

## Basque in talk media: from the gifting to the performance era

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### 1. Introduction

Basque was introduced throughout the audio-visual media in the 80's with the creation in 1982 of the Basque State Broadcaster, *Euskal Irrati-Telebista* (EITB), which began broadcasting in December of that year. From that time to the present the Basque audio-visual media have developed a whole media structure and have also adopted language policy criteria that clearly differentiate them from how their policies in the 80's used to be. Borrowing from Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes' proposal for characterising the evolution of minority-language media (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes 2011)<sup>1</sup>, we will differentiate in this work three eras in that development of Basque in the talk media: The gifting era, the service era and the performance era. Like Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes (2011), we can also identify in the Basque case different key policy actors, values and expanded dominant language identities and practices in those policy eras. The gifting era of Basque media started in the 80's when the Basque community was gifted resources in the form of media by the Basque institutions, after a process in which Basque activists were key actors. The media, first radio and later television, were deeply embedded in aspirations towards a unified Basque speech community and were, from that time on, an especially crucial site for the unfolding of a narrative of national development. Linguistic homogeneity and unity were the guiding linguistic ideological principles in the language policy of Basque state media at that time, and the newly created unified Basque standard, *Euskara Batua*, was prioritized, in particular in state-media such as EITB, which from its creation was considered an important tool by which to use and promote standard Basque. The Basque media were dominated in that era by an ideology of linguistic prescriptivism in which language itself was conceived as an isolated system that could be kept pure and maintained, and media speakers were conceptualized as ideal speakers, as an example to follow.

Around the 90's we can also identify in the Basque media some features of what Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes explain as the 'service media paradigm' (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes 2011: 59). Simply being present in media was not considered enough anymore. As in the Irish and Sami cases explained by Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, achieving what Moring (Moring 2007) called 'functional completeness' was considered a priority in the Basque-language case too. A full media-service in Basque was the main goal, so that 'the speakers of the language, if they so choose, can live their life in and through the language without having to resort to other languages' (Moring 2007: 18). The proliferation of local media and media products for specific audiences guided the development of Basque media policy in the 90's, in particular as regarded children and young people, all together with the promotion of new media genres of fiction and information, a media world before unexplored for Basque. Basque institutions were still the main policy actor in that era, but the proliferation of local radio stations

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<sup>1</sup> Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes (2011) borrow from Ricento's (2006) three-stage taxonomy for understanding the evolution of language policy in relation to English in the post-colonial context and identify three paradigms that they consider useful for characterising the evolution of minority language media.

and TV channels and also independent media productions brought with them the beginning of a ‘bottom-up’ policy management of Basque media production. Linguistic purism of the gifting era continued in the media paradigm of that time but, as Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes (2011) observe, functional aspects were becoming more important. The media were seen as a vital tool to enhance and develop linguistic resources and expand the speech community, and corpus planning and diffusion of new linguistic resources were essential aspects in the media language policy reflection and praxis, in particular for the new recourses of *Euskara Batua*. But also in that decade we can see the beginning of a reflection on the use of the internal variability of Basque, and in particular the usefulness of dialects, in Basque media policy.

From the 2000’s to the current phase, gifting and service logics have continued to exist. There are now, however, very different development and policy frameworks in Basque media, in particular depending on the political-administrative region in which those media are located. But in general we can say that a lot of the current media policy measures still answer to gifting and service logics. But, clearly, technological changes and global media flows have brought about, and also in the Basque case, what Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2011) term a ‘performance era’, and this new media paradigm of performance brings with it new policy actors, values and linguistic practices. Basque institutions are still key actors in what is called traditional media, in particular in television. But, in the digital media, they are being supplemented by a multiplicity of actors, such as hip-hoppers, web film and documentary makers, rockers and also youtubers, business and tourist companies, and so on. Media production in Basque nowadays consists more and more of ‘bottom-up’ activity, with initiatives being developed by the users themselves and by media makers that we can consider grass-roots media creators.

The logic of those minority-language media makers in the new global digital world is very far from the logic of the gifting and service media paradigm: first of all, the communication type they design is far from that of one-to-many communication of the traditional media in the 80’s and 90’s. Audience fragmentation and narrowcasting are some of the main features to take into account in the design of the new media context (Androutsopoulos 2010). The language policies of new media professionals are very far removed from a Standard-only policy view that characterized the beginning paradigms of the Basque media, clearly the policy of the grass-roots media creators. They make use of the whole multilingual and heteroglossic repertoires of that target they aim for. For instance, the vernacular forms of Basque have a primordial place in the new cultural spheres such as music or fiction, and also in social media like YouTube. These new practices are also provoking changes in the institutional media that have to compete in that media ecology. Gaztea web-radio is a good example we will observe in this work and also some other television broadcasting programs aimed at youth. But our examples will also include instances from other tourist and commercial marketing and Internet products and services related to that grass-roots cultural production. From all those instances, we will draw examples to illustrate the emerging new language values in the Basque media, values that many times challenge those of official policies based on standard and monoglot principles of media discourse of the previous policy paradigms.

In this paper we will begin by giving a brief overview of the development of Basque in the talk media through the first two afore mentioned media eras or paradigms, and we will identify the main key actors, values and dominant practices in the Basque audio-visual media since its beginning in the 80's. We will illustrate this with some examples of talk media practices in the 80's and 90's from radio and TV based on the documentation of state media of that time. In the next two sections, we will focus on the current media phase, since the introduction of Basque on the Internet in the 2000's. We will draw from specific media practices from radio, TV and Internet. We will analyse in them some of the new voices, linguistic values and practices that illustrate the multilingual and heteroglossic stylistic management that characterize the current Basque media.

