи узагальнення та аналізу інформації: систематизація, групування, якісні (аналіз тексту, класифікація) та кількісні (цифрові дані) методики інтерпретації даних. Представлення результатів подано як розгорнений словесний опис.

Результати. З'ясовано, що переважна більшість респондентів – це молодь, що мешкає у великих містах. 96,6% опитаних вважають, тема ЛГБТК(IA+)-спільноти має бути представлена (у т. ч. представлена збалансовано) в українській підлітковій літературі. 3,4% опитаних вважають, що не має бути представлена. Відповідно до ключових меседжів, можна

виділити такі групи з категорії «має бути представлена», бо це: 1) сприяє обізнаності підлітків щодо теми квір-спільноти, подоланню упереджень і стигматизації; 2) допомагає зрозуміти, що орієнтація осіб, що входять до квір-спільноти, – це варіант норми, і саме як норму її мають сприймати усі представники соціуму; 3) забезпечує розвиток культури толерантності, гендерної рівності, усвідомлення і прийняття себе будь-яким представником соціуму; 4) сприяє культурній ідентифікації і репрезентації підлітків, що належать до квір-спільноти; 5) дає розуміння, що література має охоплювати всі аспекти життя; 6) реальність для багатьох підлітків; 7) бо ніша потребує наповнення. Аргументами того, що тема «не має бути представлена», є особистісне несприйняття; стереотипне розуміння «корисності літератури/мистецтва»; нерозуміння ролі культурної ідентифікації; і традиційний закид загроженості інституту «традиційної» сім'ї.

Лише 55 респондентів змогли назвати окремі твори із зазначеного сегменту 27 зарубіжних і 8 українських авторів, причому спостерігається нерозрізнення книжок за віковими категоріями. На українському книжковому ринку видання на окреслену тему представлені двома жанрами – фантастика і фентезі та реалістична проза. В анотаціях до видань, що містять елементи квір-культури, рідко згадується про це. Домінують опосередковані та замасковані/метафоричні/алюзійні згадки.

Книжки, у яких, крім інших тем, висвітлено тему квір-культури, готові купити майже всі респонденти. За жодних обставин не купуватимуть і не читатимуть такі книжки 4% опитаних. Таким чином, отримані результати підтверджують усі наші припущення.

Також слід зазначити, що на українському книжковому ринку домінують перекладні видання. Крім того, можемо вважати, що для українських авторів і видавництв (аби не зазнати гейту) оптимальним варіантом представлення теми ЛГБТК(IA+)-спільноти у книжках для українських підлітків буде подання її через якісно написані та видані цікаві/значимі історії, у яких герої, що належать до квір-спільноти, діють нарівні з усіма іншими персонажами і це є виправданим і є нормою.

Новизна. Це перше нішеве аудиторне дослідження сприйняття специфіки представлення теми ЛГБТК(IA+)-спільноти у книжках для українських підлітків.

Практичне значення. Одержані результати можна використовувати у процесі формування видавничих портфелів українських видавництв; промоції читання; викладів навчальних дисциплін, пов'язаних із підлітковою літературою, зокрема авторка внесе отримані дані у зміст авторського курсу «Художній текст від А до Я» та модулю «Підліткова література» для студентів спеціальності 061 «Журналістика» (ОП «Видавнича справа і медіаредагування», «Медіапродюсування», «Журналістика і соціальна комунікація», «Реклама і зв'язки з громадськістю»).

Ключові слова: ЛГБТК(IA+), квір-спільнота, квір-історія, квір-культура, читання, підліткова література.

Ryżko O. Temat społeczności queer w książkach dla nastolatków: dyskurs ukraiński

Celem badania jest poznanie specyfiki percepcji tematu społeczności LGBTQ(IA+) w książkach dla ukraińskiej młodzieży.

Metodologia badania. W celu poznania opinii respondentów na wymieniony temat wykorzystano metodę sondażu. Sformułowano szereg przypuszczeń, w szczególności: 1) taka literatura będzie ciekawsza dla młodzieży; 2) respondenci będą uważać, że ten temat powinien zostać zaprezentowany w literaturze młodzieżowej, ponieważ świat w ogóle, a społeczeństwo ukraińskie w szczególności jest wieloaspektowe i różnorodne, zatem normalne jest, że słycać wszystkie głosy; 3) o uwagę czytelników będą walczyć realistyczne publikacje prozatorskie i gatunkowe; 4) książki takie będą zapotrzebowane, jeśli będzie chodziło przede wszystkim o ciekawą historię. W związku z tym niniejszym zadaniem była weryfikacja tych przypuszczeń. Na tej podstawie stworzyliśmy ankietę składającą się z 7 pytań: 2 otwarte i 5 z wieloma odpowiedziami (+ opcja «inne»). Sondaż pod nazwą «Książki dla nastolatków na ważny temat» został przeprowadzony w dniach 10–13 listopada 2023 r. za pomocą metody «kula śnieżna» z wykorzystaniem formularzy Google. Przepytano 145 respondentów. Do przetwarzania otrzymanych informacji zastosowano metodę uogólnienia oraz analizy informacji: systematyzacja, grupowanie, jakościowe (analiza tekstu, klasyfikacja), a także ilościowe (dane cyfrowe) metody interpretacji danych. Przedstawienie wyników ma formę szczegółowego opisu słownego.

