

Geolinguistic Regions and Diasporas in the Age of Satellite Television¹

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Abstract

Studies of the globalisation processes in the communications media have frequently emphasised the planetary-scale diffusion of the dominant cultural and linguistic models. This is undoubtedly a clearly observable tendency of our age. However, at the same time different tendencies can be observed through which globalisation is also affecting other languages and cultures, which have no choice but to globalise themselves since they belong to less favoured communities. This is the case, for example, of the languages that migrant and diasporic populations take with them on their journeys. A detailed analysis of the world panorama of satellite television makes this phenomenon clearly apparent, where the presence of those other languages makes it possible to speak of the formation of geolinguistic regions that cross geographical spaces and the frontiers of the nation state.

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Introduction

The formation of markets and audiences that extend beyond the more traditional sphere of national communication spaces, giving rise to transnational or global spaces, is one of the most studied aspects of the changes occurring in the panorama of television in the age of globalisation. Studies of the planetary scale movements of the big media groups in the field of transborder television show how these groups, the majority originating in the richer countries, are extending their power towards different regions of the world. This expansion has clear cultural implications, which some describe in brief as cultural imperialism.

In comparison to the studies of how the big communication agents are occupying an increasingly large space on the planet, there are studies that manage to show the other face of globalisation: specifically those tendencies that do not extend from the metropolises towards the periphery, but that are emerging in the peripheral areas, in some cases forming big regional agents, and in others reaching into the area of the metropolises themselves. The now classic work of Sinclair, Jacka and Cunningham, besides clearly raising this other aspect of globalisation, also shows how one of the key elements of global television is that it is based on “geolinguistic regions” rather than on continuous geographical spaces (Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham 1996).

Parallel to this second line of research, there is, in our opinion, a third aspect which has not focused as much on the big communication agents as on the studies of what authors such as Karim call globalisation “from below” (Karim 2003). Within this line we find, on the one hand, the work of Arjun Appadurai, who brilliantly highlights the cultural changes that are occurring in a globalised world in which there is an increasing flow of persons and media contents (Appadurai 1996). Together with these reflections, we also find a series of empirical works on the uses and consumption of television by diasporic groups in different places in the world. This line of research, which while incipient is becoming increasingly

detailed as we shall see, shows the way in which people displaced from their countries of origin, or even their descendants, are enthusiastically turning to television broadcasts in the language that they took with them when they set out on their journey. In some cases these are broadcasts by the diasporic community itself, and in others they are made from the country of origin. But in both cases we find people in the privacy of their homes immersing themselves for a time in a cultural milieu, or public space, different from that beyond their front door, from that of the country they inhabit. Analysis of these partial studies shows the increasing possibility for different diasporic groups spread around the world to obtain access to the mass media of their countries of origin or reference. At the same time, these works show the implications of this option for the cultural and identitarian reproduction of the diasporic communities in an age when there is a tendency towards an increase in multiculturalism, above all in the metropolises.

So as to provide a broader vision that will help in a better understanding of this other aspect of globalisation in the field of television, this article aims to show the presence of different languages in satellite television broadcasts throughout the world, as well as the places to which the broadcasts in each language are directed. In this way, we hope to support the idea that globalisation is not only strengthening the hegemony of a few dominant languages and cultures on a planetary scale, but is at the same time causing the expansion of other geolinguistic – as well as geocultural – regions, especially within the wealthier countries, thus giving rise to apparently contradictory tendencies. We also reflect on whether the picture of immigrants who, when switching on the television, tune in not to the media of their country of residence but to that of the other community of which they also form part, is merely an incidental question or whether it is a phenomenon that will acquire considerable scale in the near future, transforming the diasporic experience itself (Askoy and Robins 2003a).

Methodology

There are considerable difficulties involved in carrying out a global count, especially since satellite television is an area undergoing constant evolution and growth. The increase in broadcasting capacity thanks to technological development (digitalisation, new satellites with greater capacity, etc.) or business reorganisation, for example, are producing daily changes in the world panorama of satellite television. However, while

recognising the risk of errors and omissions in our totals, we believe that we are in a position to offer an approximation of the linguistic reality of the broadcasts.

Our starting point was the databases of the Satco satellite control centre, associated with the magazine Tele Satellite International (Satco 2002), and the Swedish centre Lyngsat (Lyngsat 2003). Given the complexity and volume of the information, frequent differences can be observed between the lists provided by each source. Where such differences have been detected, we have turned to other sources, such as specialist publications, the websites of television channels, consultation with experts, etc. This has enabled us to create our own database for carrying out our count.

Given that both sources include very different types of video and audio broadcasts, we have filtered these. With respect to television broadcasts, these are obviously not all DTH (Direct To Home) signals, that is, directed to an end user: many correspond to feed channels amongst television broadcasting centres that are later rebroadcast (either by satellite, or by cable), etc. In filtering the data, we have tried to include only those broadcasts that are either directed to the end user (in either open or encrypted form, analogue or digital), or to cable suppliers, inasmuch as the latter multiply the broadcast of the signal received from a satellite.

Having reached this point, we found ourselves facing a very broad typology of television signals, broadcast by more than 160 satellites in geostationary orbit included in this study. Together with the open channels (Free To Air or FTA), which can be obtained using a domestic receiver connected to a parabolic antenna aimed at a specific satellite without the need of paying a fee, we also considered the encrypted channels. The combination of the capacity to broadcast to vast zones of the planet and to control reception through encrypting gives rise in its turn, within DTH television, to an array of television types. These range from the broadcast of a single open signal to several continents to encrypted broadcasting restricted to a single city (such as the case of local-into-local broadcasts in the United States). We find another example of restriction in those broadcasts aimed at very specific sectors of the population, such as the broadcasts that the American Forces Network makes throughout the planet, providing their own contents to North American soldiers on different international missions; or those of the corporate television Daimler-Chrysler Business TV, which broadcasts information in seven different languages to the centres where the 300,000 employees of this group work in different parts of the

world. To these types we must obviously add broadcasts corresponding to educational networks, the exchange of contents between production centres, and many other types that are not included on what is normally considered as conventional television directed at the domestic user.

We should also mention that our count includes broadcast signals irrespective of whether the same content is being broadcast on two or more different frequencies, systems or satellites. This means that we do not count different channels, but broadcasts, which is something that should be borne clearly in mind when interpreting the information that we offer here. To have worked with channels rather than signals would have meant, firstly, a clear definition of what a channel is: for example, if the same programs are transmitted in different languages, or at different times, or under a different name, or in a different order, etc., would this have to be considered as different channels or as variations of the same channel? This would have meant an almost impossible labour of analysis and detailed comparison of broadcasts, something that is obviously far beyond our resources. We know that many channels broadcast simultaneously using dozens of signals and different satellites, while others do so using only one signal. But we believe that knowing the total number of broadcasts in each language is of greater interest than knowing the total number of channels that broadcast in that language, since this figure comes closer to showing the real presence of each language on satellite television.

With respect to information on the languages in which the signals counted are broadcast, we can observe that there are a growing number of channels that broadcast together with video signals, different audio signals in different languages. On occasions it is the user who makes the linguistic choice, and on others this is decided by the distributor. In these cases, we have chosen to count as many broadcasts as languages employed. Similarly, we use the information that the databases mentioned above usually offer on the main language employed in the broadcast, irrespective of whether this might include spaces in other languages, subtitles, etc. To define the languages we have opted for the classification employed by Ethnologue (Grimes 1992).

