

CULTURE OF SEX: SEXUAL LINGUISTICS AND DISCOURSE OF
COSMOPOLITAN EDITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE AND INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Cosmopolitan is one of the most popular magazines for women, both domestically and internationally; it is published in 28 languages in 45 countries. However, *Cosmopolitan*, especially its sexual content, is subject to change by cultures who maintain social norms and standards different from the United States. This study compared the approaches *Cosmopolitan*, *Cosmopolitan France* and *Cosmopolitan India* used in presenting sexual information. A total of 12 magazines were content and textual analyzed to determine whether their sexual linguistics and discourse differed. This study also examined whether *Cosmopolitan* and its sister magazines promoted normative behavior or pushed pre-existing social norms and values.

The findings showed that all three magazines used a distinct approach to sex, but not in the way hypothesized. *Cosmopolitan* and *Cosmopolitan India* used a prescriptive discourse, one designed to educate the reader and establish a mentor-protégée relationship. *Cosmopolitan India* was also found to have an explicit, straightforward approach to sex to accommodate an evolving readership. *Cosmopolitan France* used a descriptive discourse and focused on the self-perceptions and body confidence of the reader. These findings provide insight into how *Cosmopolitan* and its international editions could accommodate readerships according to established or developing cultural standards.