

COMMUNICATION, LITERACY AND CITIZENSHIP: A CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATION IN A PORTUGUESE CHILDREN'S TELEVISION THEMATIC CHANNEL, K SIC

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Abstract

This paper highlights the consequential nature of communication, literacy and citizenship and the meta-pattern that connects everything together – the ecology of the human spirit. It argues that, just like human communication, literacy is consequential in nature for humankind. Through each of our different worlds of experience and processes of communication, we manifest both of these human conditions and co-construct everyday practices that engender a plurality of effects. Literacy is a concept common to all humankind. Thus, it forms an indivisible whole with communication. This viewpoint is at odds with that which confines literacy to being understood as the acquisition of certain competences. It is arguable that, just like communication, the human condition of literacy needs to be both encouraged and developed.

We suggest here that the idea of borders in literacy should be questioned. The work of Gregory Bateson on the ecology of the human spirit – an imminent characteristic of the human species that is based on the physiological structure of the living being and is in permanent interaction and reconnection with both the biosphere and our ways of seeing the world – supports the viewpoint put forward here. From the communication mediated by a children's television channel, from SIC K and from the results of studies carried out into children's use of television we draw the examples that shall illustrate the theoretical approach taken here. They also underpin two premises of an ongoing project. Firstly, television is part of the solution in that it encourages and develops communication-literacy-citizenship-education-connectivity. Secondly, human rights form a shared platform from which to orient the use of Technologies and define connection strategies for the active participation of the children.

Keywords: literacy; communication; citizenship; education; children.

1 COMMUNICATION-CITIZENSHIP-LITERACY: HUMAN NATURE THAT DEVELOPS OR ATROPHIES

There are many understandings as to what constitutes literacy, citizenship and communication. These are formulated in one way or another, depending on each person's life experience and their observational viewpoint in understanding reality, of what they want to know. Today, there is, rightly, much talk of literacy, citizenship and communication which reveals the need to unveil the meanings inherent in each of the concepts. The path forward is to reflect on them and sketch out paths that will help us seek out a better understanding of the world.

We need to understand what we are saying when we talk about communication, citizenship and literacy, so that, in encountering each other, we can situate ourselves and read our differences and learn that, in all probability, there is more to unite than to divide us. We need to read to enrich ourselves, to interact, to act better, and to cooperate. As the child psychiatrist João dos Santos says, "Reading people (scrutinise or guess what they feel), things (describe or interpret phenomena), texts (preselect, explain) or our own interior selves (daydream, imagine) are ways of seeing" [1]. We would add: observe, hear as a listener, and describe as a writer what you see to see-read better.

Our way of thinking about communication, literacy and citizenship has been in development since 1998 [2] and is based on the work done by Cronen [3] on the consequential nature of communication. Also of importance are the contributions made by Gregory Bateson, an anthropologist of communication, who highlights the ecology of the human spirit as being the meta-pattern that holds everything together, the logical complexity of the various levels of learning and the axiomatic principles of communication [4] [5] [6]. Added to this is the Aristotelian view of humanity [7], enriched by reflections on citizenship and literacy, from the Portuguese philosopher Joaquim Coelho Rosa [8], [9].

In a round-table dialogue with these authors we put forward our lived experience and the results of the Human Rights in Action project run, since 2001, by the NGO Civitas Aveiro in partnership with the University of Aveiro and a large group of nursery schools and schools. This project has focused on the co-construction of the social learning of active citizenship [10].

Thus, to a large extent, our approach to literacy and citizenship is ontological in nature. It emerges from reflection on the consequential nature of each human being's communicative acts, of their place in the world from which, through the lens of their experienced worlds, through what they make or don't make happen, they manifest themselves and co-produce a multitude of effects. Of these, we would highlight the world understanding readings which allow them to interpret and act in this world. The consequential nature of communication, emphasised in Cronen's [3] concept of consequentiality, allows the setting up of intermediations between the three concepts – communication-literacy-citizenship - and their solidification into an indivisible triad, immanent to humankind. Given this point of view, we argue that in order to understand each of these states of human nature three analytical vectors will be necessary. The first of these vectors is the condition of being human (communication-literacy-citizenship are qualities of human nature). The second vector concerns the manifestations that are preceded by the first vector and which may be either developed or atrophied. The third vector is that of the effects of the various manifestations associated with each one of the qualities referred to in the first and second vectors. This broad approach to citizenship and literacy calls into question the restrictive and widely-held views on these two human phenomena, as will be discussed below.

