

## Euskal Telebista, the Basque public television company: entertainment as a core factor for minority language audiovisual media

*Euskal Telebista, euskal telebista publikoa: entretenimendua,  
hizkuntza gutxituetako ikus-entzunezkoen funtsezko faktore gisa*

Euskal Telebista, la televisión pública vasca:  
el entretenimiento como factor clave  
para los medios de comunicación audiovisual en lenguas minoritarias

Itziar Azpeitia Iruretagoiena\*

Euskal Irrati Telebista

**ABSTRACT:** The television landscape is undergoing tremendous and rapid changes. In this context public broadcasters are having great difficulties to fulfil their commitment to the public they serve. This task is even harder for those entities related to minority cultures and languages. In this paper we identify some of the ways in which entertainment content can contribute to fulfilling the missions of these types of companies. We will mainly focus on the Basque Public TV, Euskal Telebista, but the results and conclusions drawn can be applied to other public service media companies of similar types, too.

**KEYWORDS:** Basque Television; Public Television; Entertainment; Minority Languages, Audiovisual Media; Euskal Telebista.

**RESUMEN:** *El escenario televisivo está experimentando enormes y rápidos cambios. En este contexto los medios de comunicación públicos tienen grandes dificultades para cumplir su compromiso con la sociedad a la que sirven. Este cometido es aún más complicado para aquellas entidades relacionadas con culturas y lenguas minoritarias. En este artículo se identifican algunos de los modos en los que los contenidos de entretenimiento pueden contribuir al cumplimiento de las misiones de estas empresas. Aunque principalmente nos centraremos en el caso de la televisión pública vasca, Euskal Telebista, los resultados y conclusiones extraídos pueden ser también aplicados a similares medios de comunicación.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Televisión Vasca; Televisión Pública; Entretenimiento; Lenguas Minoritarias; Medios de Comunicación Audiovisual; Euskal Telebista.*

**Corresponding author:** Itziar Azpeitia Iruretagoiena. EITB-Euskal Irrati Telebista. Miramon Pasealekua, 172 (20014 Donostia-San Sebastian, Gipuzkoa) – [azpeitia\\_itziar@eitb.eus](mailto:azpeitia_itziar@eitb.eus) – <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5048-8871>

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## **Introduction**

We can observe that the television landscape is constantly changing, but this medium certainly maintains a position of relevance in the current audiovisual ecosystem, in any of the different forms television content is created, produced, distributed and consumed. However, digitalisation and online production and dissemination modes have entailed increasing competition and a shift in audience viewing habits. Television can be watched on different devices and windows nowadays and consumers decide what, where, how and when to watch, choosing among a tremendous, overwhelming, audio-visual content offer. New, powerful, global agents have entered the business in recent years. This is the case of the companies known as 'FAANG' (an acronym for Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix and Google). These technology driven huge companies have disrupted the market and have drastically changed the audiovisual business arena. They have become a real threat for traditional broadcasters, whether public or private, that operate in the field, where they have enjoyed a prominent position for many years.

This is, therefore, the case of public service media, as in this new scenario it is becoming even more difficult to fulfil the main missions of these organisations and their commitments to the public, the citizens they serve. In fact, the role and the future of Public Broadcasting Services, of Public Service Media, within this context, and when foreseeing the changes still to come, have become matters of concern, analysis and discussion in recent years. This is also reflected in different documents and reports produced and published by various public institutions, as well as in academic papers and essays written and compiled by scholars who have conducted research on this matter (cf. Arriaza, Nowak and Kuhn, 2015; EBU-MIS, 2015, 2021a, 2021b; Miguel de and Casado, 2012; FORTA-USC, 2021; Túnuez, Rodríguez and Campos, 2021).