## **2. The development of talk media language policy: From gifting to performance paradigms**

A group of language activists were the first people to create the Basque media. That activism included the religious radio broadcast programmes in Basque of the 50's and 60's in Gipuzkoa and Biscay: *Segura Radio*, *Popular Radio of Loyola and San Sebastian* and *Arrate Radio*, among others. The religious people who directed them broke the prohibition on the use Basque in the media during the Francoist regime (1939-1975) and timidly started to use Basque in talk radio, always in radio programs aimed at evangelizing the rural population. We can also include in that activist media category the local radio experiences that broadcasted entirely in Basque in the 80's in the Northern Basque Country and Navarre. They were also run by language activists and responded to a desire to introduce Basque in the media of Labourd, Soule, Baxe-navarre and in Navarre: *Gure Irratia*, *Irulegiko Irratia* and *Xiberoko Botza*, and *Euskal Herria Irratia*. Another clear example of that media activism were the free radios in the 80's in the whole Basque Country, such as *Txomin Barullo*, *Arrakala*, *Hala Bedi*, *Matraila* and *Molotoff* radios, among others (Gutierrez 2002:97). Urla explains that the appearance of many of those free radios is related directly to the youth movements in the eighties in many towns across the southern Basque provinces (Urla 1995: 248). One of the aims of those free radio stations was to open new media spaces for Basque, but always within an anti-institutional and anti-normative media paradigm.

The language policy of those free radios in the 80's was definitely linked to their anti-institutional identities. As Urla (1995) explains, 'the programmers of those free radios embraced a hybrid, playful, and anti-normative set of language practices than do language activists in other areas of language revitalization (Urla 1995: 246). Vernacular use and street language were the most common language choices in those radios: 'In keeping with their anti-institutional and oppositional politics, free radio broadcasters interject a great deal of slang, and colloquialism, that mark themselves as closer to what they see as 'the language of the street'' (Urla 1995: 254). The local radios of the North Basque Country and Navarre also showed an audience design model in which local dialects from those provinces were the main linguistic tools (Gutierrez 2002).

The Basque audio-visual media were first established in the 70's in the southern

provinces. Regional media centres were set up in Spain, and in Bilbao the Telenorte news programme started including a few minutes of Basque each week (Noci Díaz 1998: 445). But only after the death of Franco (1975), and the organisation of the Spanish state into autonomous governments, was linguistic decentralisation of the media permitted, and Basque was introduced into programming as a whole. Language activists also played a key role in that access. One of the best examples of this social movement and media professional activism was the «24 hours in Euskara» campaign (27/03/1976) that was started by the Popular Radio of Loyola together with Euskaltzaindia (Basque Language Academy) (Agirreazkuenaga 2012). They demanded, by means of a symbolic 24 hours radio broadcasting in Basque, a media system in Basque. As Arana et al. point out ([Arana et al. 2009](#):19-20), that activist campaign served to legitimate the use of the Basque language on the radio and to consolidate the need for a mass media system in Basque. A few years later the [Law of Basque](#) considered the media a significant policy tool in the revitalization of the language. An unquestionably qualitative step was taken in that policy: the creation in 1982 of the Basque State Broadcaster, *Euskal Irrati-Telebista* (EITB). In 1982, the promotion of the Basque claim was defended in the rubric of the law according to which the Basque state broadcaster [EITB was created](#). In its third article, the law discusses the main goal of EITB and points out the place of Basque in it: ‘The promotion of the Basque culture and language, establishing for the purposes of using Basque the basic principles of programming, ...’ (BOPV 1982, 1226, our translation).

In the discourse around the creation of EITB, there was a close relationship between media development and national projects of modernisation. Modernist language ideologies revolve around two tenets, as Spotti (2011) explains: ‘...the establishment of a standard or norm for language behaviour that is common to all inhabitants of a nation-state, and the rejection of hybridity and ambivalence in any form of linguistic behaviour (Spotti 2011:31). Those principles, which have often been seen as contributing to maintenance of national order (Bauman and Briggs 2003), were also the guiding language ideological principles at the beginning of Basque state-media. In other words, Standard Basque or *Euskara Batua* (‘Unified Basque’) was linked to a desired internally unified speech community. As Barambones (2012: 412) points out from the law of creation of EITB itself, the media became a vital tool in the creation of a Basque national identity: ‘The rubric of the law recognises the key role of Basque State Television in the process of cultural identification and in the promotion and social integration of the standardised version of Basque. So it was that ETB set out to become a decisive factor in the construction of a national identity in its capacity as a “vital instrument for information and political participation for Basque citizens [and] an essential medium for cooperation with the state educational system and for the promotion and dissemination of Basque culture, keeping especially in mind the promotion and development of Basque” (BOPV 1982: 1250, Barambones’ translation)’. The first ETB style guide, published ten years later (Arrasate 1992) reinforces that idea of the use of Standard Basque in the media as an identity instrument. The second tenet has been also very present in the policy of that media: a ‘pure’ and ‘homogeneous’ *Batua* was a priority at that time. The head of the Basque section of ETB at that time, Manu Arrasate, noticed the special risk of hybridity in media use in the case of Basque: ‘That’s how things are, journalists speak in a non-Basque way, all too easily turning to [non-Basque] expressions and structures, discarding the originality and richness of Basque.