2 THE CONSEQUENTIAL NATURE OF COMMUNICATION

We argue that human communication, on emerging from the self, is the manifestation of that self and that it exists, always, prior to any such manifestations or effects. Thus, our interpretation of the consequential nature of communication leads us to affirm that communication is not some exterior thing that the person decides to engage in, nor is it an effect of that which individuals are. Communication is a state of human nature that is manifested in the creation of a sense of being in the world, of sharing this and the consequent effects. In this way, the consequentiality of communication is the site of action, where all intentionality, motion and rationality are expressed: it is created, recreated, abandoned, connections are set up (consequences) and exposed to criticism and change [3]. The work of Cronen [3] in communication pragmatics shows the influence of Heidegger regarding the ontological nature of the human being in which the "I" and the "I-with" are inseparable from the "world in common". The work of Gregory Bateson on the ecology of the human spirit [4] and [5] also bring to the fore the immanence of the human spirit and the meta-pattern that (re)connects all human experience.

An etymological consideration of the words consequential, consequentiality and consequence can also help us to prove the sentiments expressed above. The use to which Portuguese-speakers put the word consequential (Latin in origin) is to mean "succession" and in the Portuguese language it means "the effect of an action" [11]. In other words, the notion is of manifestation-succession and of effect as the result of an action. Thus, consequence is the resultant effect of a given action. The suffix 'al', as in consequential, expresses a function and gives a new meaning, that of a relationship. That is, communication is consequential through the relational condition that emerges from the individual person themselves. The suffix "ity", as in consequentiality, indicates a quality, a state or a condition, that is, a way of being. Therefore, the consequentiality of the communication process is a way of being and, as such, may be distinguished from the set of consequences that occur during the communication process in which this way of being is revealed and expressed.

We may state that the consequential nature of communication means everything that is expressed during the interactional process between individuals and, additionally, the consequences of these, understood as the final results of the process and constituents of a small part of the process. From this distinction we may also draw the conclusion that the communicational process does not just derive from the structure of the verbal language, the particular characteristics of each individual or the social structures of which they are part but, in fact, from all of these.

3 THE INFLUENCE OF THE WORK OF GREGORY BATESON: ECOLOGY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT, THE META-PATTERN THAT (RE)CONNECTS EVERYTHING

Through a systematic approach to the living world, Bateson systematises the coherence of the interactions and interrelationships existing between the various dimensions of the world of human experience, as in between humans and the biosphere. He considers these an indivisible unit, fruit of the existence of a structure that links the various interacting elements that interact as if it were some kind of “dance of interacting parts and is only secondarily pegged down by various sorts of physical limits and by those limits which organisms characteristically impose” [6]. According to this writer, for human beings to better understand themselves they will first have to understand the process and system of the ecology of the human spirit. This observation is reinforced by his daughter, Catherine Bateson, who, quotes her father, stating: “it is not possible to describe what is happening in organisms, in societies or in ecosystems without thinking in terms of communication, organisation and reaction to difference (...) we cannot describe the spirit nor presuppose the presence of physical structures within which these are produced” [12]. It should be pointed out that for Bateson the world is an integrated whole. That is, I is not a separate entity from the environment. The I emanates from the relationship constructed by humans with their environment. Similarly, spirit and learning (learning to learn and learning how you learned to learn), as well as the physiological processes implicit in these, work by means of different levels of logic. For Bateson, it is not possible to forget the number of phenomena in the living world, given that these are subject to the laws of chance. This means that it is necessary to accept the idea that living world will never be a predictable fact, contrary to technology which, however perfect it may be, is always predictable. Concerning the rules of coherent reflection on the living world, Bateson also calls our attention to the need to avoid confusing the map with the territory and he suggests that we counterbalance different information, which will allow the generation of new information. He also proposes the use of the method of abduction to assess the potential for generalisation of new discoveries and establish, as we now intend, an understanding closeness to human phenomena, such as literacy, communication and citizenship. The intention is to show the pathways of the intermediations which lead us to form a conceptual triad that includes an attitude (being), ability (know-how) and competence (know how to say and analyse), present in the different ways in which it is manifested.