Wyniki. Ujawniono, że zdecydowaną większość respondentów stanowią młodzi ludzie mieszkający w dużych miastach. 96,6% respondentów uważa, że temat społeczności LGBTQ(IA+) powinien być prezentowany (w tym przedstawiany w sposób zrównoważony) w ukraińskiej literaturze młodzieżowej. 3,4% respondentów uważa, że **nie należy** go przedstawiać. Zgodnie z kluczowymi przesłaniami, z kategorii «warto przedstawiać», można wyróżnić następujące grupy, ponieważ: 1) promuje to świadomość nastolatków na temat społeczności queer, przezwyciężanie uprzedzeń i stygmatyzacji; 2) pomaga zrozumieć, że orientacja osób należących do społeczności queer jest odmianą normy i właśnie jako normę powinni ją postrzegać wszyscy przedstawiciele społeczeństwa; 3) zapewnia to

rozwój kultury tolerancji, równości płci, świadomości i akceptacji siebie jako przedstawiciela społeczeństwa w jakiegokolwiek postaci; 4) sprzyja identyfikacji kulturowej i reprezentacji nastolatków należących do społeczności queer; 5) daje rozumienie tego, że literatura powinna obejmować wszystkie aspekty życia; 6) jest to rzeczywistością wielu nastolatków; 7) nisza wymaga wypełnienia. Argumentami, że tematu «nie należy przedstawiać» są zastrzeżenia osobiste; stereotypowe rozumienie «przydatności literatury/sztuki»; niezrozumienie roli identyfikacji kulturowej; oraz tradycyjny zarzut zagrożenia dla instytucji «tradycyjnej» rodziny.

Tylko 55 respondentów byli w stanie wymienić poszczególne dzieła z określonego segmentu autorstwa 27 autorów zagranicznych i 8 autorów ukraińskich, brak jest także rozróżnienia książek według kategorii wiekowych. Na ukraińskim rynku wydawniczym publikacje o określonej tematyce prezentowane są w dwóch gatunkach – fantastyka i fantasy oraz proza realistyczna. Adnotacje do publikacji zawierających elementy kultury queer rzadko o tym wspominają. Dominują wzmianki pośrednie i zakamuflowane/metaforyczne/aluzyjne wzmianki.

Prawie wszyscy respondenci są gotowi kupić książki, które oprócz innych tematów poruszają tematykę kultury queer. 4% respondentów w żadnym wypadku nie kupi ani nie przeczyta takich książek. Uzyskane wyniki potwierdzają zatem wszystkie nasze przypuszczenia.

Należy również zauważyć, że na ukraińskim rynku wydawniczym dominują publikacje tłumaczone. Ponadto możemy uznać, że dla ukraińskich autorów i wydawnictw (aby nie narażać się na hejt) optymalną opcją przedstawienia tematu społeczności LGBTQ(IA+) w książkach dla ukraińskich nastolatków byłoby przedstawienie go poprzez jakościowo napisane i opublikowane ciekawe/znaczące historie, w których bohaterowie należący do społeczności queer zachowują się na równi ze wszystkimi innymi postaciami i jest to uzasadnione i normą.

Nowość. Jest to pierwsze niszowe audytoryjne badanie dotyczące postrzegania specyfiki przedstawienia tematu społeczności LGBTQ(IA+) w książkach dla ukraińskiej młodzieży.

Znaczenie praktyczne. Uzyskane wyniki mogą być wykorzystane w procesie formowania portfeli wydawniczych ukraińskich wydawnictw; promocji czytania; prezentacji dyscyplin naukowych związanych z literaturą młodzieżową, w szczególności autorka uwzględni uzyskane dane w treściach autorskiego kursu «Tekst artystyczny od A do Z» oraz modułu «Literatura młodzieżowa» dla studentów specjalności 061 «Dziennikarstwo» (Program Edukacyjny «Wydawnictwo i edycja mediów», «Produkcja medialna», «Dziennikarstwo i komunikacja społeczna», «Reklama i public relations»).

Słowa kluczowe: LGBTQ(IA+), społeczność queer, kultura queer, czytanie, literatura młodzieżowa.