What's more, the problem is made even worse with there being Spanish in the Southern Basque Country and French in the Northern Basque Country, with us borrowing one thing here and another thing there, instead of trying to unify Basque, because it's being broken up and dispersed' (Arrasate 1992: 24, our translation)

Compliance with those ideological views was evident in the first two decades of EITB, not only in news production but also in entertainment and fiction. All programming in EITB took Unified Basque as a model and followed the rules set down by Euskaltzaindia: in in-house productions and also in dubbed audio-visual products (Barambones 2006 and 2012). Dialects were seen in that policy paradigm as contributors to the standard Basque from the first Style Book (see Arrasate 1992: 40) and also later on even at the beginning of the millennium. For instance, we can read in the 2002-2005 contracting-programming review of EITB: 'Batua Basque is the standard working model for our presenters and reporters. As a general rule, as well as following the criteria and rules set out by the Euskaltzaindia for the use of unified Basque, presenters may enrich their standard speech with elements of their own regional dialects. (EITB 2006: 135, Barambones' translation). Once again the words of Arrasate in that first stylebook of EITB established the limits in the use of dialects: 'When interviewing or questioning people outside television, of course, the guests themselves will choose the form of speech they want, and this can be any of the Basque dialects. In the news given by correspondents there is also some room for using dialects, using local Basque and clearly demonstrating the dialect of that area (Arrasate 1992: 40, our translation)

In that Basque media paradigm, the media speaker of EITB was conceptualized as an ideal speaker, as an example to follow. The prologue to that style book of Iñaki Zarrhoa, director of EITB at the time, made that point clear when he spoke about the media as a tool for language normalization: 'They are tremendously powerful tools, both in written and spoken language. And in the Basque Country, as with any other minoritized language, even more so. As regards radio and television, they are especially influential in spoken Basque. We Basque speakers, and of course, children and young people, will take radio and television as our model. We'll speak the kind of Basque that is used on our radios and televisions' (Arrasate 1992: 17, our translation)

In a few years, the Basque media moved to a service paradigm in the Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes terms. One radio station or television was not enough. *Functional Completeness* was also the goal in the Basque media and, as Moring (2007) emphasises, there is a necessary condition for that: the *Institutional Completeness* of different service providers in the minority language. That means that there must be media platforms available in Basque for each type of media, reaching out to each audience group, and for each media genre. That policy view was followed in the Basque media in the 90's and carried with it an era of 'mega-policy', as ÓLaoire (2008) identifies in the Irish context. Numerous county and municipal radio stations were created that met the target of reaching different geographical audiences. The local media took great prominence within that service paradigm. Different radio stations were created such as Arrasate Irratia, Oiartzun, Txolarre, Zirika and Itsuki in Biscay and in Gipuzkoa; as well as a significant number of municipal stations such as Esan Erran, Beleixe, Karrape and Aralar in Navarre. Also in the early 90s, the creation of [local television stations](#) that worked entirely in Basque reflected that view of offering a service to different local audiences in TV platforms.

Consequently, for instance, a number of TV stations date from that time: Goiena Telebista, Zarautz Telebista, Plentzia Telebista, Goierri Telebista, Oizmendi Telebista or 28. Kanala, TtipiTtapa Telebista and Xaloa Telebista.

To satisfy a specific social audience also became a priority in that phase; from a national media view of EITB, in particular, children and young audience targets were the preference. As Barambones et al. (2012: 414) point out by emphasising the similarities between the Basque and the Irish cases: ‘there is a clear strategy centred on broadcasting children’s programmes in Basque with the aim of capturing a young audience and promoting the use of Basque from an early age. Something similar occurred in Ireland with TnaG (the Irish-language television channel, relaunched as TG4 in 1999), a clear manifestation of “the policy of preserving the language through concentrating on young people” (Watson 2003: 119)’. The creation of Euskadi Gaztea music station aimed at young people is a good example of this, as is the development of the media program Betizu for children. The Betizu club had a big membership success and encouraged Basque children to participate in outdoor activities and media activities shown on the Betizu TV programmes.

Another policy goal in that service paradigm was promoting new genres that could satisfy the demand for entertainment. We can read in the Euskara Biziberritzeko Plan Nagusia (‘Chief plan for reviving Basque’) of the Basque Government in 1998: ‘If we want to assure the use of Basque in people’s free time, it is essential to provide general TV programming: wide-ranging programmes for the whole family, made for anyone, successful and reaching out to everyone. ETB1 must establish the means of communication and channel the tools for creating in Basque aimed at social relations as a whole: cultural shows, young people’s music, literary discussions, Basque music, songs, theatre, and so on’ (EBPN 1998: 62). In fiction, the internal production of TV series started with *Hau da A.U* in 1990 and four years later the very successful *Goenkale* soap opera. Comedy was also improving the programming of EITB: *Jaun eta jabe*, for instance, one of the longest running series. But within that comic genre, we can find productions such as *A zer pareta* (What a couple), *Benta Berri* (The new inn) and *Ertzainak* (The police), among others (see that production in Irazu 2001). From the 90’s on, according to Barambones (2006), that internal production was prioritized. And only in the promotion of fictional genres related to children was dubbing into Basque from shows in other languages still an important tool.