The comprehensive study carried out recently by the British institution Ofcom regarding this issue, and the consequent responses from some of the companies and institutions involved, show the relevance of this matter within the U.K. and in relation to the BBC, the worldwide prestigious public broadcasting corporation, in particular (Ofcom, 2020, 2021; BBC, 2021; S4C, 2021). The BBC has always been a relevant reference among Public Service Media, and the three main principles established by Lord Reith for the British Broadcasting Corporation almost a century ago are still considered the main missions of public television companies, namely form, inform and entertain. Additional aims related to the characteristics of each entity and to their objectives in particular are also included within the missions of media companies of these types. Among them, those related to their specific culture, to its promotion and dissemination are also quite common, regardless of the dimension of each company and their features as national or regional public television.

With respect to non-hegemonic and minority language public media in particular, aspects related to cultural identity and to preserving and fostering their own language and culture are especially underlined as fundamental aims to attain. The institutional information and documents presented by most companies of these types, which can be easily found on their official web sites, reflect all these aforementioned aspects (i.e. CRTVG/TVG, DR, MG Alba/BBC Alba, NRK, RTÉ, RÚV, SVT, S4C, TG4, TV3/CCMA, VRT, YLE, etc.). This is also the case of Euskal Telebista (ETB), the public television company of the Basque Country (eitb.eus/es/grupo-eitb/transparencia), on which we will focus in this paper in order to analyse the importance that entertainment content has for fulfilling the aims of this public entity. We will identify some of the ways in which entertainment programmes can contribute to attaining its mission as a media company that serves Basque society, in addition to and beyond its entertainment function.

In this regard, we can observe that among the three main missions of public broadcasting services previously mentioned, in most public media the informative function is clearly emphasised over the other two, whereas the value of entertainment content in relation to the public service nature of these entities is not properly assessed, often even being dismissed in this respect. This author has conducted ongoing and comprehensive research on this topic (Azpeitia, 2012, 2016, 2019, 2019b, 2021a), whose main results and conclusions are reflected in the extensive text of her doctoral thesis, entitled: *Beyond negativity on television entertainment: positive perspectives and research on its contribution to public television. Additional analysis: the Basque night-show magazine Sorginen Laratza at Euskal Telebista* (Azpeitia, 2019).

This current paper summarises some of those aspects, in relation to minority language television in particular, and more specifically regarding the Basque public television company, Euskal Telebista, that stem from that thorough analysis. For that reason, that main text becomes an essential reference for further information and arguments in addition to those posited here, in order to complete them. Moreover, that PhD dissertation text backs up the information, arguments and conclusions reflected in this paper as well as the research methodology designed, developed and applied in conducting this study.

The long list of references that can be found in the Bibliography section of that text (Azpeitia, 2019, pp. 667-718) can also be helpful in this regard. Moreover, additional documents, both academic and professional, related to the issue recently published have also been analysed with this purpose, in addition to those already mentioned in this chapter (i.e. Costa and Díaz, 2021; Herzog and Meese, 2021; Izquierdo and Miguel de, 2021; Raats and Jensen, 2021; Sehl, 2020; Shel and Cornia, 2021; Iturbe and Castillo del, 2020).

## 1. Objectives and research methodology

The initial objective of this current paper is to identify and define some of the contributions of entertainment programmes to this public audiovisual media organisation in particular, Euskal Telebista —ETB—, in addition to the aim of purely entertaining. With that purpose, we take a specific television programme as a case study, a night-show-magazine in Basque that was produced and broadcast by this company for 6 years, *Sorginen Laratza*. The specific features of this television show make it suitable for this analysis and for the extrapolation of its results to further cases. Due to that, and because of the type of research conducted, we can state that the main results and conclusions that this text includes are also valid for similar organisations and, in some respect, for other media public television companies of different types too.

The research conducted for the above mentioned PhD dissertation and which also applies to the analysis reflected in this paper has two main parts, and includes several modes of enquiry, although the final state consists of documental research, as it responds to the analysis of documents of different types. An international, global perspective is taken throughout the first part of that main work (Azpeitia, 2019, pp. 15-467) and the literature produced by scholars of different academic fields, by professionals of various areas related to television within the industry and by writers of different types of specialized publications, as well as television critics, is gathered and analysed in this first part of the study. Likewise, both industry reports and institutional documents of different provenance, whether global or local, related to the issue posited are also analysed. The second part of the analysis focuses on a case study, and a specific television programme is selected for that, for which the rationale and the theoretical framework resultant of the research carried out previously are applied (cf. Azpeitia, 2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2021b).