4 CITIZENSHIP, STATE OF HUMAN NATURE

To the above, we would add the search for understanding and clarification of the concept of citizenship. To this end, we turn to the writings of the Portuguese philosopher Joaquim Coelho Rosa in his work “Rethinking citizenship” [8]. This text leads us to reflect on citizenship and on the connections to the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this text, we find arguments that we can associate with the consequential nature of human communication, to the work done by Bateson, mentioned above, and that, as a whole, serve to support the hypothesis that we are putting forward. Coelho Rosa states that “the human condition is a state of nature” [8]. In this sense, human nature is the potentiating and required condition for the humanising of humankind that culture, sufficient cause, puts into action in cultivating reason, conscience and liberty. It is through the realisation of this, and other, potentials that the condition of being human may be realised, manifesting itself and producing effects.

As we have stated above, the human condition is communicative. Thus, it is a project of autobiographical construction, the realisation of the human being to him or herself, with and in the world, making meanings, learning meanings, remaking meanings and allocating and reallocating meanings to the singularly common world which each one inhabits. Thus there are as many worlds as there are humans. A common world encompasses all these singular worlds that are complementarily or symmetrically (re)connected into communities. This point of view, of understanding a singularly common world, requires that we make an effort of inter-comprehension, generated by the willingness to share lived experiences that make it possible for a world with life to exist: “a phenomenological expression penned by Edmond Husserl” that refers to the communication space that exists between beings who have not only language and the ability to act but also the ability to critically justify their discourse and their actions [13]. The world of life is, thus, the space of world experience thematically organised and shared through discourse, which implies mutual recognition from those who share this space and a common culture founded on tradition” [13]. To communicate is to be in relationship, it is to

make common, it is to share and, for this to happen, it is necessary to inter-comprehend, the ideal outcome of human communication.

This condition of the human being in which it is possible to create meanings has a physiological structural base, as we have pointed out regarding Bateson's influence on the formation of the triad in question, which is why the ability to read and interpret the world can be generated and developed. There is no physical human without communication, without citizenship, without literacy, without learning, without change, without reason and without freedom. Just as there would be no communication, no citizenship, no literacy without learning, without change, without reason and without freedom if there were no physical human body, the bio-physiological materiality from which all of us may symbolise the worlds of our experience. Freedom is an essential condition for the realisation of humanity, pre-existent in the road of communication-literacy-citizenship. From this point of view, health and the ecology of the human spirit must be protected if these are to develop. If they are not safeguarded they wither, the potentials of communication-literacy-citizenship atrophy. Humans are born with the potential for freedom, equality and fraternity. Humans are born with the potential to be communicative and positively connect to others. Humans are born with a potential for communication, literacy and citizenship. Thus the natural condition of human existence is to be humans, to become human. That is, to be more communicative, more citizen, more literate and, so, freer, more rational more emotional, more playful, in a broader landscape of subsistence of and realisation of one's own coexistence. However, the majority of human beings are denied the development of these potentials and they are dispossessed of their natural condition of citizenship.

5 CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC-MINDEDNESS

The words citizenship and civic-mindedness are generally "confused with the exercise and/or participation in power" [9]. This arises from the generalisation and employment of the two views of citizenship that emerged from Greek and Roman culture. The first view, of platonic inspiration, is linked to the governance of the polis and emphasises the autonomy and protection of individuals in the face of abuse of power. The second view, of Roman origins, is linked to civitas and stresses the subordination of the individual to institutions and the access of individuals to power structures and participation in institutions. According to Joaquim Coelho Rosa, there is a third definition of citizenship, less well-known in the west, from Aristotle who stated that "all citizens constitute citizenship". Plato confined citizenship to the ruling class. Conversely, the Aristotelian viewpoint, as interpreted by Coelho Rosa [9], is that being a citizen is not an attribute related with access to power or governance. Being a citizen is "a condition of nature (...) one is born a citizen just as one is born with a head, a trunk and limbs, a mammal, with an opposing thumb, ready to walk upright, to think, to love and to be free" [9]. According to this writer, this is the meaning of the way in which Aristotle defines 'man', *zoón politikón*, in his work *Politics* – "man is a political animal by nature". In other words the noun *politikón* identifies the citizen, the *politikós* that, from birth, is rational and social in nature.