The only-standard policy of the gifting era continued also in the service paradigm of Basque state-media’s policy at that time. But, as we said in the introduction, the functional aspects of media language started being prioritized. For instance, the Euskadi Gaztea project from its creation was considered an important tool by which to use and promote the newly created standard Basque among young Basque people. Its whole production was in standard *Batua* at that time. Even at the beginning of the 2000’s, Euskadi Gaztea could be considered a centripetal domain whose influence basically amounted to promoting standardization. Regional and social vernaculars were heard on Euskadi Gaztea only in a very limited context. We can say that, Euskadi Gaztea, like its parent media company EITB as a whole at that time, contributed in the 90’s and early 2000’s to a sociolinguistic stratification effect of Basque linguistic variants: in other words, using the standard form of the language was often associated with the voices of

‘serious’ news readers; whilst ‘non-standardness’ was ideologically confined to the media voices of a few comedians and vox pop street interviews. Moreover, the fiction production of EITB during that decade followed that only-standard policy. Good examples of that were the successful *Jaun eta Jabe* comedy show and *Goenkale* soap opera. As in the whole fictional production of EITB at that time, all the characters of those fictional programmes in the 90’s used a standard Basque and followed the rules set down by Euskaltzaindia. This was also in the dubbing policy of cartoons on EITB, in terms of the phonetic, lexical and morphosyntactic standards according to Barambones (2012: 413). In fact, Barambones (2010) argues that there is a notable degree of formality in the cartoons of that time and considers that feature makes their audiovisual text less expressive and less credible.

As we said before, the ideological views about the language model of media in this service paradigm are not very different from that which existed at when the Basque media were first created. But the beginning of a reflection on the role of Basque dialects and dialectal features in the media and, in particular, in films and TV fictional characterization, started in that decade, and, without any doubt, were linked to that lack of expression and credibility pointed out by Barambones (2010). Asier Larrinaga, the head of the Basque-language Service of EITB, explains in a short history of dubbing on ETB what the main concern in the early 90s was: ‘Because there was an increasing preoccupation about dubbing on Euskal Telebista. Many people found dubbed products difficult to understand, uncomfortable and without any credibility, and, therefore, they thought they damaged the channel’ (Larrinaga 2008) and talking about an internal report of 1991 he adds ‘Another report of that time said: “[...] that we are linked too much to the orthography of Standard Basque, pronouncing every letter as clearly as possible. [...] A spoken language, however, goes its own way, it does not bow to the norms of writing. Words, sentences, develop smoothly and thoroughly in a process without any boundaries (*sendatuko da > sendauko da > \*sendauko’a\** ‘she/he will recover’)’” (Larrinaga 2008, our translation). Following those last criteria and in the same year, ETB brought to the screen the TVseries *Ederra eta Piztia* (‘Beauty and the Beast’). It was in *Batua* but with dialectal phonological features based on the Biscayan and Guipuzkoan dialects. What is more, EITB contracted SIADECO Company of Sociological Applied Studies to carry out a study on the language policy applied in *Ederra eta Piztia*. The results led ETB to abandon that new policy (Larrinaga 2008) and go back to the standard pronunciation in dubbing but, without any doubt, the view on the contribution of dialects to playing roles was developed more deeply in the praxis from the late 90’s and early 2000s in very successful TV productions like *Sorginen Laratza* (1999) (The witches’ cauldron) and *Wazemank* (2005), for instance. In particular in *Wazemank* Basque dialects were core tools for the comedians’ portrayals.

## **2. The performance era: new actors and audiences in the Basque media**

Since the introduction of Basque to the Internet in 2000, technological changes and new digital media flows have brought Basque media to a performance era or paradigm. Many of the Basque television and radios created in the 90s are still broadcasting and there are some new outlets, such as [Hamaika Telebista](#) (2006) and [Kanaldude](#) (2010), the first television in Basque

in the northern provinces<sup>2</sup>. All have gone through technological changes trying to find an online audience. In the last two decades national and local media have both gone from local to global digital media spaces through webpages, *YouTube* channels, and *Twitter* and *Facebook* accounts. Using that same technology, the print media, too, such as the newspaper [Berria](#) and the news magazine [Argia](#) have their own audiovisual production on the web, in their multimedia sections and webtelevisions. Basque is likewise assuming a significant place on the Internet through thousands of webpages and *YouTube* channels with cultural, touristic and commercial content.

Basque institutional-media are still key actors in what is called traditional media: ETB in television and, also, [Euskadi Irratia](#) and [Gaztea](#) in radio. The institutional policies are also the key to most media products made in Basque on the web: for example, a magazine such as [Gaztezulo](#) that is aimed at young people depends on institutional support, as many of the Internet media products in Basque do. The professionals in the institutional media are still the most important actors at this time in the Basque media. But, at the same time, those institutional actors are being supplemented by a multiplicity of new non-institutional media-creators that are opening the doors to a new media paradigm. In that new paradigm, the individual is the primary actor or agent in the media and self-generated projects, including the self-generated linguistic projects, are key aspects to understand it (Kelly-Holmes & Atkison 2017: 238)

The development of new digital platforms for the delivery and circulation of audiovisual content, such as *YouTube*, *Vimeo* and *Ivoox*, have facilitated the development of those individual media projects outside media institutions: Perhaps only slowly, but we can say that Basque talk media nowadays consists more and more of ‘bottom-up’ activity, with initiatives being developed by the users, and also by other individual organizations that we can consider grass-roots media creators: such as independent web producers, film and documentary makers, hip-hoppers, rockers and commercial or cultural companies. Through those video-sharing platforms like *YouTube* or *Vimeo* channels we can consume the production of film makers such as [La chicas de Pasaik](#), winners of the annual selection of short films [Kimuak](#)<sup>3</sup>, or a short film production like [Zela Trovke](#) (*Cutting Grass*) and the documentary [Bertsolari](#), both created by the director and screenwriter Asier Altuna and published on the web of Txintxua film company. Moreover, the *Argia* news magazine’s multimedia section is nowadays a digital storage of that *YouTube* and *Vimeo* grass-roots production. We can find in that video storage, among others, the latest winner of the *Gaztezulo* Video contest, [Ultratune](#). Youtubers’ production in Basque is still very incipient, but there are already some well-known *YouTube* channels such as the Iban Garcia’s [DespertaVlogs](#), by now one of the few example of a successful youtuber in Basque.

