

Linguistic space: satellite television and languages around the world and in the European Union¹

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Satellite around the world

Nowadays there are about 160 satellites broadcasting television signals around the world.² Since 1957, when the now defunct Soviet Union put into orbit a ball no bigger than a beach ball, called Sputnik, to broadcast radio signals, thousands of devices have been sent into space with different aims. They have been mostly used for telecommunications, that is, to amplify and bounce off a satellite a signal broadcast from a given point on earth so that it can reach one or several parts of the planet. Obviously, the possibility of making the same signal “shower” from the sky towards wide areas of the earth’s surface has, for the last two decades, opened up great possibilities for the dissemination of television signals, adding to the resources of terrestrial signals and cable broadcasting which have already existed for forty years.³ These new ways of broadcasting on a large scale open up unprecedented possibilities which need to be analysed from the point of view of minority languages, both regarding the challenge of this new landscape, and the opportunities derived from the use of this technology.

Through these 160 satellites an estimated 6,000 televisions channels are broadcast, together with 3,000 radio stations. This figure includes repetition of channels broadcast from more than one satellite. Trying to calculate the number of *different* channels broadcast would be rather complex as different factors combine. In some cases, the same channel (content) can appear on different satellites with different names and vice versa. In other cases, the same programme is broadcast in different languages. Yet again, a programme can be a copy of another one with a different timetable or with its content structured differently, and so on. Thus, it is difficult to give an exact figure for the number of different channels broadcast by satellite and to do so we should need first of all to agree on what constitutes different channels. However, taking the estimates we have considered when analysing the gross information, we should think that the number must be between 3,000 and 4,000. We can also point out that a little more than half of these channels (58 %) broadcast an encrypted signal, so in order to receive them a decoder is needed, which must be paid for in advance or on a monthly basis. The rest of them (42 %) are open broadcast or FTA (Free To Air), that is to say, a decoder is not needed, and it is enough to have a satellite dish oriented to a given satellite and a satellite receiver.

¹ This communication is part of a wider piece of research work about the uses of satellite television among the Basque Diaspora in Latin America we are conducting in the University of the Basque Country (Ref.: 1/UPV 00016.323-H-14276/2001).

² Source: Satellite Control Centre Satco (SATCO 2002). Unless otherwise stated, all data on satellite channels and the main languages of the channels mentioned have been taken from this source.

The number of 160 satellites is obtained considering as a single satellite those satellites which, coordinated, share the same geostationary position with regard to earth, such as Astra’s fleet on position 19,2° East, composed by 7 different satellites: Astra 1B, 1C, 1E, 1F, 1G, 1H and 2C. If we considered these copositioned satellites as units, the figure of satellites in orbit and with television signals would be 277 (Source: (LYNGSAT 2003) .

³ An example of the growing interest among communications companies in this technology is the increasing saturation to be observed in space. In fact, the most suitable orbit for telecommunications satellites is a geostationary orbit (that is, one which is always on the same perpendicular to the earth rotating at par) on the equator at a distance of 36,000 kilometres above sea level. In order to avoid risks they have to be far enough apart (2 degrees or 1,600 kilometres), which implies a limited number of positions in which geostationary satellites can be placed on the equator. $360^\circ / 2^\circ = 180$. If we disregard the positions which only allow coverage of areas of sea/ocean (such as those on the Pacific) we will see that the already occupied number of 160 orbital positions practically saturates this orbit. Nowadays efforts are being made to overcome this saturation using copositioned satellites and other types of orbits.

Communications spaces and satellite

As noted above, the broadcasting of signals via satellite allows one to cover, from a single broadcasting centre and with a relay/booster situated thousands of kilometres above sea level, large areas of the earth's surface. Obviously, this has allowed television companies to spread over geographical, economical and political borders which used to limit their capacity to disseminate their signal. Thus, when a broadcaster is faced with the difficulty of transmitting a television signal through relays or cable to areas far from the broadcasting centre, as in the case of large sparsely-populated countries, satellite broadcasting can become an economically viable alternative. Moreover, legal limitations imposed upon television broadcasting by a state can be overcome by satellite broadcasting from another territory. This system ultimately allows the carrying of the signal to areas widely dispersed throughout the planet, contradicting the idea that a channel should broadcast exclusively in a large and more or less continuous territory.