Another question to be considered is the geographical area reached by the signals. It is easier to determine the scope of diffusion in cases where signals are included in subscription packages, since this is reflected in the market of the package in question; this is the case with two thirds of the broadcasts counted. With the remaining third, that is,

broadcasts not included in packages and free signals, the area of reception is not determined by economic and political considerations but by technical questions, such as the strength of the signal or the size of the dish antenna used. In these cases we have chosen to count all the territories where reception of the signals is theoretically possible, dedicating more space to explaining those signals that can be received using domestic dish antennas no greater than one metre and a half in diameter.

Finally, we must recall that in this study we count the languages in which signals are broadcast, not the countries from which the broadcasts are made or where the contents are produced. This is especially relevant, for example, with those televisions corresponding to ethnic minorities that do not broadcast from their countries of origin, but from the countries where the minority in question has settled, provided by different business bodies or organisations or by the communitarian organisations of the ethnic group. It is also relevant in the case of broadcasts aimed at the diaspora, not in the language of the country of origin but in that of the receiver country (for example, broadcasts in Spanish to the Basque diaspora in Latin America, or in English to the Jewish community in the United States).

The distribution of broadcasts by languages

In our count we have found a total of 13,570 television broadcasts by satellite throughout the world. Approximately ten thousand correspond to encrypted signals, and over eight thousand of these were diffused through subscription packages. Table 1 shows distribution by the main language used, and by the open or encrypted character of the signal. The first conclusion that can be drawn, as we have already indicated in a previous article (Amezaga 2004b), is the supremacy of English, a language that accounts for over 40% of total broadcasts.² The second observation is the fact that out of the thousands of languages currently spoken in the world, less than eighty are used in satellite television broadcasts. Amongst the fortunate ones we find both the languages of big linguistic communities and the languages of small communities. Similarly, amongst those languages that are currently excluded from this medium, we not only find languages with a scarce diffusion, but also some thirty languages that are each spoken by over ten million people (that is, half of the languages that reach such a proportion in the whole world). Finally, it is notable that practically all of those on satellite television have, to a greater or lesser extent,

an official character in one or more states or regions. This is a fact to bear in mind when evaluating the important role that the state continues to play in the development of languages, especially in an age when there is so much talk of the overcoming of nation state frontiers thanks, amongst other phenomena, to satellite communication. The only two exceptions to this rule are Kurdish and Assyrian, two languages that while lacking official recognition have acceded to satellite broadcasting from the diaspora, although they are not free of difficulties proceeding from the nation states (Hassanpour 2003).

Table 1: Television satellite broadcasts in the world ³

Language	Speakers (000)	Broadcasts	FTA	Language	Speakers (000)	Broadcasts	FTA
English	508,000 ⁴	6.194	14%	Albanian	5,000	11	36%
Spanish	352,000	1.555	19%	Kannada	42,000	10	60%
French	122,000	740	18%	Slovak	5,600	10	60%
Chinese ⁵	1,042,000	545	38%	Catalan	11,000	9	11%
Portuguese	175,000	540	30%	Marathi	65,000	8	50%
Arabic	375,000	526	73%	Georgian	4,000	7	86%
German	118,000	321	59%	Gujarati	39,000	7	43%
Italian	63,000	321	47%	Latvian	1,500	7	43%
Japanese	126,000	311	23%	Armenian	5,500	6	83%
Russian	294,000	227	56%	Azerbaijan	4,000	6	100%
Korean	72,000	209	21%	Kazakh	8,000	5	100%
Turkish	56,000	197	49%	Burmese	22,000	4	100%
Hindi	367,000	170	46%	Cambodian	7,000	4	100%
Polish	43,000	133	20%	Lithuanian	4,000	4	75%
Swedish	9,000	118	16%	Luxemburgese	335	4	100%
Greek	12,000	87	40%	Nepali	16,000	4	75%
Hungarian	14,500	61	23%	Oriya	30,000	4	75%
Bulgarian	9,000	54	26%	Sanskrit	200	4	100%
Farsi	30,000	51	94%	Galician	3,200	3	100%
Thai	21,000	51	88%	Kashmiri	4,500	3	100%
Hebrew	4,000	45	16%	Sinhala	13,000	3	0%
Urdu	50,000	45	53%	Slovenian	2,200	3	67%
Dutch	20,000	42	24%	Turkmenian	6,500	3	100%
Romanian	25,000	42	60%	Mongolian	1,900	2	100%
Tamil	66,000	42	40%	Assyrian	200	2	100%
Malay/Indonesian	143,000	39	51%	Macedonian	2,000	2	100%
Serbo-Croatian	20,000	36	58%	Pashto	19,000	2	100%
Danish	2,300	34	15%	Tswana	4,000	2	50%
Czech	12,000	31	10%	Welsh	600	2	100%
Norwegian	4,400	31	19%	Tajik	4,000	1	100%
Philippine	57,000	31	26%	Amharic	23,000	1	100%
Malayalam	34,000	26	62%	Basque	800	1	100%
Telugu	69,000	26	54%	Belarussian	10,200	1	100%
Bengali	187,000	25	76%	Estonian	1,100	1	100%
Ukrainian	46,000	23	91%	Irish	260	1	0%
Finnish	6,000	18	17%	Lao	4,000	1	100%
Punjabi	20,000	17	59%	Maldivian	200	1	100%
Vietnamese	59,000	14	100%	Tibetan	1,300	1	100%
Kurdish	15,000	12	100%	Indefinite ⁶		428	21%
				Total general		13.570	25%

Another notable aspect of these figures is the difference found between broadcasts in different languages depending on whether they are encrypted or open. As a general tendency, it can be said that the languages with a greater presence appear mainly in

encrypted packages, the majority included in subscription packages. On the contrary, the languages with less presence have a greater tendency to open diffusion or FTA. There are however significant differences between the languages of the two groups, as we shall see below.

Languages with a greater presence

In order to analyse the data in greater detail, we will first concentrate on the languages that have a greater presence on satellite television. If we consider those languages that are present in over one hundred broadcasts, a first observation is that within this group we find nearly all those with the greatest worldwide diffusion (those spoken by over one hundred million people), with the exception of Bengali and Malay/Indonesian, which, in spite of their far surpassing the figure of one hundred million speakers, do not reach fifty broadcasts. Together with these languages of large communities, there are others with less demographic weight (Italian, Korean, Turkish, Polish and Swedish) that are present in many satellite broadcasts. Another characteristic of this group is that it includes those languages that we could term intercontinental, that is, they enjoy some type of official recognition in territories situated in different continents: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Arabic. The exception to this observation is Dutch, which, in spite of having an official character in territories of the Caribbean and in South Africa, does not exceed forty broadcasts.

English

Obviously, one of the reasons for the hegemony of English in satellite television broadcasts must be sought in its character as a global language, according to the rank it is ascribed by David Crystal, taking account not only of the number of people who speak it but also its status in many countries (the official or co-official language in 76 countries or territories) and in international relations of every type (economic, political, scientific, etc.) (Crystal 1997).

While the global character of the language partly explains the impressive number of English-language broadcasts, the characteristics of the satellite television market in the main English-speaking countries, especially in North America (the United States and Canada), are of equal or greater importance for understanding this fact. Indeed, as we can

observe in table 2, nearly eight out of every ten of the English-language broadcasts we have counted are aimed exclusively at the main English-speaking countries; either because this is the area of the signal’s technical diffusion or because they are encrypted broadcasts with access restricted to a specific market. In the specific case of broadcasts directed to the United States, we find that half (approximately 2,000) are signals corresponding to local televisions, which can only be received using decoders restricted to the local area.⁷ In Canada, as well, there is a notable number of local broadcasts that are retransmitted by satellite.