This paper reflects in a summarised manner some of the results of that final part (Azpeitia, 2019, pp. 469-641). A format that we have classified as a night-show magazine, *Sorginen Laratza*, is the programme chosen for its analysis. This Basque show, with almost 500 episodes, was produced and broadcast live in Euskal Telebista's prime-time during six years. Equal to similar types of formats this programme consists of different sections of varied form and content, combining a great variety of studio outputs and a wide range of audio-visual pieces and video reports of different kinds, both fiction and non-fiction, scripted and unscripted.

The study of the television show selected is conducted in three fields, namely content, production and audience/reception, which are considered core areas for the study of television programmes by most prominent academics in television studies, as well as within the industry. The three main missions of public television, form, inform and entertain are borne in mind for conducting this analysis, alongside the

additional specific objectives of the particular public network where this programme was produced and broadcast. Therefore, the main missions of Euskal Telebista, the public television company of the Basque country, are taken into account for the analysis, in order to identify in which manner this programme contributes to the fulfilment of the main aims and objectives that this organisation has, focusing mainly on those aspects that are closely linked to the public nature of this audio-visual media company and its specificities as such.

Although this part of the study focuses on a local case, the analysis conducted enables us to extend the results and conclusions beyond its primary scope, and to extrapolate them further than what initially might be expected, including to other public television networks, and those that work for minority cultures and languages in particular. The characteristics of the programme selected make it suitable for that. On the one hand, *Sorginen Laratza* can be certainly classified as an entertainment programme but, besides that, it is most significant that, according to the general classifications of television genres (i.e. EBU-UER, 2007; Arana, 2011), we can state that this show-magazine includes a great variety of audiovisual content which can also be considered representative of most genres and subgenres of television entertainment (cf. Azpeitia, 2019, pp. 405–456, pp. 496–525). It is also fundamental for the final objective of this paper that this entertainment programme was produced in, and broadcast on a public television company, Euskal Telebista, in Basque which is a minority language.

Regarding the details of the research mode developed in this second part, we can affirm that the final phase of the process corresponds to the analysis of documental material, either in the form of written documents or as audio-visual assets, from the television entertainment show which is the object of analysis. Nevertheless, several modes of enquiry underlie many of the documents of this final analysis. Actually, most of these papers are the result of various analyses undertaken at the time of the production of the programme, in which this researcher was directly involved as co-creator and executive producer. Various methods were used as part of that ongoing process, including text analysis, field work, participatory observation, quantitative and qualitative methods, and experimental and action-research modes, in addition to the documental analysis that was also conducted at the time. The mixture of professional and academic research is clearly noticeable in that work, too, a combination of modes of analysis which is indeed relevant for the final output. A multidisciplinary and mixed method has, therefore, been designed and applied in this study (Azpeitia, 2019, pp. 471–474; Azpeitia, 2020a, 2020b, 2021b).

Arguments that support these statements and those expressed further in this paper are provided in the second part of the previously mentioned PhD dissertation text, which reflects both the method developed and the results drawn from the study of that specific case in a more extensive way (Azpeitia, 2019, pp. 469–641).

The long list of references included in the main text (Azpeitia, 2019, pp. 667-718) shows the wide range and variety of documents analysed regarding this topic for the doctoral work from which this paper stems, although, for obvious reasons, a very limited number of them have been included here.

## **2. Case study: the night-show-magazine *Sorginen Laratza* and Euskal Telebista**

### **2.1. EUSKAL TELEBISTA: THE PUBLIC TELEVISION OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY**

EITB- Euskal Irrati Telebista is the public broadcasting corporation of Euskadi, the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. It is publicly owned, dependant on and mainly financed by the Basque Government. Euskal Telebista (ETB) is the television brand of this media group; founded in 1982, it is the pioneer of the autonomous television companies existing nowadays in Spain, that is to say, those regional television channels of the different Autonomous Communities that make up the Spanish State.