This is why satellite television seriously affects national spaces of communication. In fact, these spaces have been for most of the 20th century rather conditioned by the characteristics of the nation-state. That is to say, unification of territory, legislation, market and culture (especially language). This has brought about the appearance of great spaces of communication under a common legislation, with a given business structure and a dominant language within the same territory. Satellite television overcomes these borders to a large extent, creating new spaces of communication over and above the national space. Among satellite television channels there are different models with regard to the communications spaces they help to create. These include, among others, national, pan-national, geostrategic, linguistic, diasporic and global spaces.

The national space

As noted above, satellite broadcasting allows broadcasters to cover large areas of a nation-state which would be difficult to reach by means of cable or terrestrial transmission, especially in sparsely populated areas. Indonesia is a case in point. It is a nation-state with more than 200 million inhabitants scattered throughout 6,000 islands. Under circumstances such as these, satellite broadcasting becomes the best way to create a space of communication covering the whole territory. Indonesia is a recently created country which gained independence from the Netherlands in 1949. Its government worked to build a national consciousness under an official language (Bahasa Indonesia) in a space inhabited by more than three hundred ethnic groups. Under these circumstances, satellite has become the best means for spreading a national radio and television system and this explains the fact that the first Indonesian satellite (Palapa A1) was launched as early as 1976 (LABRADOR and GALACE).

Another case of the use of satellite for building a national space of communication is Canada. With an area of 10 million square kilometres, 90 % of the population living near the USA border, and an important concentration of native population in the far northern regions, the spreading of satellite radio and television has helped to build a national space of communication in order to challenge the great communicative space to the south (the USA) and to reach the remote indigenous territories. Thus, Canada was the fourth country in the world to take part in this project in 1962. Ten years later they had their own satellite television channel with Anik 1 (LABRADOR and GALACE).

Commercial television channels are another example of the use of satellite within the national communicative space, acting within a given national area. This is the case of digital platforms (*Sky Digital*, *Canal Satellite France*, *Sky Mexico*, *Direct TV*, and so on) which, although broadcasting a great number of international channels, have a significant percentage of channels belonging to the country they are directed to as well as channels broadcasting in the country's official language, so that they work to strengthen the national space. It should be pointed out that in many cases, broadcasting of such digital packages is restricted to national space not only by the signal coverage itself, but also by law. An example would be the Swiss *SRG* which, broadcasting from a satellite allowing it to reach the whole of Europe, does so by means of an encrypted signal that can only be

decoded by a card which is exclusively sold to Swiss residents or Swiss citizens abroad. Thus, the national space goes beyond territory in order to create an administrative space, due to the national implications of the market itself.

Satellite also allows other uses of the national space such as those quoted by Askoy and Robins regarding Turkish commercial television: through satellite broadcasting from outside, private companies aimed to force the Turkish government to modify their restrictive communications policy inside the country. (ASKOY and ROBINS 2000).

Pan-national state

Beyond the nation-state space, satellite is also an instrument for the construction of pan-national spaces. The most striking example would be Arabsat. Founded in 1967 by member countries of the League of Arab States with the aim of integrating social and cultural activities of the member countries, the consortium launched their first satellite in 1985. This was to allow both public and private channels from Arab countries to broadcast their programmes throughout a space that goes beyond the nation-state and that reaches at least all Arabic-speaking countries, thus contributing to the development of an Arab national or pan-national feeling which over the last few decades has had high and low moments. For instance, the channel *Al Jazeera* has contributed to the formation of an Arab public space through information and discussion.

Another example of pan-national use of satellite television can be seen in the efforts of western European governments to create a European audiovisual space, in which satellite broadcasting should play an important role. As Bustamante and others point out, some of the European Council's initiatives to create a pan-national space through television (the Green Paper for a Television without Frontiers, *Eurosport* and *Euronews* channels, etcetera) were based on a belief in the importance of satellite communications (BUSTAMANTE 2003).