But the *YouTube* video-sharing website is also the main platform for a lot of the rock and pop music groups in Basque today. Most of the current Basque music groups have their own

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<sup>2</sup> The Observatory of Basque Media [Behatokia](#) webpage shows the actual distribution of the local Basque media with interactive maps.

<sup>3</sup> *Kimuak* is a programme for the promotion and distribution of short films run by the Basque Government's Department of Culture through the Etxepare Basque Institute, and organized by the Basque Film Archive. Short films made in the Basque Country are selected annually and compete at the main film festivals and international audiovisual events.



YouTube channels and websites and they share in them their audio-visual production. [Gatibu](#), a Basque rock group from Gernika-Lumo, is a significant example of that digital development in Basque music. We can listen to and watch Gatibu on their website in several formats (audios, videos, pictures...). They offer their content related to new albums and music concerts as well as interviews, videos and tickets for Gatibu music concerts. Gatibu also includes several participative tools on its website, in particular tools for sharing content through social media such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, where they exchange and distribute their content. As we said before, that digital development is common to almost all Basque music creativity today.

But that Basque grass-roots media creativity is no longer organised solely on the basis of local or national identifications, as was common in the outline gifting and service eras. Those media products are increasingly translocal, particularly in cultural media production for young people. As Kelly-Holmes and Atkinson (2017) point out 'Unlike the gifting and service eras, which were premised on granting rights to and servicing territorially-defined speech and media communities, the performance era is characterised by the emergence of communities based on interest in a language or activity in it, rather than necessarily by location' (Kelly-Holmes & Atkinson 2017:238). And often those interests take the cultural producers in Basque to a communication that transcends the local. In fact, Basque production is increasingly translocal, particularly in cultural media products for young people in which we can find good examples of those local/global affiliations. Many of the new cultural products in Basque hip-hop music culture, for instance, has been developed in those translocal flows. In the productions of rappers such as La Basu and Aneguria and, in particular, in the whole music and film production of Fermin Muguruza. Basque has been exported into the niched and global market of hip-hop music and video production in a project like "[Nola?](#)", Muguruza's latest work. Muguruza explores the music, people and death culture of New Orleans ten years on from Hurricane Katrina through the singular music fusion of New Orleans rhythms with Muguruza's Basque funk-rock. Here there is a hybridization of different music and cultures. A cultural view that does not confine itself to the Basque territory and brings Basque to a multicultural and multilingual media environment.

That artistic creation looks outside and extends its boundaries to involve a global sense of space and those extensions are also more and more common in the cultural space of short films and documentaries. A documentary such as [Zela Trovke](#) ('Cutting Grass') made by Asier Altuna in collaboration with the Holland Baroque Society is a good example of a production made in Basque for a global audience. *Zela Trovke* tells us about a *moritat* from Slovakia, that is, an old folk song about a crime, which the Holland Baroque Society has recovered to include in its Barbaric Beauty programme. Maite Larburu, the orchestra's violinist, unveils the song's hidden secrets in this documentary that, as it is made in Basque and English, transcends the territorial boundaries of the Basque community when it comes to both the topic and also the perspective.

In those translocal flows we also find a lot of media productions for tourists, commercial and art promotion in which Basque is usually part of multilingual communication. Probably the best example of that type of audio-visual production in Basque for global audiences is the whole audio-visual creation around the *DSS2016 Capital of Culture project*. DSS2016 was a year-long series of cultural events that took place in Donostia-San Sebastian and the surrounding

area to celebrate the territory's designation as the European Capital of Culture for 2016 and a lot of its audio-visual film production in projects such as *Ikusmira Berriak*<sup>4</sup> ('New perspectives') and the whole tourist, commercial and art promotion were created for a translocal audience.

### 3. New values and stylistic practices in the Basque media

In this performance era, it is not enough for a media product to be in Basque alone to be successful. The national identity values that were at the base of the media production in Basque in the 80s and 90s are still important, but less and less relevant in the current digital media market. Even Basque media producers and managers of state-media such as EITB know that the success of media products nowadays is based on their innovative format and entertainment and news content; in TV and radio, and particularly in the digital world (Elordui 2017). What is more, those media managers and cultural producers know that their media products do not just have one mediation on a radio station or television channel but they must also be shared, uploaded and linked. The success of media products today is based largely on their capacity to be remediated.

In that context, Basque media producers look for new added values in their Basque media products in order to compete in that digital and participatory market, and language is part of that search. New language values are emerging that challenge those of official policies based on standard and monoglot principles of media discourse. At the same time, the principles of gifting and service logics continue to exist and in almost all media products we can detect the coexistence of existing and emerging values. We will focus in this section on those new values, which often re-emerge (Urla 1995) and revalue values (Coupland 2014).