Thus, understanding the concept of citizenship requires that we have an ontological understanding of the human condition. Moreover, this is closely linked to the concept of humankind because, as Coelho Rosa points out, "only humans are citizens" [9]. The condition of being dispossessed of citizenship is one in which the governments of many of today's democracies – one of the types of power structures in citizenship – have placed their citizens. By confusing sociability with gregariousness they put their citizens into the same shoes as a pack of wolves, a flight of swallows, a shoal of sardines or a flock of sheep, with the key issue being who is in charge in each group. Since the implantation of political systems based on the law of the strongest, tyrannies, the perpetuation of power, acquired or inherited, as with monarchies or other strategic forms of power-sharing, even where the power is acquired in democratic elections, all aim to establish and affirm the rights of the state.

Citizenship, as we have seen, is defined as the natural condition of the human being and is a global concept common to all humankind (the same for all and for all the same level of equality). The phenomenon of globalisation that the media in general and the internet in particular have instigated is, for many rulers, a threat to their continued abuse of power. However, for many citizens it can be what each one of us wants and is able to make of it. Globalisation makes it truly possible to affirm the universality of humankind and this may be an extraordinary truth, as it may be achieved by our active participation.

6 LITERACY: CONDITION-MANIFESTATIONS (DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES) - EFFECTS (ACQUISITION OF COMPETENCES)

Literacy shares the same condition of consequentiality as communication and citizenship and so is also a constituent of human nature.

Being part of the natural state of being human, it is born with us and manifests itself in the unveiling of the world through speech that creates facts and structures both individual and collective experience [14]. In Havelock's vision we find this same ontological point of view. However, the most common interpretations of literacy tend to reduce it to the condition of a manifestation – as a competence – linked to “knowing your letters” or “being literate”, even though associated with a range and multiplicity of aspects of the human experience, of which media literacy, financial literacy, musical literacy and consumer literacy are just a few. This reduction of literacy to its various manifestations does not, in our view, facilitate the understanding of the phenomenon at issue. Yet, it was not always so, the harmonisation of human nature with the various manifestations of literacy is a clear to see in universal western history. Today, the media (the press, radio, television and, more recently, the internet) are very powerful examples of this. Over different time periods of human history, these media have served as new spaces for our orality.

In the domain of the “hot” auditory media [15], the radio has contributed, through individual and collective imagining, to the transformation of the world's orality into a written form more efficient than the press. This is how it was and how it is. The invisible voices on the radio continue to contribute to the visible reading of the world. In the domain of the “cold” media [15] of simultaneous auditory and visual input, television has served to harmonise the visual and auditory senses, image and sound, and continues to be one of the most prodigious resources for literacy ever invented by human labour. The internet, with its multitude of platforms takes us back to orality and offers, for circulation, various forms of manifestation of oral writing whose effects have yet to be fully seen. Being literate is, says Coelho Rosa, a “highly powerful human competence for creating and recreating the world” [16] and is crucial, along with knowing your letters, for a comprehensive reading of the world. From this arises a new template, for the understanding of not just each of the various manifestations of literacy: media literacy, financial literacy, human rights literacy but also of literacy itself, as a natural human condition.

All strategies for the development of literacy are important; they are humankind events that occur “in the always dynamic meeting of the realisation of the individual by society and vice-versa (...) whatever be the awareness that our literacy has of the event”. However, they may be used in an illiterate form [16].

The shared experiences of television and internet users (emission-reception), regarding the oralisation of the written, promote writing and reading practices and the creation of communities. Moreover, people, who may be excluded from the culture of the literate, can find here spaces of communication, assuming the inheritances of both literate and lettered literacy.