Geostrategic space

Arabsat was made possible because a group of countries decided to undertake a project for television broadcasting through satellite in order to create a space for mutual assistance; however, in other cases, it is a single country which addresses others in order to raise its profile and increase its influence on them. Turkey is a case in point. Having inherited the Ottoman Empire, one of the biggest empires in history, Turkey envisaged, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the possibility of resuming and strengthening its relations with some countries which up to that moment had been included within the socialist block or even within the USSR. The countries concerned are those in the south-west of Europe which until a century before had belonged to the Ottoman Empire or especially the Central Asian republics which achieved independence after the fall of the soviet regime. These republics (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan) are to a large extent inhabited by populations whose languages have a Turkic base and who share cultural and religious backgrounds with Turkey, thus forming a space spreading from Europe as far as China. Within this context of world reorganization the Turkish government decided to increase its presence and especially its influence on this large region from 1990 onwards, using satellite television broadcasting as one of its main tools. Thus, in 1992 the state-owned *TRT* put on air its first satellite television channel addressed to these countries and in 1994 it launched Turksat, its very first satellite.

Linguistic space

As well as the geostrategic sphere of influence, linguistic space is one of the objectives of satellite television. We should mention here the Spanish satellite Hispasat. It was developed as a bridge between Spain and Latin America in 1989 and its first satellite was set into orbit in 1992. The date is no coincidence, for the fifth centenary of the so called "discovery" of America was celebrated the same year, together with the Universal Exhibition in Seville and the Barcelona Olympic Games, all three events specially aimed at spreading the idea of Spain as "homeland" of the Spanish speaking

countries (although, in fact, the Olympic Games mostly contributed to spreading the image of Catalonia as a nation). Hispasat covers through satellite, in addition to the Iberian peninsula, all Spanish speaking areas in South, Central and North America (except California).

Diasporic space

We are referring here to the use of television for connecting diasporas from scattered communities throughout the world, or communities displaced from their homelands. In some cases this use derives from the interest of governments in maintaining the ties between emigrants and their countries of origin, sometimes for economic reasons. An example of this would be the worldwide Chinese diaspora. According to Karim, the economic importance of the Chinese diaspora (as well as other diasporas in the world) is considerable: 55 million Chinese emigrants have the same annual income level as the 1,200 million people of China (KARIM 1998). As a result, Chinese authorities and private companies based in Hong Kong have a special interest in keeping ties with such a major source of economic power dispersed around the world.

Obviously, the Chinese case is only another example and this economic motivation of the relationship with diasporas underlies many of the activities concerning satellite television undertaken by different governments or even by private companies all over the world.

Another case where a diasporic communicative space has been created by means of satellite television is the Kurdish television broadcaster *Med-TV*. The Kurds are the most numerous people on earth without a state of their own (c.35 millions). *Med-TV* broadcast its signal from London towards the satellite Hotbird 4, from which it covered all of Europe, the Middle East and the North of Africa. Thus, it was the television of a people without a state which hardly reached the territory where its community is settled but potentially reached most of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe and the Mediterranean region. *Med-TV* was closed down by the British broadcasting regulator, the Independent Television Commission, in 1999, having been accused of promoting violence against the Turkish authorities, though nowadays the Kurds have at least another two television channels: *Kurdsat*, aimed at Kurds in Iraq and broadcasting six hours a day, and *Medya TV*, connected with Kurds in Turkey, which broadcasts 13 hours a day. Both can be received in the aforementioned areas and the first also broadcasts to the USA and Canada.⁴

Global space

Along with satellite television channels transmitted to geographically or culturally defined territories, we should mention other media which might be called global broadcasters and which seek to broadcast all over the world. A clear example of a global network would be *BBC World*, a channel which currently broadcasts through 28 different satellites covering almost all the inhabited territories of the world. Within the same framework we could include public and private channels (for instance *CNN*) and those which, within the same overall matrix, have regional broadcasting throughout large areas of the planet. (*MTV*).

There is another case which constitutes global television but which is different to those mentioned above, namely the channel belonging to the international Islamic organization Ahmadiyya, which claims to have over 170 million members scattered in 174 countries.⁵ This organization, persecuted in several Islamic countries, has a television channel, *MTA International* (Muslim Ahmadiyya Television) broadcast through 8 satellites in 8 languages all over the world, thus forming a

⁴ We should emphasise that in order to pick up any of these signals from Kurdistan, a big satellite dish would be necessary (1.80 metres), whereas 0.80 would be enough in Europe. They would therefore be broadcasts mainly addressed to the diaspora.

⁵ Data extracted from their own website: <http://www.alislam.org>.

communicative space we could define as not only religious, but, global, taking into account the extent of its reach throughout the planet.