Concepts such as authenticity, transgression and commodification of language recourses are becoming key concepts in the understanding of the new value system and linguistic stylistic practices in the Basque media, as has been observed likewise for media production in Irish, Sami, Welsh and Corsican (Pietikäinen et al. 2016). Those new values and stylistic practices are motivated or reinforced by the particular aesthetic, social and cultural norms and conventions of digital cultural environments and market. In that cultural environment and market, to be 'authentic', 'transgressive' or 'sellable', for example, can be more important than to be 'pure' or 'correct'. These new values are guiding the policies of many of the media products in Basque today: in the election between Basque and Spanish/French or English but also in an intralinguistic dimension, where decisions are between varieties of Basque itself.

We will show in this section some examples drawn from the last two decades of Basque media production. Many are media products aimed at young people, where those new values can easily found. We will use examples from the state web, radio and television, but also from

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<sup>4</sup> *Ikusmira Berriak* (New perspectives) is a programme designed to support audiovisual projects that show innovation and experimentation in both cinematic language and the production medium. It is the result of a partnership between the Tabakalera International Centre of Contemporary Culture, Donostia Zinemaldia / San Sebastián Film Festival, the DSS2016 Capital of Culture project, Donostia Kultura and the Basque Film Archive Foundation.

cultural, tourist and commercial products that we found on the web and that we must consider nowadays Basque media production.

Authenticity is probably the most important emerging value in current Basque media policy, in grass-roots creation and even in the media production of state-media. Euskadi Gaztea radio is a good example in which we can understand that importance. As we said in the last section, Euskadi Gaztea was conceived in the 90's to promote Basque, in particular standard *Batua*, among young Basques. But in 2006 its management decided to change the language policy of its youth media and in the renamed Gaztea they introduced the strategic use of youth language and dialects in the broadcaster's programming. According to the Gaztea management today, that decision aimed at improving audience levels, which were not good at the time (Elordui 2017). Sharing a linguistic identity with the young community became a priority of the new stylistic design of Gaztea, and according to the managers, to share a view of vernaculars as 'authentic' or 'real' Basque is a characteristic of that identity<sup>5</sup>. In Gaztea, young people's vernaculars are used nowadays to negotiate the professionals' personal media identities and images. Dialects are selected and performed in Gaztea's DidaGaztea programme, for instance, to fit in with informal and light genres, and also used by young and friendly voices to construct individual informal styles. The general use of code-switching in many of the informal voices in DidaGaztea is explained also as an act of authentication by Gaztea's professionals. They explain code-switching as a common strategy in colloquial speech style for all young Basque people. In general, the use of a 'mixed street language' is considered by Gaztea's managers as a way of encouraging a relationship of authenticity and similarity to the style of young Basques, and also to young urban styles (Lantto 2015). Similar stylistic principles have predominated in the design of *Gu ta gutarrak* ('We and our things'), a reality show for young people broadcast between 2014 and 2017 on ETB1, the Basque-speaking EITB channel.

Localness and authenticity are also important values in grass-roots cultural production in Basque. There are many examples of that importance in cultural creativity, but one on the most obvious is the case of [Gatibu](#). The text of their website highlights that local origin of the music group: 'Their musical style is based on *colourfully sung Western Basque*, full of melody and life'. The whole production of the web, the videos and even the texts makes use of the Western Basque dialect and so do the songs of Gatibu. Likewise, the production of most of the youtubers that use Basque on their channels follows this vernacular use. It is, for example, probably one of the linguistic identity features of Iban Garcia and probably that choice for the production of his entire YouTube channel is related to the belief that dialects are more authentic and youthful, as attitudinal researches among young Basques show (Lantto 2015, Ortega et al. 2015, Urla et al. 2016).

Authenticity is also a significant value in Basque production for global audiences. In this case, the relation between localness and authenticity in hip-hop culture gives Basque a new value in the authenticity value system. We can observe those new values in the youtube rap production of [La Basu](#), [2zio](#), and [Goenetxe Anaiak](#), among others. La Basu started her

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<sup>5</sup> According to the research carried out in recent years on attitudes and identity among young Basque speakers (Ortega et al. 2015, Urla et al. 2016), dialects are particularly highly valued among young Basque people. They are considered by young people 'authentic' Basque.

production in Spanish, while nowadays a lot of her products are in Basque, for instance her latest production 'Ni naiz izotz erregina' ('I'm the ice queen'). She mixes local Basque resources with a global format and genres, and while doing so, she shifts the values of Basque. We can see in their music and youtube production a two-way cultural flow, as Pietikäinen explains in the practice of Amoc, a Sami rapper (Laihiala –Kankainen and Pietikäinen 2010): Locally, Basque is seen as an index of that authentic global culture, and globally as an index of the originality and authenticity of a hip-hop musician (Pennycook 2007). But Basque is not alone in that media global production. Hybridity mixing and sampling of languages is a significant element of the value system of the authenticity of hip-hop culture and it is the main linguistic feature of the production of La Basu. The use of Spanish, English and Basque, even in the same song, is common in her videos on YouTube. Another example of this hybrid strategy is Muguruza's whole production. The remixing of languages like English, French, Catalan, Arabic and Basque is a constant in his film production and also in the linguistic values his work projects, starting from the name of the latest one: *Black is Beltza*.

