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Media Representations of LGBTQ+ People in Taiwan's United Daily News

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Abstract

Taiwan became the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage in 2019, societal attitudes may appear to be increasingly open. However, prejudice and stereotypes against the LGBTQ+ community still exist. The media's portrayal has a profound impact on the social status of minority groups, as the media is a crucial arena for shaping public perception and policy agendas. Previous research on LGBTQ+ issues in Taiwan has mostly focused on social media or specific events, such as the same-sex marriage referendum, while systematic analyses of how mainstream newspapers represent different LGBTQ+ subgroups remain relatively limited.

To address this research gap, this study aims to examine how LGBTQ+ people are represented in the United Daily News (UDN) and investigate whether differences exist in the representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. It also explores what kinds of stereotypes appear in news discourse and whether these representations reproduce, negotiate, or challenge existing stereotypes.

This study adopts a qualitative critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach and employs van Leeuwen's (1996, 2008) framework for the representation of social actors. The analysed corpus consists of 42 news reports related to LGBTQ+ issues published in UDN throughout the entire year of 2025. The analysis focuses on five dimensions: role allocation, referential strategies, association, nomination, and categorisation. These dimensions are used to examine how LGBTQ+ people are positioned, named, classified, and associated with other social actors in news discourse. The analysis also distinguishes between reports referring to the LGBTQ+ community as a whole and those explicitly identifying particular subgroups.

This study is expected to reveal how LGBTQ+ people are represented in UDN and whether the coverage differs between subgroups. I expect to find differences in how often each group appears, how much agency they are given, what terms are used for them, and how they are categorised. I also want to see how stereotypes are reproduced, negotiated, or challenged. Some reports talk about LGBTQ+ people as

a whole without naming a subgroup. I will analyse these as a collective category and will not assign them to any single subgroup.

This study aims to provide a clearer understanding of LGBTQ+ representation in a major Taiwanese newspaper in the period following the legalization of same-sex marriage. Its findings are expected to contribute to research on media representation and critical discourse analysis, while providing a basis for reflection on news reporting, stereotypes, and more inclusive journalistic practices.

Keywords: LGBTQ+, Tongzhi, Media Representation, Critical Discourse Analysis, Stereotypes, Van Leeuwen, United Daily News