Distribution of satellite channels according to languages

Although it is difficult to be precisely accurate, what follows is an attempt to outline the linguistic distribution of the different satellite television channels currently broadcasting worldwide. We have used information from the Satco centre. The basis used for calculation is the number of broadcasts, that is, it includes repetitions where channels broadcast via more than one satellite. Furthermore, it is the main languages on each channel that are listed below, leaving out those which, although not the main languages of those broadcasts, are also used. It is also necessary to point out that in some cases, the names given to the main language on each channel do not match any specific language but rather a nationality. Chinese would be a clear example in this case, where we know that in at least one third of the 341 channels referred to, Mandarin is the main language. We cannot say that this is also the case on other channels, for there might be more than one channel in, say, Cantonese. Thus, we are aware that although the following table can be taken as an indication of the general situation, there may be slight divergences in the detail.

Table 1: Number of satellite TV channels according to main language used ⁶					
Language	Satellite TV channels	Speakers (thousands)	Language	Satellite TV channels	Speakers (thousands)
English	1,563	800,000	Georgian	6	4,000
Spanish	552	352,000	Kannada	6	42,000
French	403	122,000	Telugu	6	69,000
Arabic	375	185,000	Albanian	5	5,000
Mandarin + Other types of Chinese	341	1,042,000	Gujarati	5	39,000
Italian	280	63,000	Macedonian	5	2,000
German	247	118,000	Marathi	5	65,000
Portuguese	200	175,000	Catalan	4	11,053
Japanese	196	126,000	Mongolian	4	1,885
Russian	150	294,000	Punjabi	4	20,000
Turkish	146	56,000	Turkmenian	4	6,500
Polish	129	43,000	Armenian	3	5,500
Korean	118	72,000	Azerbaijan	3	4,000
Hindi	79	367,000	Burmese	3	22,000
Greek	73	12,000	Oriya	3	30,000
Hungarian	44	14,500	Assamese	2	10,000
Hebrew	42	4,000	Cambodian	2	7,000
Dutch	40	20,000	Dhivehi	2	220
Indonesian	34	125,000	Galician	2	3,173
Danish	32	5,280	Kiswahili	2	30,000
Farsi	31	30,000	Luxembourgish	2	335
Serbo-Croatian	30	20,000	Slovene	2	2,218
Tagalog	29	57,000	African	1	6,300
Norwegian	28	4,400	Amharic	1	23,000
Swedish	28	9,000	Assyrian	1	200
Romanian	26	25,000	Bantu	1	3,000
Thai	26	21,000	Bihari	1	10,000
Bulgarian	23	9,000	Brunei - Malay	1	18,000
Czech	19	12,000	Gurjari	1	840

⁶ Sources: based on data from Satco (SATCO 2002) and Ethnologue (GRIMES 1992) data.

Tamil	18	66,000	Lao	1	4,000
Bengali	16	187,000	Lebanese	1	15,000
Finnish	14	6,000	Lithuanian	1	4,000
Malayalam	14	34,000	Marwari	1	12,000
Urdu	14	50,000	Slovak	1	5,600
Ukrainian	13	46,000	Taiwanese	1	15,000
Kurdish	11	15,000	Tajik	1	4,000
Vietnamese	9	59,000	Welsh	2	600
Total (74 languages)				5,488	

This table shows a number of things. First, the supremacy of English is clear: 28 % of satellite television broadcasts are in English. To this supremacy in absolute terms, we should add the fact that if we calculate the ratio between the number of channels and the number of speakers in each language, the outcome is that English is still predominant, with an approximate ratio of one channel for every half million speakers. This ratio clearly discriminates against other languages, especially Asiatic and African, which have very few channels for linguistic communities with millions of people.

Another aspect which stands out clearly is that of the thousands and thousands of languages currently spoken in the world, (between 3,000 and 5,000) only 74 have been broadcast on satellite television (as the main language of a channel, at least), which shows the great imbalance there is on a global level between some linguistic communities and others regarding their development. This is even more evident if we take into account that among the languages which are not on this list of privileged languages are not only the ones spoken by small communities but also languages with dozens of millions of speakers. If we take languages with over ten million speakers⁷ we can see that 17 substantial African linguistic communities still have no television satellite, although some of them (such as Hausa, with 40 million speakers, or Zulu+Xhosa, with 30) are major human groups. Something similar happens to 12 Asian languages with the same dimensions or even bigger (such as Jawa, with 80 millions, Bhojpuri+Maithili, with 60, Uzbek+Uyghur, with 25, Kazakh+Kirghiz, with 20, and so on) and even with American languages such as Caribbean Gallo-Creole, with 11 million speakers or Quechua, with more than 10 million speakers.