Values related to resistance and transgression are also important in free video sharing production in Basque on *YouTube* and particularly in the comedy media production of radio and television. As Pietikäinen et al. (2016: 156) explain when talking about Welsh, in Basque too the linguistic and semiotic tools of transgressive practices are nowhere more visible than in parody. The stylization of Jon Gotzon's character in *Gaztea*, for instance, is an illustrating example of a parody that shows a position of resistance to institutional and academic constraints. Jon Gotzon is a character on *DiDaGaztea*, a morning programme on *Gaztea*. He parodies a new Basque speaker from Burgos, a non-Basque speaking area of Spain. Jon Gotzon's character breaks with convention in every sense of the word, but he is especially critical of the Basque-speaking world. The main feature of Jon Gotzon's language identity is Spanish-Basque hybridity, related to an extravagant performing of his Spanish origin: Spanish phonetic styling and a hyperbolic use of Spanish-Basque code-switching are two of his stylistic features.

His polylingual behaviour signals an oppositional attitude that fits with his critique of the Basque-speaking world and of the normative language policy towards Basque. *Gaztea*'s stylistic practice reflects and implicitly validates the abundant language mixing among Basque youth and shares with young people transgressor attitudes to the monolingual and standard norms that characterize officialdom. The stylistic practice of Jon Gotzon can be understood as an answer to the gatekeepers of language, as a violation of all norms that are characteristic of officialdom and educational systems. Jon Gotzon in his parody transgresses the rule that prohibits a syncretic mode of language, that is, to use Basque and Spanish as combined resources for making meaning.

Commodification is a new circumstance for Basque, as for many minority languages. As Turner points out (2016), the crucial factor in new digital media global environments is the market. Media systems commercialise, and the processes of globalisation reinforce that tendency. The principles of the market, and processes of marketisation, play more of a role in the media of today (Turner 2016: 10). Economic or marketing criteria are also gaining great importance in the language policies of the Basque media, when talking about the choice

between varieties of Basque and also in the election between languages. An illustrative case of the first case can be found in the language policy strategy of *Gaztea*, in this case related to the economic and marketing value of certain dialects on the radio. As we explained before, traditional Basque dialects are generally noticeably strong throughout *Gaztea*'s stylistic design. The professionals of *Gaztea* consider the use of dialects an important strategy to reach new media market niches. They highlight the importance of the dialectal empathy particularly in the case of the Biscayan dialect, that is, the Western Basque dialect that most differs from the model selected for the standard *Batua*. The effort to attract the audience of Biscay to the radio even determinates the choice of the professionals' voices on *Gaztea*, as *Gaztea*'s director Jon Lamarka underlines in a 2014 interview: '(...) Three Biscayans and another fifteen Guipuzkoans showed up at the last audition, (...) I myself have prioritized Biscayans, as clear as day. Otherwise, it's useless'. And he adds, as a means of arguing the positive effect of that strategy in the audience: '(...) and he continues 'I'll mention one case: *Gaztea* has a large number of listeners in Biscay, significantly bigger compared to several other radio stations [he is referring to stations within EITB]' (Elordui 2017). The case reveals the marketing value of that dialect in the language policy of *Gaztea* and, at the same time, how it is changing the role of the radio speaker in the Basque media: from being a model to follow in a national identity creation, to being an attractive hook to attract new audiences and market niches.

Some illuminating examples of the processes of commodification<sup>6</sup> of Basque resources can also be found in the choice between languages in small businesses' commercial websites, as well as cultural and tourism audio-visual production, mostly between Basque and Spanish/French and sometimes English. In that digital commercial context, Spanish and French are mostly prioritized, but more and more commercial webpages, and cultural and tourism audiovisual productions, choose Basque in their promotion, and often Basque in a context of bilingual or multilingual management. A good example of a small business webpage that, while multilingual (Basque-Spanish-English-France), prioritizes Basque is that of the cider company *Gorena*, which is probably one of the best elaborated marketing campaigns on the Internet in Basque. The main slogan of the company is 'Sagardoen euskal selekzioa' ('The national team of ciders') making a clear reference to the national football team of the Basque Country, in the name and also in the pictures used in its publicity. The use of Basque in that ad is linking to a clear national identification that can be meaningful for a local audience. But the use of 'euskal' (Basque) together with the use of Basque strengthens, at the same time, the uniqueness of the product for a more global consumer. It can offer the company a way to distinguish itself from its competitors, to achieve that distinction it needs in the Spanish cider market, for instance. As Appadurai (1986) explains, the instrumental value of major languages such as English or Spanish continues to rise as a result of globalizing processes but their symbolic authenticating value is being diminished. Languages like Spanish, French or English can be too homogeneous for the market. They offer to companies little in the way of distinction.

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<sup>6</sup> Pietikäinen et al. (2016) explain that 'the concept of commodification refers to the introduction of exchange values and relations into domains that had previously lacked such arrangements'. But they point out that in sociolinguistic literature 'the term have been tended to be used more narrowly to refer to a given language's change from a negative economic exchange value to a positive one' (Pietikäinen et al. 2016: 109).

Basque is taken as part of new ‘added values’ that show how it is timidly positioned in the globalized new economy, like other minority languages (Heller 2005, 2014, Kelly-Holmes 2010). As Pietikäinen et al. (2016) note, the changing conditions of the economy of late modernity, and in particular the saturation of markets, create increased opportunities for the commoditization of small languages (Pietikäinen et al. 2016: 108). One of the main criteria for being a ‘commodity’ is usefulness (Appadurai 1986) and the lack of usefulness in a modern economy has been a major factor that contributes to language shift from a minority language to a majority one. But what before disfavored those small languages seems to favour them now (Pietikäinen et al. 2016: 108). Technological changes have carried out more and more commodities and also more exchange possibilities for commodities. That increasing role of commodification in society in general is increasing the possibilities for minority languages. New niche markets are emerging for those languages (Heller 2003, 2008).