Table 2: Distribution of English language broadcasts by geographical zone	
Principal English-speaking regions	4,847
USA, Canada	4,239
UK, Ireland	327
Australia, New Zealand	281
Other regions	1,347
America (included USA and Canada) ⁸	59
Mediterranean, West Asia	318
Europe (included UK and Ireland)	305
South East Asia	213
Southern Asia, Indian Ocean	117
Eastern Asia, Pacific (included Australia and New Zealand)	88
Africa	169
Gobal (Atlantic)	28
Global (Asia, Pacific, Indian Sea)	25
Others	25
Total broadcasts in English	6,194

Together with the North American space, Great Britain and Ireland, followed by Australia and New Zealand, are the other points towards which an important number of English-language broadcasts are directed. To a lesser extent, we can mention countries where English, while not the language spoken by the majority, holds great social weight and has an official status (the Indian subcontinent, the Philippines, Malaysia, or African countries like South Africa, Nigeria and others).

The weight of English in satellite television broadcasts must therefore be situated in general terms within this panorama where the majority of such broadcasts are concentrated in English-speaking areas. It is difficult to determine the number of English-language broadcasts in zones where it is neither the official language nor the language of the

majority, given that encrypted broadcasts, to which a market can be more easily attributed, are combined with open broadcasts that can be received in extensive zones of the planet, including both Anglophone and non-Anglophone countries. If we consider all of them as a whole, we can speak of somewhat over one thousand English-language broadcasts that could theoretically be received outside the zones that are mainly English speaking. Two thirds of these signals are broadcast in encrypted form.

On the other hand, out of the ensemble of broadcasts that are not centred on regions where English is exclusively or predominantly spoken, a notable number of broadcasts can be received in Europe, both open and encrypted (in some cases directed to subscribers to a specific satellite platform, or to cable-operators who then distribute the signal to their customers). This presence of English language broadcasts in the European zone is something highly evident to its inhabitants, amongst other reasons because some English channels reach audiences of many million people (Chalaby 2002). If we add to the broadcasts aimed at exclusively European or pan-European markets, those that also include the Mediterranean zone and the Middle East, we find ourselves dealing with a macro-region in which the English language channels have a significant presence (in the European case this presence is greater in the Northern European countries, Italy and Spain, and smaller in France, Germany or Greece).

Different parts of Asia are also another important market for English language broadcasts. On the one hand, many of the signals that cover the Mediterranean also reach Central Asia. On the other hand, the expansion of English language broadcasts towards the markets of East and Southeast Asia is well known thanks to different studies, both to countries where English is officially recognised and to other places (Chang 2003; Ellis 2001; Thomas 1999).

With respect to the non-Anglophone countries of sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, while in absolute terms there is a significant presence of English language channels, in relative terms there is an appreciably lower presence than in Europe, Asia or Oceania.

Spanish

The strength of the American satellite television market is not only reflected in the number of English language broadcasts, but also in the quantity of Spanish language

broadcasts. From the data in Table 3, we can similarly highlight the relatively small presence of Spanish language broadcasts outside the regions and countries where it is not the official language (that is, outside Latin America and Spain). The chief exception is the United States, a country where there is an important presence of Hispanic television channels. This interesting phenomenon has already been highlighted and analysed in different works (Sinclair 1999; Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham 1996). In fact, the United States accounts for nearly all Spanish language broadcasts targeting national markets that are not officially Spanish speaking. The remainder is made up of open broadcasts directed either at Europe and the Mediterranean as a whole, or to different parts of the American continent, also reaching Brazil, the United States or Canada.

Table 3: Distribution of Spanish language broadcasts by geographical zone	
America	1,180
USA	283
Mexico	158
Europe	249
Spain	228
Other regions	126
Mediterranean (South Europe, North Africa, Middle East)	47
Global (America, Europe)	73
Global (Europe, Africa)	4
Asia, Oceania	2
Total broadcasts in Spanish	1,555

In spite of Spanish being the second language in terms of its presence on satellite television and the fourth or fifth in terms of forming a linguistic community in the world, there are little more than a dozen signals outside these two continents, reaching Asia beyond the Middle East or sub-Saharan Africa, and its presence is very limited in Oceania.

French

French, while spoken by less than half the number of those who speak Spanish, has a more widespread diffusion around the planet. This is explained by the continued existence of overseas territories of the French Republic, the use of French as a colonial language in many countries until well into the XX century, and its importance as a diplomatic language until its replacement by English. This is reflected in the distribution of French language

broadcasts throughout the world. On the one hand, these reach the territories where French is spoken, amongst which France and Canada are outstanding with a similar number of broadcasts in each country, followed by French overseas territories (the Reunion Islands, the French Antilles, New Caledonia and French Polynesia) and African countries where French has an official status. The great majority of these broadcasts are included in encrypted packages with a national diffusion. On the other hand, a third of the broadcasts extend to regions where French is not an official language, both in open form, reaching huge geographical zones, and in encrypted form. The majority of these broadcasts cover the European continent and the Mediterranean (over one hundred broadcasts) and, to a lesser degree but significantly, the United States (approximately forty signals). Finally, some thirty broadcasts are diffused over huge zones of Africa, Asia and Oceania.

Chinese

One of the factors differentiating Chinese language broadcasts from those we have considered until now is the high number of open or FTA broadcasts in comparison with encrypted ones. While in the English case the percentage is 14%, and in the Spanish and French cases it does not exceed 20%, in the Chinese case it reaches 38%. This greater technical capacity for reception by the inhabitants of the countries covered by the signals clashes, however, with the control exerted by the Chinese government - similar to that of other governments in both Asia and other parts of the world - over the diffusion and reception of satellite signals (Thomas 1999; Thomas 2003; Xiaoming 2000). This can, for example, affect the reception of Chinese language television signals proceeding from Taiwan and diffused in the mainland China.

On the other hand, broadcasts in Chinese are not restricted to zones where this language (or ensemble of languages, since we include here broadcasts in both Mandarin and Cantonese) is official. Other authors have already indicated the importance of the diaspora in the projection of Chinese channels towards different parts of the planet, given the economic potential of the Chinese emigrants throughout the world (Karim 1998; Karim 2004). In fact, 28% of broadcasts in Chinese are diffused in countries where this language has no official status. This has converted Southeast Asia into a region with a great diffusion of television signals in Chinese; there is a significant presence of Chinese inhabitants in the area, estimated at twenty million people by some authors (Chaliand and Rageau 1995).

Beyond the Chinese linguistic area and neighbouring Southeast Asia, America is outstanding as a receiver of Chinese language broadcasts, with seventy television signals reaching this continent, two thirds of which are concentrated in the United States alone. After Southeast Asia and America, a third area of diffusion for these signals is formed by Australia and New Zealand, which are reached by a hundred signals (a third of them in specific form, and the rest through global diffusion on C band, whose reception requires large dish antennas). These countries are followed at some distance by Europe, which receives approximately twenty broadcasts, half of them encrypted.