Together with the absence of these big languages, it is interesting to note the presence of other linguistic communities which are smaller but which have 'reached heaven', from the point of view of satellite television. This is the case of Assyrian, Divehi, Luxembourgish, Gurjari or Welsh, which, with less than a million speakers, have at least one satellite television channel.

This wide range of languages available by satellite television worldwide is reflected significantly in the specific provision available at a given place. This means that when we say that throughout the world television channels can be seen in at least 74 different languages this should not be taken to mean that in some geographical areas some languages are spread as other languages are spread in other areas, but quite the opposite. Even though it is true that different numbers of channels and television signals are received in different parts of the world, there are many places where broadcasts in many of the languages we have mentioned can be received. As an example of this diverse provision in a given place we shall look at the Basque Country. With a 1 m diameter satellite dish we could receive the following television channels:

⁷Source: Linguasphere (LINGUASPHERE OBSERVATORY 1999)

Table 2: Number of satellite television broadcasting theoretically accessible in the Basque Country⁸

Over 100 channels

English (148), Spanish (110), German (104)

Between 50 and 99 channels

Arabic (88), Italian (74), French (60)

Between 10 and 49 channels

Turkish (45), Serbo-Croatian (14), Dutch (13), Polish (13), Portuguese (11), Farsi (10),

Between 3 and 9 channels

Greek (7), Rumanian (5), Hindi (4), Kurdish (4), Catalan (3), Mandarin (3), Hungarian (3), Swedish (3)

1 or 2 channels

Armenian (2), Galician (2), Georgian (2), Japanese (2), Lebanese (2), Luxemburgish (2), Albanian (1), Assyrian (1), Bulgarian (1), Czech (1), Korean (1), Macedonian (1), Norwegian (1), Russian (1), Slovene (1), Tamil (1), Thai (1), Urdu (1)

Of all the above, 87 % are free to air (FTA), whereas 13 % are received encrypted through a paying platform. Therefore it may be deduced that at least in the rich countries the multilingual provision of satellite television is real and easily available, which undoubtedly brings with it the need to think about the new spaces of communication that may be on the point of being created in the information society.

Minority languages and satellite television in the European Union

Having presented global data on languages and satellite television around the world, we shall now address the situation of minority languages and satellite television in the European Union. A more detailed analysis of broadcasts that takes into account not only the main language on each channel but also the presence of other languages for at least some hours per week will offer a clearer image of reality.⁹

Thus, among the communities with a minority language in the European Union¹⁰ we have found three clearly different situations as regards the presence or absence of their languages in satellite television broadcasting. On the one hand, we have those communities with no satellite television in their language and, on the other hand, those linguistic minorities which, although they do not have broadcasts of their own, have access to broadcasts in their language from linguistically related communities. Finally, there is the case of those linguistic minorities which do have satellite television broadcasts in their language.

Communities with no satellite television

This is the case of 16 out of the 41 minority languages in the survey. These languages have not yet gained access to satellite television and many of them not even to conventional/terrestrial or cable television.

⁸ Source: based on data from Satco. These data refer to October 2000; obviously, nowadays the number would be greater still. On the other hand, languages which are not the main language in each case are not included.

⁹ We have based this both on the above-mentioned data from Satco and on various censuses of media in European minority languages: European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL), UNESCO Red Book on Endangered Languages, Eurolang, Eurominority and especially Mercator and Euromosaic. We have also taken into account the different television stations in minority languages.

However, this collection of data could be incomplete given the speed of development in this field and the lack of centralized data.

¹⁰ For our census of linguistic minorities in the European Union we have taken the Euromosaic and Mercator lists as a reference.

In this group are: Aragonese, Asturian and Berber in Spain, Cornish in Great Britain, Corsican in France, Franco-Provençal, Friulian, Ladin and Sardinian in Italy, Frisian in Germany and Holland, Mirandese in Portugal, Occitan in France, Italy and Spain, Romany in Austria, Saami in Finland and Sweden, Sorbian in Germany and Walachian in Greece.