The presence of Basque in that global market is still very limited, but we can perceived some new practices that show Basque for global audiences as an ‘authentic’, ‘exotic’, ‘ancestral’ and ‘cool’ language. Basque can be useful in media products, even without being understood. Sometimes as part of a desire to show a ‘balanced bilingualism’ (Kelly-Holmes and Pietikäinen 2014), such as is the case of almost all the audiovisual production of DSS2016<sup>7</sup>, starting with the slogan ‘Donostia/San Sebastián, living together’ in the [promotional video](#) of DSS2016 presented in London in 2015. The use of Basque and Spanish names for San Sebastian is integrated as part of a marketing strategy that wants to give a general peaceful image of the Basque Country and ‘peaceful’ and ‘balanced’ bilingualism’ is part of it. This use of bilingualism is probably part of a more general shift in ideology about bilingualism, from a cultural deficit to an added value (Kelly-Holmes and Milani 2013 and Jaffe 2007). Those values of ‘coolness’ are particularly important in that tourist marketing and are closely related to the concept of authenticity. A good example of this is the webpage [Basque CoolTour](#), while there are many more. Basque on that tourist website is used as part of the authentic identity the ad wants to reinforce: the tourist service is like a trip into the ‘real’ Basque essence and, clearly, Basque is part of that.

Those values of exoticism or coolness associated with authenticity explain also the stylistic election of Basque by productions out of the Basque country, in some cases by real celebrities such as Madonna, in the [video](#) promotion of her world tour recorded in Tel Aviv. Madonna sings the traditional Basque song *Sagarra jo* in the video accompanied by the musicians of the group Kalakan in a spectacular show. The example is an instance of minimal or token bilingualism (Kelly-Holmes 2005) and clearly illustrates the rise in spectacular uses of a language for commercial purposes (Pietikäinen et al. 2016: 114), in this case Basque. The whole modality of the video shows how commodification takes a symbolic form and the symbolic meaning is prioritized over content. Symbolism eclipses the communicative value: the language is not used to be understood (Kelly-Holmes 2014). Likewise, Fermin Muguruza’s production, analysed above when talking about authenticity and transgressive values, is a clear

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<sup>7</sup> Donostia/San Sebastian 2016 or DSS2016 was the year-long series of cultural events that took place in Donostia-San Sebastian and the surrounding area to celebrate the territory’s designation as the European Capital of Culture for 2016.

example of that commercial symbolic use. The distinction between resistance and commodified multilingualism in that case is perhaps better not viewed as in a rigid dichotomy, as Androutsopoulos points out when talking about hip-hop in general (Androutsopoulos 2007: 227).

## 5. Final remarks

Modernist principles of gifting and service logics guided the status and corpus language policy of the Basque media since their beginning in the 80's and through the 90's. That modernist language policy and planning have been driven by a moral imperative, in the Basque case the unity of the Basque community and, in that ideological framework, linguistic homogeneity and the unity of standard *Batua* was prioritized. In the current Basque media, those modernist principles and values continue to exist but almost after forty years of the first audio-visual emission in Basque, in all talk media products made in Basque, we can detect the coexistence of those modernist values with emerging new ones. These new values can be considered as part of a sociolinguistic change typical of late modernity, a change that is affecting language value systems also in the Basque case (Elordui 2017) and that is being accelerated and, to a great extent provoked, by media new demands (Androutsopoulos 2014, Coupland 2014, Kristiansen 2016)

As in the Sami and Irish cases explained by Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2011) and other European minority languages like Corsican (Jaffe 2012) and Welsh (Coupland 2012), both linguistic heteroglossia and hybridity are the main features of the communicational behaviour in this last phase of Basque media, and standard varieties such as *Batua* constitute just part of a diversified and fragmented media linguistic ecology. New values are guiding those stylistic practices, values motivated or reinforced by the particular aesthetic and cultural conventions of digital cultural environments and the market. We have observed those new values in the state-Basque media products such as *Gaztea*, *Wazemank* and *Gu ta gutarrak*, and they are also common in what we have seen as 'bottom-up' activity, with initiatives being developed by individuals or companies from the cultural, tourist and commercial spheres.

Looking for authenticity, transgression and marketization in their media products, Basque media professionals and also the new social actors manage not only the whole Basque variation but also all multilingual and local cultural resources for making meaning, often in a humorous key, sometimes even in involving reflexive parodies. Humour is one of the strategies that can be used to test, manipulate and stretch boundaries, as well as to resist the normative tendencies that such boundaries represent (Moriarty 2011) and humour has been also in the Basque media case the first niche to reveal stereotypes about the 'authentic' Basque speaker and to take up a critical stance towards fixed categories and normative ideologies of media paradigms before.

Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2011) suggest that those parodic treatments, as in the case of Jon Gotzon in *Gaztea* and some characters of *Wazemank*, can be read as a sign of maturity of language revitalization processes. Basque in this case could be seen in a strong

enough position to be the subject of humour. But also we cannot forget that humour can be seen as a ‘safe’ mode for initiating the critique of established norms in spaces of public discourse (Pietikäinen et al. 2016:192) and that is probably the main reason why it is being used in those media products. In any case, it is obvious that, as Pietikäinen et al. (2016) point out, ‘the creativity required by late modernity implies that exclusive ‘straight’ and ‘serious’ footing for sociolinguistic activity will often be too restrictive’ (Pietikäinen et al. 2016: 25).

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