The Basque Country, the land of the Basques, is formed by seven provinces, three of which are in the South of France, and the other four in Northern Spain. Three of these four form the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. Euskal Telebista (ETB) is, in fact, the public television company of this Autonomous Community. We can nevertheless assert that it serves the whole of the Basque Country and also the Basque community worldwide, responding to its mission to develop, promote and spread Basque culture and the Basque language. In fact its Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) signal reaches the seven Basque provinces, due to special agreements. ETB's content can also be watched on demand worldwide, on the Internet, in different ways and through various platforms, applications and channels, including social media. According to the official documents of this company, its mission is to enrich people's lives with an attractive, quality offering in information and entertainment as well as to contribute to the development of Basque culture and the Basque language, Euskara (cf. [eitb.eus/es/grupo-eitb/transparencia](http://eitb.eus/es/grupo-eitb/transparencia)).

This public media company (EITB) has three business units: television, radio and the internet, the online division, which are currently gathered under the name of EITB Media. Euskal Telebista is the television brand. We can say that EITB is a multimedia public corporation that, equal to similar traditional broadcasting entities, currently combines the broadcast and online (narrowcast) dissemination modes of its audiovisual content. It is, therefore, a PSM company whose offering includes varied content of both main genres, namely information and entertainment, in various and varied forms, narratives and formats, in two languages, Basque (Euskara)

and Spanish. Euskal Irrati Telebista is currently the first media group in the Basque Country (cf. eitb.eus).

The importance of this Basque public media entity for Basque society and for the Basque language was emphasised since its foundation and has been valued as such during all these years. This is reflected in many articles published by academics who have conducted research on Basque media. Likewise, the position of this PMS among the public regional television companies in Europe, and among minority language media, has also been mentioned in different studies in the field (i.e. Amézaga, Arana, Narbaiza & Azpillaga, 2013; Cormack & Hourigan, 2007; FORTA-USC, 2021; Deirdre, 2015; Miguel, Garitaonandia, Peña, & Casado, 2021; Garitaonandia & Casado, 2007; Pavón & Zuberogoitia, 2013; Zallo, 2006).

The Basque language is Euskara, which is a minority language. At present, around one million people can speak it in the whole world. Most speakers are in the Basque Country. It is an ancient language, its roots are still unknown, and it is not related to any other current or historical language. Latest sociolinguistic surveys show the great development this language has undergone in recent decades, although they currently emphasise the need to promote its use in informal spaces and environments besides more formal areas, such as education, work and administration where the increase of the use of the Basque language has been very noticeable (Eusko Jaurlaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2019, 2021).

## 2.2. THE NIGHT-SHOW MAGAZINE *SORGINEN LARATZA*: ITS CONTRIBUTION TO EUSKAL TELEBISTA

After the comprehensive research conducted, we can observe that the night-show magazine *Sorginen Laratza* contributed to the fulfilment of the main missions and the general objectives of the Basque public television, Euskal Telebista, in addition to, and beyond, its entertainment function, regarding the following fields and topics:

### 2.2.1. *Basque culture and Basque language*

This entertainment television show certainly contributed to the promotion and dissemination of Basque culture and the Basque language. The presence and adequate integration of so many and so different elements and expressions of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity within the programme, as well as the relevance of the Basque language in its creation, production and its final output, were determining factors for the achievement of such important objectives of the Basque public television company. *Sorginen Laratza*'s contribution to the communities of

the Basque diaspora in this regard must also be noted because at that time many of its episodes could be watched in America, too. At present some of them are also accessible worldwide, on demand, on the internet (eitb/tv), and they even nurture television programmes which are currently being produced (i.e. *Ez da posible*).

We can affirm that the contribution of this programme to both the dissemination and normalisation of the Basque language is indeed relevant, not only due to the amount of people who watched this programme, which was broadcast in Basque, during the six years it was on air, but also as a result of the way the Basque language was presented and used in the programme, which provided a valuable and varied corpus of this minority language. Hence, this compilation of audio-visual and written material can be used in different ways, both at present and in the future. This television programme's contribution to the normalisation of the Basque language according to the three main fields that are considered in this regard, namely prestige, corpus and acquisition (cf. Cormack and Hourigan, 2007; Larrinaga, 2019) must be mentioned.