As for Ladin and Friulian, both of which belong to the Rhaetian sub-family of languages, we can point out that although there are no satellite television broadcasts in these languages, there is at least one channel broadcasting in Romansh, a language belonging to the same family. What we cannot tell is the degree of intelligibility of Swiss Romansh for the speakers of these languages, nor the real chance the inhabitants of these administratively Italian communities have of receiving the signal. It should be noted that *TVR*, which has some programmes in Romansh, broadcasts through Swiss *SRG* but, as noted above, one must either be of Swiss nationality or live in Switzerland to decode it.

Communities with access to other communities' broadcasts

This is the case of those communities which, although they are a linguistic minority in the country in which they are settled, belong to a group whose language is the majority or official language in another country. This is the situation of Albanian speakers both in Italy and Greece, Croatian in Italy and Austria, Czech in Austria, Danish in Germany, Dutch in France, Finnish in Sweden, French in Italy, German in Belgium, Denmark, France and Italy, Greek in Italy, Hungarian in Austria, Macedonian in Greece, Portuguese in Spain, Slovak in Austria, Slovene in Austria and Italy, Swedish in Finland and Turkish in Greece.

As mentioned above, in some cases, even if it is technically possible for satellite signals to be received in areas beyond the national borders, they are limited by the broadcasting rights of their contents, which turn national borders into impassable walls. In order to limit this technical capacity, they use encrypted broadcasts, which allow control of who can gain access to the broadcasts by means of the appropriate decoder.

This means that, even if theoretically the linguistic communities we are talking about can gain access to broadcasts coming from other states in their own language, it is really difficult to know to what extent this is possible in practice. There is no doubt that it is possible in the case of such languages as German or French, which enjoy a considerable number of FTA channel broadcasts. But there are other languages, such as Czech (18 encrypted channels vs 1 open channel), Danish (30 vs 2), Finnish (13 vs 1) or Slovene (2 vs 0), whose speakers might have no real access to television broadcasts in their language.

This, of course, gives rise to an important problem for weaker linguistic communities, i.e., the subordination of technical possibilities to market forces which, on the one hand, keep these communities from gaining access to broadcasts which could be received easily and inexpensively and, on the other hand, do not allow the promotion and maintenance of minority communities' own terrestrial, cable and satellite radio and television systems within their limited market. This situation could be partly changed if, for instance, satellite broadcasting rights were not established on a territorial basis but on the basis of language community, regardless of the country in which the community is settled.

Communities with their own satellite television broadcasting

At present these communities represent a minority among the communities with a minority language in the European Union, only 8 of the 41 surveyed communities being in this category. These are the Basque, Breton, Catalan, Scottish Gaelic, Galician, Irish, Luxemburgish and Welsh linguistic minorities. As shown in Table 3, there is diversity even within this category; a quick look at the data shows that only Catalan, Galician, Luxemburgish and Welsh have broadcasts exclusively in the language. In the remaining cases, minority languages are accompanied by other languages and have a secondary position.

It is also remarkable that some of the broadcasts are intended for America, either for the whole continent or for a specific part of it. This shows the interest in maintaining contact with the American diasporas of these linguistic communities. In the case of *ETBSat*, this interest is also evident as regards the Basque communities throughout Europe, as its signal can be received free to air around the continent. Other broadcasters restrict their scope either to the state they are broadcasting from, or to Europe, but send an encrypted signal, which makes the reception of the signal beyond the state territory more difficult or even impossible.

Conclusions

We believe it is necessary to analyse in greater depth both the challenges and the opportunities satellite television offers as regards the development of minority languages.

As for the challenges, we should mention the fact that as a result of the influence of both satellite television and other factors, the so-called “great communicative spaces” - that is, national spaces or the space limited by nation-states -, which exerted their influence for most of the 20th century, are now undergoing deep changes. Various phenomena of an economic, political or technological nature are giving birth to new spaces that go beyond the reach of those found hitherto, even if the latter still dominate. Satellite television is a reflection of these changes as well as of their consequences. Among other factors, the coexistence of different communicative and linguistic spaces in a given territory is enabled to the extent that anyone can gain at home access to the television channels of his/her country of origin or in his/her language, regardless of physical location. Arriving home and turning the television set on can mean entering a completely different world - in terms of language as well as in other ways - from the one left outside the door.¹¹ The implications this has for the normalization of minority languages can be important, especially in those cases where, following the unitary model of the nation-state, “normalization” is understood as the exclusivity of a language in a given territory.