Portuguese

In the case of Portuguese, we find ourselves facing a profile similar to that found with Spanish, both with respect to the importance of the “American relative” (in this case Brazil), and in the concentration of broadcasts in zones where this language is official. Brazil, where two thirds of the broadcasts are diffused, holds a significant weight, far exceeding Portugal, which receives less than ten percent. We find the rest of the broadcasts, both open and encrypted, in different regions of America and Europe, with a small presence in Asia, Oceania and Africa, a continent where Portuguese is, however, an official language in several states.⁹

Arabic

The most outstanding characteristic of broadcasts in Arabic is that these are open in the majority of cases. Indeed, with three out of every four signals being of this type, it doubles the percentage we observed for Chinese. These broadcasts cover, in the first place, the zones where Arabic is spoken, from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic coast of North Africa, contributing to the creation of an Arabic public sphere that crosses state frontiers, as well as the communication space that was amongst the initial objectives of Arabsat (Lynch 2003; Miladi 2004).

Equally striking is the fact that, unlike the broadcasts in Spanish, French or Portuguese, and along the same line as Chinese, some 30% of Arabic broadcasts are specifically aimed at zones outside the Arab countries. These zones are, in the first place, Europe, which is reached not only by specific broadcasts but also by a large number of signals that cover the whole Mediterranean, reaching a total of over one hundred and

twenty. France is a case to highlight, as it has nearly twenty channels included in subscription packages. Europe is followed by the American continent (basically the United States), where more than eighty broadcasts can be received. They are followed at a distance by the thirty broadcasts aimed at Asia and Oceania.

The languages of India

Taken as a whole, the languages of the Indian subcontinent that have satellite television broadcasts (Hindu, Urdu, Tamil, Malayalam, Bengali, Telegu, Punjabi, Kannada, Marathi, Gujurati, Oriya, Nepali, Sanskrit, Sinhala, Kashmiri, Maldivian and Pashto) add up to an ensemble of over one thousand million speakers, as well nearly four hundred broadcasts. Hindu is the language that stands out from the rest with the greatest number of broadcasts, 170. It is followed by Urdu with 45 and Tamil with 42. On the contrary, others are present with barely a couple of broadcasts, as can be observed in Table 1.

The broadcasts in the different languages of the subcontinent are divided between those that are diffused within the region itself and those that are aimed at other zones. As a whole, half of all broadcasts are made in open form, with their reception therefore not so limited to a specific market or state. This guarantees the presence of a large part of these languages in practically the whole Asian continent. It must be pointed out, however, that a significant part of them are transmitted on C band, which limits their reception to large dish antennas, more common to rediffusion centres than to private users.

Outside Asia, we find a significant number of signals in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. More than fifty broadcasts reach the region, led by Hindi, with twenty-three broadcasts, and followed by Tamil, Urdu, Malayalam, Bengali, Punjabi, Sinhala and Maldivian, with several signals each. We also find a significant number of broadcasts in these languages in America (especially the United States) and in Oceania, with over thirty signals in each zone.

Looking beyond the whole, we can say that the languages with the greatest presence in satellite broadcasts are also those that have the highest percentage of broadcasts outside the subcontinent. This is the case of Tamil, for example, with half of its broadcasts directed towards Europe, the Middle East, America or Australia; of Hindi, with a third of its broadcasts diffused in the same regions; of Urdu, with a similar percentage aimed at Europe and America; or of Malayalam and Bengali, with more than a quarter of their broadcasts

directed to America in the former case, and to Europe and the Mediterranean in the latter. While their total number of broadcasts is lower, the same tendency can be observed with respect to Punjabi, Gujurati and Marathi. The remainder tend to be concentrated in the South of Asia.

Other languages with a large diffusion

German

Nearly two thirds of German language broadcasts are realised in open form, directed to broad zones extending beyond the frontiers of the state, basically to Europe and the Mediterranean, a region that receives nine out of every ten broadcasts. The great majority of encrypted broadcasts are obviously directed to Germany or Austria. Outside the European continent, we find a dozen broadcasts in Africa, a similar number in America, and five within the encrypted package Yes in Israel. There are two broadcasts that reach beyond Central Asia.

Italian

Broadcasts in Italian offer us a similar panorama to those in the German language. With one out of every two broadcasts in open form, nearly half of the signals remain within the limits of Europe and the Mediterranean. Nearly the same number of broadcasts reaches West Asia, while few others are diffused in other continents. Amongst the latter, twenty broadcasts are diffused in America (above all in the United States). With respect to the rest of the world, we find two broadcasts in Africa and two more in Asia and Oceania.

Japanese

Japanese is another language that appears principally in signals diffused in its own region, with nine out of every ten broadcasts concentrated in the archipelago. Outside these islands, we can mention over a dozen broadcasts that can be received in other areas in East Asia, as well as eight available in America (basically in the United States), four in Europe and one in Oceania.

Russian

Over half of the television signals in which Russian is the principal or exclusive language are broadcast in open form. That is why the zones of their reception tend to

extend beyond the limits of the present-day Russian Federation, with an important presence in the whole of the northern half of the Asian continent. This includes a large part of China and the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia. Towards the west, the Russian language signals also reach European countries, especially the regions of the Baltic Sea, the north and east of the continent. Outside these zones neighbouring on Russian territory, the broadcasts in America are notable, with a dozen in the United States, as well as a similar number of signals diffused in Israel, where the Jewish community originating from Russia consists of a million people, the majority of them recent arrivals in the country (Caspi et al. 2002). Finally, we would mention the five broadcasts directed towards Australia and the Pacific, which, while needing large dish antennas for their reception, ensure this language a presence in the region.

Korean

Eighty percent of broadcasts in Korean are diffused in the East of Asia; the majority are encrypted signals directed to the South Korean market, besides others directed to other regional countries or to the region as a whole. The twenty-four broadcasts to America (principally the United States) are notable amongst the signals diffused outside the zone. On the contrary, there is a very small presence of Korean language broadcasts in Europe, where there are two signals, or in Oceania, where there are slightly more.

Turkish

After Turkey itself, Europe is the area where most signals in Turkish can be received, given the abundant open broadcasts that cover the continent partially or totally. To be specific, more than one hundred signals can be received throughout the continent, the majority in open form, and some included in subscription packages, as is the case with a dozen broadcasts in Germany, where there is an important Turkish community. On the other hand, it should be noted that many of the broadcasts that cover Europe and Turkey also reach the Mediterranean and the republics of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan), which form another great target area for signals in this language (Askoy and Robins 2000). This is explained by the fact that following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of these republics, a large linguistic space was opened up, based on languages with a common origin from which it is more or less possible to understand Turkish language broadcasts. This geolinguistic space, which

reaches from the Mediterranean to well inside China, is of great interest for a country that until barely a century ago led one of the great empires of history – the Ottoman Empire

To a much lesser extent we also find broadcasts in Turkish in America (half a dozen, nearly all in the United States) and in Oceania.

Polish

With respect to Polish, we find the majority of broadcasts centred in Europe, some of them in Poland alone and others spread over the continent and its Western Asian neighbours. Also significant are the dozen broadcasts in this language that are diffused to the United States.

Swedish

Swedish is a language that, in spite of being present in over one hundred satellite broadcasts, is barely diffused outside Europe. With a great concentration of signals in the north of Europe, we only find a couple of broadcasts in this language in South Africa and America, corresponding to versions in the Swedish language within channels with a multilingual diffusion.

Languages with a medium presence

In this group we include languages that have between ten and one hundred broadcasts. Some of these languages barely have any notable presence outside the countries where they have an official status, or in neighbouring regions if they are open broadcasts. This is the case, for example, with European languages like Slovak or Ukrainian, without any diffusion outside Europe, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean; Czech, (which appears in a couple of broadcasts for Germany besides the open signals towards Europe); Norwegian, Finnish, Bulgarian, Danish and Albanian, all with one signal towards America alongside their presence in Europe; or Hungarian, with some broadcasts centred on European countries other than Hungary (the United Kingdom and Poland), and a presence in Australia and the United States (one broadcast in each). Rumanian also tends to be concentrated in Europe and neighbouring areas, although five channels in this language can be received in North America (four of them open), besides one channel in Israel.