#### *2.2.2. Cultural identity, cultural proximity and social cohesion*

Cultural identity and cultural proximity factors are fundamental in the selection and enjoyment of television programmes, which, therefore, contribute to their popularity and success (cf. Bignell 2013; Chalaby, 2013; Esser, 2014; Moran, 2009; Sigismondi, 2012; Straubhaar, 2007). Likewise, their relevance in public television broadcasting is particularly underlined and, more specifically, with regard to those 'televisions in the regions', or 'proximity television' channels (Iosifidis, 2012; Moragas, Garitaonandía and López, 1999; Wang, Servaes and Goonasekera, 2002). Those companies are generally attached to communities with differentiated cultures and, in many cases, with a strong sense of cultural identity, as is the case of the Basque country, the Basque culture and Euskal Telebista (Azpeitia 2012, 2016, 2021a). *Sorginen Laratza's* contributions in this area must also be noted (Azpeitia, 2019, pp. 526-527).

Therefore, cultural and cultural identity aspects influence the audience's choice of television content, likewise, their presence in television programmes do contribute to the promotion and dissemination of a certain culture and cultural identity. We must also note the influence of television entertainment programmes on building up cultural identities (Bennet and Strange, 2012; Chalaby, 2016; Moran, 2005, 2006; Moran & Keane, 2006; Morley, 1986, 1992). Actually, the construction of cultural identity is understood as an on-going process, a development in which in addition to rationality, feelings and emotions are also involved (Castells, 2010). Within this context, we can acknowledge the significance of television entertainment in this field, a genre in which emotions and feelings are also core elements, as well as genuine elements of its essence.

In this respect, the specific features of this programme, both regarding form and content, and its audience's response, lead us to conclude that this entertainment show contributed to the construction of meaning and of Basque cultural identity, that it helped to create a sense of belonging to the Basque community and that it contributed to social cohesion within Basque society during the time it was on air.

Likewise, the significance of proximity public television companies regarding social cohesion is broadly accepted (CIRCOM, 2014; Accenture 2012). In this respect, cultural and identity expressions and representations, together with any other elements that make these entities and their programming close to society are essential. The contributions of *Sorginen Laratza* in this regard must, therefore, be mentioned too, according to the arguments previously presented and extensively explained in the main text. Actually, this television show could be somehow considered as a social event (a Basque event in Basque, in fact) which gathered many different people around it, on and off the screen, creating and sharing a common imagery but also experiences and emotions, and most importantly, contributing to building the sense of belonging to a society, the Basque society, which could be perceived represented in many different manners on what that audience saw on the screen.

### 2.2.3. *Cultural products, CCI's and the Basque audio-visual sector*

Within the area of culture, and in relation to *Sorginen Laratza's* contribution in this field, the different ways in which this programme helped in the development of the Basque audio-visual sector, which is indeed an important branch of the creative and cultural industries (CCIs), must also be taken into consideration (Kulturaren Euskal Behatokia-Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2018; Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2020). The work done with regard to the development of new audio-visual narrative ways in Basque, and to nurturing, forming, and fostering talent and professionals in different skills and fields within the television activity and, therefore, in the Basque audio-visual sector, is commented and described throughout different sections of the main text.

In this regard, the development of new narrative ways as well as different types and modes of production within the programme, the design and implementation of new management schemes, and the active participation of its team in the new general management system implemented in the company must also be noted (Azpeitia, 2019, pp. 538-558). Therefore, the contribution of *Sorginen Laratza* from the perspective of television programme research, development and innovation, regarding form, content, production and management, within Basque television at the time it was produced and broadcast, must be valued as a contribution not only to Euskal Telebista, but to the Basque audio-visual sector too.