All this should make us redefine the concepts of minority language community, normalization, the connection between language and territory, etc. In other words, we should establish the ways of being of minority languages in our ever increasingly multicultural society.¹²

It is likewise necessary to think about the chances non-dominant languages stand with satellite broadcasting. We noted above how some linguistic communities seek to extend their communicative space beyond their own territory and thus reach their diasporas. This is not an irrelevant aim, since many minority communities have suffered serious problems of emigration. However, today satellite television gives them the chance of having contact with emigrants and thus reinforcing their community.¹³

In the same way, satellite television can contribute to relations between linguistic communities spread over two or more states, which could lead to transnational spaces based on the language. In an era (21st century) and a context (European Union) where the concept of state borders - which have been so prejudicial to many small communities - is being redefined, some linguistic communities could have the chance not only to reunify but also to strengthen each other.

¹¹ This phenomenon has already been noticed in two studies carried out by us on the use of satellite television by diasporic communities. One of them refers to the Maghrebi community living in Bilbao (AMEZAGA et al. 2001), and the other to the Basque people and descendants of Basque people living in Latin America (AMEZAGA, forthcoming). The use of satellite television by diasporas has also been analysed by many other authors (ASKOY and ROBINS, 2000; HARGREAVES 1999; KARIM, 1998; KARIM 2002; MILIKOWSKI 2000; VERTOVEC 1999).

¹² It is indeed difficult not to consider this when one looks at maps such as that showing the distribution by districts of the population whose mother tongue is not English in London (BAKER and EVERSLEY 2000).

¹³ Precisely one of the uses we have noticed among the Basques in Latin America as regards the Basque Channel has been that of learning the language. Likewise, the preservation of Arabic among children was one of the reasons for people to watch Arabic television in Bilbao.

Table 3: Minority Languages in the European Union with their own Satellite Television Channels

Language	Channel	Type	Package	Satellite's footprint	Weekly hours broadcasting in their language	Percentage of total broadcasting
Basque	<i>Canal Vasco</i>	Encrypted	<i>Vía Digital</i>	Spain	17 ¹⁴	10
	<i>Canal Vasco</i>	Free To Air	-	Latin America	17 ¹⁵	10
	<i>ETBSat</i>	Free To Air	-	Europe	67	40
Breton	<i>TV Breizh</i>	Encrypted	<i>Canal Satellite France</i>	Europe	18.5 ¹⁶	16
	<i>TV Breizh</i>	Encrypted	<i>TPS</i>	Europe	18.5	16
	<i>TV Breizh</i>	Encrypted	<i>Canal Satellite Caraïbes</i>	Caribbean	18.5	16
Catalan	<i>TVC Internacional</i>	Free To Air	-	Europe	168	100
	<i>TVC Internacional</i>	Encrypted	-	Latin America	168	100
	<i>TVC Sat</i>	Encrypted	<i>Vía Digital</i>	Spain	168	100
	<i>Canal Barça</i>	Encrypted	<i>Vía Digital</i>	Spain	84 ¹⁷	100
Gaelic	<i>Scottish TV</i>	Encrypted	<i>Sky Digital</i>	British Isles	< 5	< 3
	<i>Grampian TV</i>	Encrypted	<i>Sky Digital</i>	British Isles	< 5	< 3
	<i>BBC Two Scotland</i>	Encrypted	<i>Sky Digital</i>	British Isles	< 5	< 3
Galician	<i>TVG Dixital</i>	Encrypted	<i>Vía Digital</i>	Spain	168	100
	<i>TVG Europa</i>	Free To Air	-	Europe	165	98
	<i>TVG America</i>	Free To Air	-	Latin America	165	98
Irish	<i>TG4</i>	Encrypted	<i>Sky Digital</i>	British Isles	35	26
Luxembourgish	<i>Tango TV</i>	Free To Air	-	Europe	56	100
	<i>RTL Tele Letzebuerg</i>	Free To Air	-	Europe		
Welsh	<i>S4C</i>	Encrypted	<i>Sky Digital</i>	Europe	32 ¹⁸	21
	<i>S4C Digidol</i>	Encrypted	<i>Sky Digital</i>	Europe	80 ¹⁹	100

¹⁴ Most Basque programmes are subtitled in Spanish.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ French subtitles are used in some programmes.

¹⁷ Spanish soundtrack available.

¹⁸ English subtitles available in some programmes.

¹⁹ Ibidem

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