To complete the communication-literacy-citizenship triad it is necessary to emphasise human dignity, a value enshrined in the Portuguese constitution. Portugal is a “sovereign republic based on the dignity of the human individual and popular will and is dedicated to building a free, just and supportive society (article 1 of the constitution, 1976). Dignity here is understood not as a sentiment but as something higher, without equal, as human nature has no price and cannot be bartered. Communication-literacy-citizenship, source of the affirmation of human freedom and dignity leads us to reflect on the media, more specifically on the power of television and television for children and young children in particular. As a medium capable of enriching human development and democracy, television continues to attract children and young people, positively and negatively regulating their behaviour and influencing their lived experiences within their nuclear family. This is why television must be thought of as part of the solution, aiding the development of communication-literacy-citizenship, contributing, in its own way, to the construction of individuality. Television inhabits the world of common life. It is a significant shared I-we that inhabits the world of common life.

7 SIC K – THE CASE OF THE SIC THEME CHANNEL THAT PROVIDES TARGETED PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

According to studies carried out in 2007 and updated by Mónica Chaves George Dutschke et al, in [17], children watch a lot of television, they like television a lot, they are influenced by television and they understand television. According to directors of this channel they deserve better television”. The full name of this SIC channel which is entirely aimed at children and young people is SIC KIDS, more

commonly known as SIC K. Its parents are SIC. SIC K is the younger sibling of SIC radical, SIC woman and SIC news. It has a pet mascot – Kapinha – a red fish. It was born on 18th December 2009, at 4.30 pm in Carnaxide, following three months of intense work by the crew, of whom we particularly mention the head of SIC theme channels, Pedro Boucherie Mendes, and the executive coordinator of SIC K, Catarina Gil. In Portugal it lives in Meo triple play and in Angola in Zap. It is on 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The audience for the channel is 4 to 18 years old, but is subdivided into target groups. Thus, the core target groups are viewers aged 6 to 13. There are other target groups, the 4 to 6 year olds and the 13 to 18 year olds as well. This targeting of particular audiences reflects the channel's approach and concern to "treat children as people, because better television makes better people" [18]. It shows respect for the various phases of individual development and growth amongst children and young people who better learn and grasp the world, so as to be better able to critique and transform it through the emotions and rationality of the programme content they are offered. In this way, they promote the development of viewers' communication-literacy-citizenship potential.

Those running the channel "believe that better television makes better people. Children will be better people if they watch better television" [18] [19]. The relationship with children and young people is based on the complicities that grow out of the commitment to viewers, publicised in the first broadcasts and announced on the site www.sickapa.sapo.pt. There are ten promises that may be reflected upon critically. This commitment has guided programming choices: "We promise not to become your parents. We promise to be friends and companions. We promise to tell you the truth. We promise to listen. We promise to have fun, to entertain you and make you think. We promise to concern ourselves with your future and that of our planet. We promise to be with you, feeling well or not so well. We promise to satisfy your curiosity, about everything. We promise to offer you a lot of adventures. We promise not to exclude anyone on the basis of race, religion or tribe". These promises are the basis on which the SIC K brand has been designed and developed. It is built on emotion and a close relationship with the viewer. Ludicity is present in the channel's actions and graphics (Figure 1). One playful and human example of this can be seen in the "Kapa diabinho" logo created for Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sickapa. "Kapa is always saying he is going to do his homework but sometimes he doesn't want to, he just wants to eat sweets and crisps (...) we want to show that it is human to make mistakes (...) in 15 months we have also made mistakes" [18].



Figure 1 – SIC K's logos

SIC K's ADN is its own production, essential for connecting with the outside world, face-to-face with its audiences, in addition to its commercial objectives. Its presenters are personable and get close to their audiences: "we are the channel with the highest level of nationally produced programming" [18].

Programming is national, diversified and different. 95% of the content is in Portuguese. The programming schedule adheres to timing; programming suits the time of day; subtitled programmes at night; specific programming slots; double and compact episodes; primetime and new programming only between 4 and 6.30 pm – which is when children arrive home. For example, Ben 10 is always broadcast at this time; the themed parties are always on Saturday night – the comedy party; Facebook hour; weekend and themed days. There is special programming during school holidays.

This channel is extended across multiple platforms and has a wide-ranging schedule of entertainment that treats viewers as intelligent people and as having a critical eye. From the start, the channel has undertaken to commune with its target public. Under the channel's philosophy, its people relationships are a key part of its commitments. The creation, development and implementation of the SIC K brand involve interaction between viewers and producers, through the use of various brands. It is, thus, a brand that belongs to the SIC family; a brand in Portuguese that is distinctive, dynamic, responsible, intelligent, innovative and creative.