In addition, television programmes, as such, are also considered cultural products and, therefore, the contribution of *Sorginen Laratza* —with almost 500 episodes of an average duration of one hour and a half each— to Basque culture, to the Basque audio-visual output and, consequently, to the cultural and creative industries field in the Basque country, must be valued in this respect. Furthermore, we can affirm that these episodes' creation, production and dissemination respond to the need to generate identifiable symbolic production adapted to the times, pointed out as essential by the Basque Government in its Basque Plan for Culture (2005). The role of these cultural products in the production of meaning of a certain society and culture, as highlighted by the scholarship of cultural studies and studies on popular culture, can also be applied to this programme and to all its episodes, as far as Basque society and Basque culture are concerned (cf. Longhurst, Smith, Bagnall, Crawford and Ogborn, 2017; Lusted, 1998; Miller, 2010; Miller and McHoul, 1998; Newcomb, 1974; Williams, 1963, 1974).

#### *2.2.4. Popular television. Entertainment, information and motivation*

*Sorginen Laratza* was a popular programme in the Basque country. This can be said regarding the main senses of this term when referring to television, namely, watched and liked by many viewers, and programmes with high representation of the people (Bignell, 2013), of Basque people in this case; a television show made by and for them. This fact also contributed to the fulfilment of the objectives set for this television show, as well as to the general missions of the Basque public television. Actually, popularity, as just defined, is also an essential aspect pursued by public television companies, which aim to reach their public and to represent society on screen.

Entertainment is a main feature of the television programme analysed as this show is in essence an entertainment programme. As such, we can indeed affirm that it contributed to fulfilling the entertainment function of Euskal Telebista, which is among those considered the three main missions of public service media, namely form, inform and entertain. Having said that, we can also affirm that *Sorginen Laratza* also provided much and varied information and that, therefore, it also contributed to the fulfilment of Euskal Telebista's informative function.

In addition, as happens with this type of popular entertainment programmes in most television channels, we can say that *Sorginen Laratza* acted as a 'front door' and as a driving force that helped to bring people to the channel, which also had an effect on other programmes' audiences, including the informative ones. The contribution of this entertainment show to Euskal Telebista in this regard must also be mentioned. Entertainment is indeed considered a motivation for watching television.

### 2.2.5. *Uses & Gratifications and reasons for watching television*

We can also affirm that the entertainment programme studied responded to most of the needs that the audience intend to fulfil, and the gratifications they obtain, when watching television, described by the most important scholarship which analyses them, i.e. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (cf. Ruddock, 2002; Ruggiero, 2000). Therefore, we can say that the programme responded to people's motivations for watching television pointed out within this model, that is to say, diversion, personal relationships, personal identity and surveillance. Furthermore, it can be observed that this show fulfilled most of the needs of individuals for using the media, and television among them, described by this school of thought, and grouped in the following main five categories: cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and tension release needs. In fact, if we look in detail at the long list of reasons for watching television described within the U&G model by its various theorists (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Mc Quail, Blumler and Brown, 1972), we can affirm that the features of this magazine-show respond to a great deal of them.

In addition to these motivations that the U&G Theory presents, we can observe that professional, industrial surveys which also enquire into this matter are in similar line (i.e. Cooper, 2015; Thinkbox, 2013; Thinkbox, 2018). *Sorginen Laratza's* features as well as its audience's response coincide with most of the main reasons for watching television that analyses of this type indicate, including the additional sharing experience that live television offers which is also mentioned and commented on in those surveys. Taking all this into consideration, we can say that this show contributed to fulfilling many of the needs and wishes of a great deal of Basque people as far as television watching is concerned.

### 2.2.6. *Euskal Telebista and Basque society*

Consequently, we can assert that this Basque entertainment programme contributed to the fulfilment of the missions of the public television company Euskal Telebista in different manners and in various fields. Furthermore, when doing so it also benefited Basque society which after all this television company finally aims to do, due to its condition as public service media. Moreover, if we bear in mind the reflections in this regard presented in the whitepaper of the Basque audio-visual sector (2003) and in the *Basque Plan for Culture* of the Basque Government (2005), we can observe that this entertainment show contributed to the achievements of most of the goals and missions assigned to this public entity in this respect.