Dutch also appears concentrated in broadcasts directed to Europe and to other areas where it is an official language: the South African Republic and the Caribbean (the Dutch

Antilles and Surinam), although in this case the diffusion covers a large part of Latin America. It also has a presence in the United States and Oceania, with two and three broadcasts respectively.

A similar position is held by Asian languages that are barely diffused beyond the country where they have an official presence, or in more or less neighbouring areas: this is the case with Philippine, with two signals that reach Europe, America and Oceania; or Malay, the official language of Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei. This language, which is spoken by more than one hundred and forty million people, only appears in three signals that reach zones outside Southeast Asia (North Africa and the Middle East, Europe and the United States, with one signal each).

Another case of relative confinement to the country of origin or its neighbouring areas is Hebrew. Out of a total of forty-five signals, only two reach Europe and four reach the United States, with the rest diffused in open form towards the Middle East or in the Yes package of Israel. We also find international broadcasts by Israeli channels, but in other languages (English and Russian). This is the case, for example, of The Israel History Channel, which has the stated aim of reaching the diaspora.

The Kurdish language constitutes a singular case. At present there are a dozen Kurdish broadcasts, although it is a language without officially recognised status in any of the four states that currently govern Kurdistan. To this must be added the importance of the diaspora, from which the Kurdish language broadcasts originate. These are mainly received in an area extending from Europe towards the Caspian Sea (including Kurdistan), and to a lesser extent in America.

Another language with an important presence outside its territory is Farsi, whose presence is found in some thirty open broadcasts that not only cover Southwest Asia but also partially or totally penetrate Europe. On the other hand, there are twenty broadcasts in the United States, the majority of which are open. This significant presence of broadcasts in Farsi in Europe and America is largely due to the fact that many proceed from media based in the United States, where many Iranians emigrated following the Islamic revolution, which resulted in a certain development of the diasporic media (Naficy 1995). These North American media are the source of over thirty broadcasts in Farsi throughout the world. The rest, except for two broadcasts proceeding from the United Kingdom, come from Iran.

Other Asian languages with a relatively important presence outside their zone of origin are Vietnamese, with broadcasts not only in Southeast Asia but also in Europe and the United States, or Thai, a language that is also present in Australia and New Zealand.

Beyond the Mediterranean and the European continent, Greek has a significant presence in America, with a dozen broadcasts in the United States. It also has a presence in Oceania. Serbo-Croatian¹⁰ is in a similar situation: besides broadcasts in Europe, it appears in four signals directed towards Australia and New Zealand, and in another five directed to the United States.

Languages with a lesser presence

If we consider languages with a presence in less than ten satellite broadcasts, we can, as a general tendency, note their diffusion in open signals covering extensive zones. Amongst the European languages, this is the case with Belarussian, Estonian, Macedonian, Slovenian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Luxemburgese: the majority of broadcasts in these languages are diffused in certain zones of Europe or throughout the whole continent (except for some encrypted broadcasts limited to national markets). We find the following Asian languages in this situation: Lao, Tibetan, Mongolian, Turkmenian, Tajik, Kazakh, Georgian and Azerbaijan, the latter three of which have signals that also reach Europe. This continent is also reached by several broadcasts in Armenian, which also has two signals in the United States (one of which corresponds to a television which was set up in this country). Assyrian has two signals, one a wide broadcast that covers Southeast Asia and the Mediterranean, while the other covers the United States. Assyrian is the only language apart from Kurdish to carry out satellite broadcasts without any official support from a state or a similar administrative structure; both Assyrian signals originate in a channel based in the United States.

Since they are broadcast on C band, Burmese and Cambodian achieve a more global diffusion, although their reception is restricted to large dish antennas. This is also the case with the only languages of African origin that are currently broadcast by satellite as a main language, that is, Tswana and Amharic, with signals diffused to different zones of Africa.

Other languages with a minor presence are those whose diffusion is restricted to nation state markets, due to their inclusion in packages with a limited radius of activity: this is the case of Irish, which is limited to Ireland, and it was the case of Welsh, which until

2003 could be only received in the United Kingdom. In the case of Catalan we find that the majority of satellite signals are restricted to the Spanish market. There is, however, a Catalan broadcast directed towards Europe and another towards America.

Other languages with little satellite diffusion have recourse to this technology almost exclusively to reach distant zones, as they cover their own territory with terrestrial broadcasts. This is the case with Basque, where the only satellite broadcast with Basque as the main language is directed towards Europe; or Galician, with open broadcasts towards Spain and towards America and Europe.

A reading by regions

One of the principal conclusions that can be drawn from what we have seen above is that there is an abundant presence of satellite broadcasts in languages that are not found historically in the place to which such broadcasts are directed. This does not only involve English, the language of global broadcasting, or the other colonial languages that still retain a certain status in former colonies, such as French, Dutch, Portuguese and others, but is equally apparent in the significant transborder, and even transcontinental, diffusion of languages belonging to migrant and diasporic populations.

This is important in a world where, according data from the United Nations, 175 million people live in a country different from their place of birth, as part of a growing tendency whereby the rich countries are receiving an increasing number of immigrants from other countries (UNO 2002). According to a report drawn up by this world organisation, the number of people living outside their country of origin - three percent of the population of the planet - grew by 14% between 1990 and 2000, but in an unequal form. Thus, while the increase was 48% in the United States, 26% in Oceania and 16% in Europe, the poorer countries underwent a negative migration. We believe it is important to bear these figures and tendencies in mind if we are to adequately weigh the phenomenon of transborder television, as well as the impact that the latter can have on the social and cultural life of countries where there is a big diasporic community (especially the rich countries). It is not our intention to restrict our consideration to immigration, since the question of diasporas is much wider than this. This is because while the statistics on migratory movements speak of persons displaced from their place of origin, the studies of diasporas speak of communities that have maintained themselves as such for generations.

Our fieldwork has enabled us to observe how the uses of satellite television can, under certain conditions, broaden the very concept of diaspora.¹¹ That is why we cannot reduce diasporas to migrant populations. But consideration of the latter allows us to at least gain an idea of the dimensions of the phenomenon. In this section we will concentrate our attention, by way of example, on the presence of the languages of immigrant communities in three big receiver regions: the United States of America, the European Union and Australia.

The United States

As we have seen, the United States forms the largest satellite television market in the world, which not only results in a growing number of English language broadcasts, but also makes it an attractive market for broadcasts in other languages. At the same time, this country has the largest number of immigrants in the world, with some 35 million people born elsewhere, representing twelve percent of its population. Besides, immigration is inherent to the birth and development of the country itself, which has diasporic communities that have laid down deep roots over generations. If to all this we add the fact that the country's economic power provides a large part of the immigrants with a purchasing power greater than that of the population of their country of origin, we can better understand why there are so many broadcasts in languages other than English directed towards this territory (Table 4).