As regards the channel's programming schedule, 95% of content is in Portuguese, on time and in accordance with the time of day. All night-time programming is subtitled. There are specific programming slots with double and compact episodes and a special emphasis on parties, weekends and theme days. There is special programming for school holidays. At primetime (4 pm to 9 pm) there are new programmes while at 6.30 pm, the time at which most children arrive home, there is the programme Ben 10.

The choice of programmes reflects a particular concern about violence, particularly in live action genres, in terms of, for example, the use of weapons. This is in addition to the care taken with erotic, explicit or insinuating language or imagery in both programmes and video clips. For example, the latest Miley Cyrus video clip was not broadcast on SIC K. Gender issues have also been addressed in programming options, with an awareness that the channel tends to be slightly more male. Channel bosses try to offer a balanced content in the programming schedule as well as in the promotions, aiming these equally and both male and female audiences [18].

They value children and young people and offer them both communication and ludicity that are coherent, fun, creative and intelligent. Expressions such as be a friend to yourself, shake yourself, hug yourself, have fun, be adventurous are widely used in various promotions and by presenters – the mediators of the communicative interaction with the viewers. Amongst these are João Manzarra, who is also the channel's voice off, and Inês Folque who hosts Factor K.

As mentioned above, SIC K is a brand that aims to engage in interaction and inter-activity with its viewers and promote a sense of community. The channel works hard to involve children and young people, as can be seen in the attention it pays to social networks and its use of Facebook. This can be seen online at www.twitter.com/sickapa and www.hi5.com/sickapa, where the emphasis is on getting close to the viewer and having them communicate with each other and with the channel. By, thus, interacting they share life worlds, get to know the preferences of others, collect suggestions and opinions as well as publicise important information. They offer competitions which encapsulate the five maxims of relationships: “be friends, a founding concept of community identity and a sense of belonging and loyalty to “your television - SIC K” which now has over 12,900 friends and activity levels considerably above average.

The programming on SIC K may be divided into: main genres (the main genres or programmes being dubbed animation and Portuguese or dubbed live action) and complementary genres (amongst which are nationally produced magazines, subtitled live action and other dubbed or subtitled programming). Programmes are selected to match their target audience group. Thus, and in accordance with the channel management's programming plan, the genres on broadcast on SIC K may be categorised as animation, live action, magazines, musicals, talk shows and cinema amongst others. However, these genres may be subdivided into sub-genres in order to widen the programming spectrum. A concrete example of this is “Koisas Kuriosas” (Curious Things) which presents science in a magazine format. Animated and live action content is normally bought on the international markets and needs to be dubbed before airing and films are also usually subtitled as an aid to comprehension. Animation, also known as anime in Japan, contains a range of content, from comedy to horror and including science fiction and drama. Typical of this type of animation is the accentuation, perfection and gradual increase in size of characters' eyes, always sharply defined, rounded and slanted so that they can more easily transmit emotion and better engage the viewer. Live action, as the term itself implies, is real action, involving real actors and personalities without the need to use animations. It may involve animated elements but these interact normally in the production, mixing in with the live action provided by the real actors/personalities.

Face-to-face communication with viewers is really important and the conviviality is programmed and made to happen. There are various happenings; promotions, event support, pastimes and others in which freebies associated with the target audience are given out. Publicity events such as media promotions, mupies, pastimes, holiday camps, social responsibility programmes (E.g. Clean up Portugal) and the support the channel gives to concerts (e.g. Tokyo Hotel) and other types of shows (e.g. Ben 10, Gormiti) demonstrate the brand's culture and the richness of its communication, ludicity and experience-oriented strategies through which they reach out to viewers and their families. For example, the channel's first birthday party was held in Lisbon (on 18th December 2010) at Kidzania in the Dolce Vita Tejo Shopping Centre. The all day party included a lot of games and fun, an appearance by the mascot Kapa and a performance by Expensive Soul, responsible for the SIC K's theme tune in front of hundreds of children and their families who ended the day by singing happy birthday together, eating SIC K cookies and blowing out the candle on an enormous cake that was then sliced up and enjoyed by all.