### 2.3. THE NIGHT-SHOW MAGAZINE SORGINEN LARATZA: KEY ASPECTS

The thorough text which is the main reference of this paper (Azpeitia, 2019) presents a great deal of information and arguments that back up and complete the reasoning and conclusions just posed. In addition, we have also identified the main factors and features of this programme that were relevant for those achievements. They are also mentioned, described and explained in detail in that main referential text. We will now outline the general aspects that did, indeed, influence the final output of the programme. Actually, they became essential characteristics of this show and were, hence, determinant for those achievements and contributions previously noted.

Humour and entertainment can be considered as the main features of this programme. This fact, along with the high presence of elements and expressions of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity, including the participation of so many and varied people representative of Basque society, was indeed key for its success. In addition, other aspects became relevant as well, and even essential. Thus, the combination of the global and the local, the mixture of such varied television genres and subgenres, the sense of variety, proximity and authenticity, as well as the attachment to current issues in its final output, can also be identified as core factors directly associated to *Sorginen Laratza's* attainments and success, and, therefore, to its contributions to Euskal Telebista and to Basque society.

Having said that, and regarding the objectives of this research, we can affirm that the entertainment factor, in its multiple and varied expressions, is not only an essential feature of this programme because it also proves to be of great value for the achievement of the main goals and missions of the Basque public television. Furthermore, we would add that all the different subgenres and outputs presented in the programme, which can be classified as television entertainment, influenced the ultimate result. Although each one played a different role, we can assert that all of them contributed in their manner to the final output, to the achievements attained and, consequently, to the above mentioned eventual contributions of the programme to Euskal Telebista, the public television channel where it was produced and broadcast.

Finally, we can affirm that although we have taken as a case study a programme that was produced more than a decade ago (*Sorginen Laratza*, 1999-2005), the results presented are equally valid for present times, and that, moreover, they can be applied not only to that type of show and format in particular, but also to entertainment programmes in general. Furthermore, they can also be pertinent for its application to similar types of companies, not only to those which work with minority cultures and languages but, in some respect, to PSM in general too.

### 3. Euskal Telebista: entertainment as a core factor

Although for the purpose of this paper we have mainly focused on the analysis of a specific programme, a format that we have defined as night-show magazine, due to its characteristics it has proved to be adequate for the attainment of the final objectives of this study. We can also state that it is suitable for the extrapolation of its results broadly to entertainment programmes and to Euskal Telebista and, therefore, that it is appropriate for assessing the importance of entertainment content for this Basque public television company.

Regarding the missions of Euskal Telebista we can state that the commitment of this public media entity with Basque society and those objectives related to the spreading and development of Basque culture and the Basque language as well as to contributing to the promotion and normalisation of this minority language, are central for Euskal Telebista since its depiction (ETB foundation law 5/1982). ETB has also embraced the three main principles of public media, namely form, inform and entertain. Equal to similar public television companies, additional objectives related to the development of the local audio-visual, creative, sector as well to fostering democratic and social values, including those about the representation of the people on the screen, are also included at present among the aims and objectives of the Basque public television company ([eitb.eus/es/grupo-eitb/transparencia](http://eitb.eus/es/grupo-eitb/transparencia)).

We can observe that this night magazine show, *Sorginen Laratza*, certainly contributed to the fulfilment of the main missions of Euskal Telebista regarding the promotion and dissemination of the Basque language and Basque culture, in multiple and varied ways. Additional contributions to the Basque public television and to Basque society have also been identified. Among them, we can outline the following topics and areas in which television entertainment content can benefit Basque society: Basque culture, Basque cultural identity and the Basque language; cultural proximity, construction and production of meaning and social cohesion; creation and production of cultural products as well as the development of the Basque creative, audio-visual sector. The analysis of this TV show has indeed demonstrated that television entertainment programmes can be an excellent vehicle for the attainment of the mission and the goals of Euskal Telebista, in addition to, and far beyond, their initial and obvious entertainment purposes.

The study carried out also enables us to identify some of the modes in which these contributions can take place. Regarding the television show studied, in this particular case the following factors are considered as key for those achievements: the high presence of such varied elements and expressions of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity; its features as a popular programme—regarding the various meanings of the popular in television—; the combination of global, local and glocal

aspects; its attachment to current issues; its live airing and perception of authenticity; the mixture of such varied output of television entertainment genres and subgenres; the presence of humour and, definitely, its essence as a Basque and close television entertainment programme.