Table 4: Satellite television broadcasts and habitual speakers of each language in the United States					
Language	Speakers¹²	Broadcasts	Language	Speakers	Broadcasts
Total	262.375.15	4.69			
	2	7	Hebrew	195.374	4
English	215.423.55	3.79			
Other	7	1	Dutch	150.485	4
languages	46.951.595	880	Thai	120.464	3
Spanish	28.101.052	448	Telugu	86.165	3
				1.009.62	
Arabic	614.582	74	Vietnamese	5	2
Chinese	2.022.143	64	Armenian	202.708	2
French	1.643.838	61	Bengali	128.820	2
Portuguese	564.630	39	Tamil	83.965	2
Korean	894.063	24	Kurdish	10.190	2
				1.224.24	
Farsi	312.085	21	Philippine	1	1
Italian	1.008.370	15	Finnish	312.085	1
Greek	365.436	14	Punjabi	141.740	1
Hindi	317.057	14	Hungarian	117.973	1
Russian	706.242	13	Albanian	79.515	1
Polish	667.414	13	Swedish	67.655	1
German	1.383.442	7	Assyrian	62.890	1
Serbo-Croatian	233.865	7	Malay/Indonesian	58.810	1
Japanese	477.997	6	Norwegian	55.465	1
Urdu	262.900	6	Danish	33.395	1
Romanian	114.840	5	Bulgarian	28.565	1
Malayalam	79.855	5	Kannada	24.390	1
Turkish	74.130	5			

In Table 4, together with the number of broadcasts in each language, we can observe the number of persons above the age of five who, according to official data, normally use this language at home.¹³ With respect to satellite television broadcasts, we have included all those that reach the United States: that is, all broadcasts that are limited by their diffusion or encrypting to the territory itself, and the other open broadcasts that reach this country as well as other zones. Four out of five of the 4,697 broadcasts in our census are in English, which leaves a total of nearly nine hundred in a different language. Half of the latter are in Spanish, the language of nearly thirty million residents in the United States, and the rest are in other languages. Outstanding amongst these are Arabic, Chinese, French and Portuguese. There is an important difference within this group of languages however. While the two Asian languages mainly appear in broadcasts directed to the final consumer (either through open broadcasting or through their inclusion in DTH subscription

packages), the broadcasts in French and Portuguese are mainly signals on C band, directed to all of North America (including Canada) in the case of French, or to the whole of America (especially Brazil) in the case of Portuguese. For the remaining languages, except Spanish, the general tendency is similar to that of Chinese and Arabic, with open broadcasts directed to the end user or with encrypted broadcasts, many of which are included in digital satellite platforms. Amongst the big North American platforms, Dish TV has a large offer of broadcasts in languages other than English: over one hundred and thirty channels in these languages, of which thirty-one are in Spanish. DirecTV offers its subscribers a total of 42 channels in Spanish, besides its channels in English, and is timidly widening its linguistic offer at the present time. In fact, there are several reports that point to the so-called ethnic market as one of the growth opportunities for business in North American television (Mitsis 2004).¹⁴ Voom does not at present offer programs in languages other than English.

From a comparison of the number of broadcasts in each language and the number of persons who speak it, as shown on the table, several conclusions can be drawn. Besides the presence of 41 different languages, we must indicate that out of the twenty-two languages mentioned in the US census as having more than two hundred thousand speakers, all except Gujurati have a broadcast. If we widen the spread to include languages spoken by over one hundred thousand people, taking the total to thirty-eight, eight languages appear that do not have a broadcast: besides Gujurati, these languages are Asian (Cambodian and Lao), African (Kru-Ibo-Yoruba), European (Ukrainian and Yiddish), and one native to America itself: Navajo. There are languages spoken by a smaller number of people that do however have a television signal. According to this data, in the best of cases nine out of every ten people in the United States who speak a language other than English at home have the possibility of gaining access to satellite television broadcasts in their family language. We should recall that we are speaking of the technical possibility of receiving such signals, which must be filtered by economic factors (especially in the case of subscription channels), television uses, etc.

These broadcasts in languages other than English have a diverse origin. Thus, some correspond to foreign television channels, which send their signals either directly or through North American packages to the homes at which they are directed. In other cases we find North American producers who – whether because they originate from a diasporic

community of for other reasons – broadcast from within the country to the community in question, feeding ethnic economies or economic enclaves, depending on the case (Zhou and Cai 2002). Finally, there are a fair number of multilingual broadcasts, where, besides English, users are offered the option of receiving the audio signal in different languages.

To these broadcasts must be added, besides diffusion by cable, part time broadcasts (that is, without a predominant character on the channel) in languages other than English. Hamid Naficy shows, for example, that broadcasts in Middle Eastern languages within local North American channels are a phenomenon with a certain tradition behind it (Naficy 2003).

Given this panorama, it is not surprising that amongst the not particularly abundant bibliography on the uses made by the diasporas of the television of their country of origin, we can find several studies of cases in the United States. These analyse this use amongst different communities: Hindu (Thompson 2002); Arab (Etefa 2004); Chinese (Hwang and He 1999; Yang et al. 2004; Zhou and Cai 2002); Korean (Lee 2004); Middle Eastern (Naficy 1995; Naficy 2003); or Spanish, where there are more detailed studies both of uses (Santis 2003) and of the penetration of the US market by this language (Sinclair 1999; Sinclair 2004; Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham 1996).

The European Union

According to the data from the UN cited above, the states of the European Union form another big receiver of people displaced from their country of origin. Germany, France and Italy, for example, have more than five million each. With respect to television broadcasts, we have counted approximately 3,300 that reach Europe via satellite. The majority of these are broadcasts in official languages of the European Union, nearly all with an official character at a state level, and a few with some degree of official status at a regional level within the states.¹⁵ Another group is formed of broadcasts in the languages of European countries that do not belong to the Union, some of which are normally recognised as the languages of minorities historically established in member countries (such as the case of Russian in Estonia and Lithuania, Croatian in Austria, Armenian in Cyprus, or Belarussian in Poland). Finally, approximately five hundred broadcasts correspond to languages that are not considered European.¹⁶ If the non-official languages spoken in the

Union are added to the latter, we reach a total of six hundred broadcasts, as can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Satellite television broadcasts in the European Union	
Official or semi-official languages (2.657)	Other languages (635)
More than 100	More than 100
English (814), Spanish (367), French (297), Italian (293), German (288), Polish (120), Swedish (117)	Arabic (141), Turkish (107)
Between 10 and 100	Between 10 and 100
Portuguese (75), Greek (70), Hungarian (58), Dutch (34), Danish (33), Czech (31), Finnish (17), Slovak (10)	Russian (94), Romanian (35), Norwegian (30), Serbo-Croatian (26), Farsi (23), Hindi (23), Ukrainian (23), Chinese (17), Bulgarian (16), Tamil (11)
Less than 10	Less than 10
Catalan (9), Latvian (6), Lithuanian (4), Luxemburgese (4), Slovenian (3), Galician (2), Welsh (2), Basque (1), Estonian (1), Irish (1)	Kurdish (9), Urdu (9), Bengali (7), Georgian (7), Malayalam (7), Albanian (4), Armenian (4), Azerbaijan (4), Japanese (4), Punjabi (4), Thai (4), Burmese (3), Korean (3), Philippine (3), Sinhala (3), Vietnamese (3), Hebrew (2), Macedonian (2), Assyrian (1), Belarussian (1), Cambodian (1), Kazakh (1), Malay/Indonesian (1), Maldivian (1), Telugu (1)

If we consider the different types of broadcasts, we can observe a similar tendency to what we have already noted for English in the United States; that is, two out of every three broadcasts in official or semi-official languages of the EU are encrypted, while this proportion is inverted in the other languages. This tendency is due to the fact that a large part of the broadcasts in official or semi-official languages occurs within packages offered by satellite platforms, open or encrypted. This limits their area of reception to a regional or national market.¹⁷ Open broadcasts in other languages, however, show a greater tendency towards continent-wide broadcasting, or to cover regions wider than the states. An example of this is that it would be theoretically possible in France to receive over one hundred open broadcasts in Arabic, besides a further twenty Arabic broadcasts in subscription packages. The figure for broadcasts in Spanish in France is over eighty.¹⁸ While this is the general tendency, there are important differences between the different languages. Thus German, for example, appears in many open broadcasts to Europe, while French has a much lower percentage of FTA broadcasts.

There is no data available to us about the number of speakers of the languages not considered as European in the EU – a question that is arduous, complex and doubtless polemical; it is thus not possible to draw a relation between the presence of language

communities and the signals broadcast in those languages. However, from the partial data available to us, we know for a fact that languages such as Arabic and Turkish are spoken by millions of inhabitants of the EU. Similarly, different studies draw attention to the fact that in the big European metropolises there is not only great linguistic diversity, but that many of these “other” languages show great vitality and are maintained as languages of family transmission (Baker and Eversley 2000; Extra and Yagmur 2004). This strengthens the idea of the importance held by transnational television in the cultural, linguistic and identitarian evolution of the countries that are host to different diasporas.

An example of this can be found in the different studies made in Europe on the uses of satellite television amongst the diasporas. Works are available on the Turkish communities in the United Kingdom (Askoy and Robins 2000; Askoy and Robins 2003a; Askoy and Robins 2003b), Germany (Hargreaves 1999), France (Hargreaves and Mahdjoub 1997) and Holland (Milikowski 2000; Ogan and Milikowski 1998); or on the Arab communities in France (Hargreaves and Mahdjoub 1997) and in the Basque Country (Amezaga and others 2001). There are also studies on the use of this medium in the United Kingdom amongst people whose origin is Indian (Thompson 2002), Chinese (Siew-peng 2001), South Asian (Tsagarousianou 2001; Van Der Veer 2004), Greek and Cypriot (Georgiou 2001).

Australia

In the Australian case, we do not find as wide a number of broadcasts as in the United States or the European Union, possibly due to the relatively small size of its population. Thus we can count some five hundred signals in total, more than half of which are in the English language. The remainder are broadcast in different languages, although the majority are signals emitted on C band, requiring large dish antennas for their reception.

Table 6: Satellite television broadcasts for a 150 cm. dish antenna and habitual speakers of each language in Australia					
Language	Speakers	Broadcasts	Language	Speakers	Broadcasts
English	15.013.965	218	French	39.643	2
Chinese	401.357	34	Italian	353.605	1
Hindi	47.817	5	Korean	39.529	1
Arabic	209.372	4	Japanese	28.285	1
Croatian	119.054	4	Hungarian	24.485	1
Turkish	50.693	3	Vietnamese	174.236	0
Tamil	24.074	3	Spanish	93.593	0
Dutch	40.188	3	German	76.443	0
Thai	- ¹⁹	3	Macedonian	71.994	0
Greek	263.717	2	Polish	59.056	0
Philippine	78.878	2	Indigenous Languages	50.978	1

Table 6 shows those signals that can be received with a domestic dish antenna (no larger than one and half metres in diameter), as well as the data concerning the number of speakers of those languages with a population over 50,000, according to the data of the 2001 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001). We can observe that with the exception of English and Chinese, the other languages have a relatively small number of broadcasts in Australia.²⁰ Perhaps the most striking case is that of the Vietnamese language that, in spite of being the language of an important group in the country, does not have a single broadcast according to our data.²¹ European languages with a significant number of speakers, such as Italian and Greek, have only one or two broadcasts, lower than other Asian languages with a smaller demographic weight in the country. Others such as Spanish, German, Macedonian and Polish have no signal that can be received with a domestic dish antenna, unlike Turkish, Tamil, Philippine, Korean and Japanese, which do have a presence in this medium.²² According to this data, we estimate that six out of every ten residents in Australia who speak a language other than English at home have, theoretically, the possibility of receiving a satellite television broadcast in which their language is of everyday use.

To complete this picture of diasporic televisions, we must bear in mind the presence in some Australian cities of community channels in which different language groups participate with their own broadcasts.

Finally, we note that nearly all the languages other than English are mainly emitted through open signals. Amongst the encrypted broadcasts, only two (in Italian and Greek)

are available in the big Australian satellite platforms (Foxtel, Austar and Optus), with distribution of the majority of broadcasts left in the hands of other companies that operate in the country (Jadeworld, Skynet, Visionasia and Globecast).

Conclusion

Different factors contribute to shaping the linguistic panorama of satellite television briefly outlined in this article. We have observed that the principal element to be considered is the persistence of the national market as the principal target of the majority of satellite broadcasts. The case of English, with over eighty percent of its broadcasts circumscribed to Anglophone countries and thirty percent to strictly local markets, is a further example of how the technical possibilities of large-scale television diffusion are reduced by political and economic factors. However, the prominence of the national market, at times limited to the nation state and at others holding pan-national ambitions (the case of Arabic), does not in any respect mean that we are facing closed communication spaces. An example of how the tendencies of globalisation combine with the persistence of national spaces can be seen in the strategies of “glocalisation”, or the adaptation of the big agents to the linguistic, cultural, economic or political conditions of the countries to which their business is directed; while reproducing certain local elements, these big transnational companies are extending their hegemony throughout the planet (Chang 2003).

If we consider broadcasts in languages outside the so-called “natural” territories of those languages, our total shows a phenomenon of considerable dimensions. The fact that thousands of broadcasts can be considered within this category is due to very different reasons. One of these is related to the strategy of companies, governments or other types of organisation to maintain or strengthen their presence in different places, profiting from the advantageous conditions that a certain language might provide in regions of the planet where it is not spoken by a majority. This is the case of English in practically the whole world, of French in some zones, of Chinese in others, of Arabic, of Turkish, etc. These broadcasts seek geolinguistic regions, rather than geographical spaces, where their own space of communication or market can be created.

Another element that is contributing significantly to the spread of languages via satellite television is formed by those broadcasts that are more specifically directed at diasporas, with the latter term broadly understood as an ensemble of people of a country or

culture that resides outside the country or territory from where that culture originates. This is the group that is of most interest to us in our work, and from the observation of the data relating to the diffusion of the different languages via satellite in the different parts of the globe, we can affirm that we are facing a phenomenon that deserves to be taken into account. In the age of satellite television, geolinguistic regions are not defined by geographic proximity, but by a community of language and culture (Sinclair 2000). We can therefore say that migratory movements and diasporic processes are contributing to a clear expansion of the geolinguistic regions of a certain number of languages throughout the planet, thanks to the use of this medium. We do not have available detailed audience studies that would provide us with empirical information about the real access to television broadcasts in their own language in the different diasporic communities spread over the world. The increase in the offer of the so-called ethnic channels in the satellite platforms of the rich countries suggests, however, that there is a sufficiently large demand to justify the necessary investment.²³ Similarly, analysis of the different case studies to which we have had access tells us that the use of these broadcasts by such communities can be considered significant, both in the sense that it is habitual and not sporadic, and in the sense that it holds important implications for the persons involved, as well as for the communities to which they belong (both for the country of reference and for the place of residence).