Taking the analysis of this programme as a reference and when extrapolating its results we can conclude, indeed, that entertainment content can surely contribute to the fulfilment of the main missions that this television company has regarding its nature as public service media and, when doing so, it also benefits the Basque society this public entity works for and serve, in different manners and in various fields. We can also affirm that entertainment programmes are fundamental, and even essential for the attainment of this task and, therefore, for the fulfilment of its function as the public television of the Basque country.

#### **4. Summary and conclusion**

Therefore, the research conducted permits us to identify some of the contribution of entertainment programmes to Euskal Telebista and also helps us to assess the importance of this type of audio-visual content for this Basque public television company. Moreover, the results of this analysis enable us to value its significance for public media companies that create, produce and distribute audio-visual content in minority languages. In addition, the type of programme selected and the in-depth analysis conducted permit us to identify some of the keys that enable such contributions related to programme making, too. Finally we can observe that some of the reflections and conclusions posited in this paper can be also valid for Public Service Media (PSM) in general.

As a result, we can say that the contribution of entertainment programmes to this public entity are indeed in line with its functions as a public, regional, proximity television channel as well as, most importantly, with its particular missions as the public television of the Basque Country. Actually, in the current audio-visual context we could even conclude that entertainment television programmes are not just fundamental, but essential, for the fulfilment of the main missions of this public media company, for the promotion and dissemination of Basque culture and the Basque language in a manner that responds to the particular characteristics of Basque society but also to the specific features of the current audio-visual landscape too (Azpeitia, 2021a). Therefore, taking into account both the features and the missions of this public entity as well as the characteristics of the television ecosystem at present, we can say that, in this context, the creation, production and dissemination of Basque entertainment programmes on the side of this public television company becomes particularly relevant.

Thus, this activity and output of Euskal Telebista enables Basque people to have access to such a demanded type of content, but in their own language and according to their cultural requirements. Likewise, the high presence of these types of programmes enhances the visibility of the brand among such an enormous offer of television output easily accessible. In addition, the new distribution modes, platforms and devices facilitate their dissemination, both within and beyond the Basque Country. In this respect, the role that television entertainment programmes in Basque play can also be regarded as very significant due to the amount of leisure time dedicated at present to television entertainment consumption, in its various forms and screens, worldwide and by Basque people too. Furthermore, the influence that this television content has on the buzz generated on social media also counts in this regard.

Consequently, all these aspects also help to increase the presence of this minority language in the varied sources, devices and outputs that the new television ecosystem entails, including the very significant platforms and expressions of new and social media. Therefore, it also facilitates the use of the Basque language in leisure time and in informal environments and among young demographics in particular, too.

As we have already outlined in the previous section, where entertainment is described as core for Euskal Telebista, contributions of entertainment content regarding Basque culture, Basque cultural identity and the Basque language have been identified in the study conducted. Furthermore, other aspects such as cultural proximity, construction and production of meaning and social cohesion are also mentioned in this respect. In addition, the key role that this type of content plays in the creation and production of cultural products, as well as in the development of the Basque creative, audio-visual sector, are highlighted too.

In summary, we can certainly affirm that entertainment is a core factor for Euskal Telebista, the Basque public television company. However, the type of research conducted permits us also assert that these arguments can be applied to other public networks too, and among them to those media companies in particular that deliver content in minority languages which they want to preserve, promote and spread. Consequently, we can state that entertainment programmes play an important role in the development, promotion and dissemination of minority languages and cultures and that entertainment content is indeed fundamental, and even essential, for minority language media, for the fulfilment of their missions as public service companies that work for and serve small communities with their own cultural specificities and with minority languages. This is even more important in the present context where entertainment audio-visual content, which can be disseminated worldwide, is so demanded and consumed, when there is such a huge, global, offer to select from, and when people can watch what they want, how, when, and where they decide to do so.

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