At the beginning of this article we said that one of the most studied aspects of the cultural consequences of globalisation is the diffusion on a planetary scale of cultural models arising from the rich countries, breaking down other existing cultural models. But we also said, and in the light of our data we would restate, that together with that tendency, other apparently contradictory tendencies are occurring that are worthy of consideration. Satellite television provides us with abundant examples of this, with the United States perhaps providing the clearest case. With a television market that promotes English as the clearly dominant language in this medium, we find over one thousand English language broadcasts that cover non-Anglophone regions of the planet. But at the same time, the economic potential of the United States not only attracts a considerable flow of immigrants from throughout the whole world, but also innumerable television signals now accompany them in their migration: over nine hundred broadcasts in languages other than English can thus be received in US territory itself. We find similar situations in other rich countries, such as the European Union or, to a lesser extent, Australia. Hence, globalisation does not

only affect English, but also many other languages of communities that, from a position of relative disadvantage facing the richer societies, have no other option than to globalise themselves. Considering the dimensions of the phenomenon of diasporic television, we thus restate the need for reflection on its future and on the processes that are linked to its uses.

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² The article cited, prepared in 2002 with data for that year, counts nearly six thousand broadcasts in a similar number of languages, in contrast to our present figure which is nearly twice that. There are different reasons for this increase. On the one hand, there has been an overall increase in television broadcasts in recent years, both because of the presence of satellites with a greater capacity and because of the multiplication of signals with the advance from analogue to digital broadcasts (making it possible not only to broadcast more video signals on the same frequency, but also to broadcast multiple audio signals – that is, different languages – for the same video signal). On the other hand, satellite broadcasting of local television in the United States (which started in 1999 and has been developing since then) has resulted in a spectacular increase in the number of broadcasts in that country, not only in English but also in Spanish. Finally, the original data used in 2002 contained appreciable faults, particularly regarding the use of different audio channels together with the same video signal, which we have corrected for our new count.

³ Source: compiled by the author, based on data of *Satco* (Satco 2002), *Lyngsat* (Lyngsat 2003) and other lesser sources. The data concerning the speakers of each language are taken from *Ethnologue* (Grimes 1992).

⁴ The disparity concerning the number of English speakers is such that while *Ethnologue* offers the figure of 508 million, other censuses raise this to 1,000 million (Linguasphere Observatory 1999) or even 1,400 million (Crystal 1997). Within this latter figure, English would be the mother tongue of a quarter, a second language of a similar number, while another 800 million would have studied it. In the interest of homogenising the data employed, we have preferred to make use here of the figure from *Ethnologue*, although this might appear conservative.

⁵ Mandarin and Cantonese.

⁶ Multilingual broadcasts, in the original language, or in an unspecified language.

⁷ The large number of *local-into-local* broadcasts in the United States is explained both by the quantity of local televisions throughout the country and by a lack of agreement, until recently, between companies, which resulted in the duplication of local broadcasts in different satellite platforms (*Dish Network* and *Direct TV USA*).

⁸ In this group we include broadcasts directed to other American countries, whether or not they reach the USA and Canada, or to the entire continent. The same is true of broadcasts from Europe with respect to the United Kingdom and Ireland, as well as those broadcast towards East Asia-Pacific, and those of global scope.

⁹ This figure is obviously related to the low rate of access to television on this continent, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, with 7 television receivers per 100 inhabitants (Paua 2003)

¹⁰ We are aware of the problems that the consideration of Serbian and Croatian as a single language could cause. But as we explained before, our source for the classification of languages is *Ethnologue*, which considers both of them as a single language.

¹¹ And they can do this by bringing people into contact with each other and with their (real or imaginary) country of origin; people who in the strict meaning of the term diaspora are scattered, without any contact with the place of reference or even with other people of the same origin. As satellite television is a medium that in the first instance is consumed in a domestic, individual or family form, these people, who had not participated in any diasporic community life, now enter the cultural and political space of the imagined community, thanks to television. This is something we have observed, for example, with third, fourth and fifth generation descendants of Basque immigrants in Latin America, amongst whom Basque identity has been re-born through television uses. Considered from this perspective, we can say that in certain cases it is not so much prior identification that motivates use of the television of the country of origin, but rather it is this use that leads to a deepening of an identity previously lacking clear definition, with such people then becoming part of the diaspora (Amezaga 2004a).

¹² The data concerning regular speakers are taken from the 2000 Census and refer to the language spoken at home by persons over the age of 5 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

¹³ Consideration of the language used is a more reliable approach to diasporic realities than data on immigration. This emerges from the difference between the number of speakers of languages other than English (47 million) and the number of people born outside the United States (35 million).

¹⁴ Interest by the television industry in the so-called ethnic offer is increasing not only in North America, but also in Europe (Fry 2002; Holmes 2003).

¹⁵ For greater detail on the presence or absence of satellite broadcasts in the languages of this group, which are minority in character and not officially recognised at the state level, see our previously cited article, although it only refers to the former EU of 15 members, not today's EU which has 25 members (Amezaga 2004b).

¹⁶ We share the reserve of several authors concerning the distinction normally made between European languages – whether “national languages” or “regional minority languages” – and “minority languages of immigrants” or simply non-European languages (Cheesman 1999; Extra and Yagmur 2004). Firstly, because problems arise with this

distinction when we recall that there are supposedly non-European languages spoken by several million people on the continent, some of which have a historical presence in some European countries (the case of Arabic, with a presence of seven centuries on the Iberian peninsula). Secondly, this is not a politically innocent definition and it has important consequences when it comes to designing linguistic policies both in individual member countries and in the Union as a whole.

We consider it more than likely that the use of satellite television, along with many other factors, will result in the establishment in Europe of languages that, according to the logic of the theories of the integration and acculturation of immigrants, were in the past considered as languages in the course of dying out in the metropolis, but which nevertheless appear to be challenging that tendency.

For our analysis we employ the distinction between languages with some type of official recognition in the European Union (nation state or regional) and languages without such recognition.

¹⁷ Besides the dominant type of broadcast from a country towards the market of the country itself, we find other types: those with a markedly pan-European character, with diffusion in several countries in one or several languages; others that are directed from an EU country in search of markets in other member states; channels proceeding from outside the EU in official EU languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese), etc. (European Audiovisual Observatory 2004)

¹⁸ According to an official report there are nearly one million people who speak Arabic in France, together with half a million who speak Spanish (Ministère de la culture et de la communication 2002).

¹⁹ The data published in the Australian census does not include details on the number of Thai speakers, probably because they are a small group.

²⁰ It is worth noting that the offer of channels in languages other than English in Australia fell sharply following the collapse in June 2004 of the *Tarbs* company, which offered DTH television services with over fifty channels in 18 languages.

²¹ According to some studies, this is due to the characteristics of the emigration of Vietnamese who were officially excluded from their country of origin. This leads them to television uses that do not depend on centres based in Vietnam. The clearest example is their use of video, a medium that is widely established in (Cunningham et al. 2000; Cunningham and Nguyen 2003; Sinclair and Cunningham 2000). The use of this medium has also been shown in connection with the Macedonian community (Kolar-Panov 1996; Kolar-Panov 2003).

²² It should be recalled that in the Australian case we are referring to broadcasts that can be received with a domestic dish antenna. If we widen the spectrum to the other signals, we observe that broadcasts in Spanish, German and other cited languages, which can be received with large dish antennas, are in fact received and retransmitted by other means. This is the case with television news programs from different countries, regularly rebroadcast by the multicultural channel *SBS* through terrestrial retransmission.

²³ Just as there are studies of the “glocalisation” strategies of the big communication agents in the different regions of the planet, it would doubtless be interesting to analyse the “ethnicisation” strategies of the national television distributors within their countries of operation.