In their design approach to the brand, the channel tells us that graphics were constructed from a number of different elements, amongst which is a message designed to impact emotionally in terms of the relationship with the viewer. Both sound and vision are part of the design, with sound design being particularly important and care being taken to ensure that this is harmonious with the graphic design. The graphics are solid, neither infantile nor adult, neither masculine nor very feminine. The design is simple, persuasive and creative and one that both young people and adults are happy with.

SIC K is a close follower of global trends in television production for children and young people. Every year it attends markets and fairs in Europe, America and Asia. At these events producers showcase their products in the hope that television stations and channels will select those which best suit their mindset and their viewers' preferences.

After 15 months on the air and for the 7-14 year old target group, SIC K is leading Panda Biggs in terms of brand recognition, particularly as regards top of mind – the dream of any marketer – according to a multi-client study carried out in June 2010 by GFK Metris (the company which will take over the measurement of ratings and viewing figures in Portugal as from 2012) [18]. This has come to be because the SIC K “believes that better television makes better people and that children are people and will become better people if they watch better television” [18] [19].

7.1 April 2011, Easter holidays – programming strategy and results

The numbers achieved in the month of April are the result of a programming strategy entirely centred on children's daily lives and in which the Easter holidays (two weeks) are important since there is an increase in viewing hours at this time.

SIC K's television programming strategy focuses on this. As this period approached, announcements were made, using a variety of resources, about upcoming programme launches, generating expectations and building loyalty amongst those children who were interested. The concentration, and increase in total hours, of animated programmes was also key to achieving targets (during these holidays, for each 24 hour broadcasting period SIC K had an average of 19 hours of animated programmes. These programmes are generally aimed at the 6 to 10 year old segment, but also managed good results with the 10-14 year old segment (and this with the proviso that preadolescents may be avid viewers in the privacy of their bedrooms but would not dream of admitting it in public).

The most successful series during the Easter holidays were: Naruto, Galactic Football, Yu-Gi-Oh, Daltons and Scorpion Island.

The timeslots in which SIC K performed best are: pre-lunch (10 to 12 am) and pre-primetime (4 to 8 pm).

The viewing figures are provided by markttest whose panel covers around 30% of homes served by Meo. SIC K is only transmitted by this operator. (it is one of the most notable margins for any IPTV operator in the world). The rest of the panel is made up of homes that are served by the dominant operator – Zon – with a market share of around 70% (Cable TV). Thus the figures achieved by SIC K in the month of April reflect the panel with this configuration and show a market share of 0.4. In comparative terms, this is the average percentage audience share amongst all those people in Portugal who watched television. Its rating, which indicates the total number of people watching a channel, lies between 0.9 and 1.2.

We may draw the conclusion that the figures achieved by SIC K in the month of April are very good and give the channel top spot in a number of timeslots. This result would be even more significant if it were not for the following factors:

- Only 3 out of every 10 homes has the possibility, via Meo, of accessing the channel
- In the Portuguese television market for the infantile-youth audience SIC K competes with 3 very strong players: one branded channel that has been broadcasting for 15 years and two global brands – Disney and Nickelodeon/MTV Networks. Despite the fact that SIC K does not have the advantage of access to a catalogue of its own productions (as the others do), it still manages to be a significant market player. It has shown that it is able to attract an audience that, generally speaking and on the basis of the figures which we have mentioned, in part, above, has formed a sustainable base with a tendency to growth.
- The skewed proportionality of the panel. This will be corrected in the future with a change in both the operator and the model for collecting viewing figures. The new model, proposed by GFK, will

focus more on the actual consumption within the various supply formats, eliminating the inequality of criteria that exists today (measuring VOD, IPTV, Cable TV, internet and mobile).

- SIC K's main competitors are the generalist channels (who are present in more homes and are responsible for more viewing hours), especially TVI with Morangos com Açúcar (Strawberries with Sugar) and RTP 2 (public broadcaster) with its large block of animated programming.
- In the school holiday period the generalist channels (RTP, SIC and TVI) included a strong component of animated films in their schedules.
- The Fox channels also put out series aimed specially at teenagers, as did SIC Radical and SIC News.
- SIC K's competitors are not just the channels specialising in children's / youth programming.
- During the holidays and the long Easter weekend, many families would have gone away and so would not have had access to TV or Meo.

To finish, and given the conceptual landscape sketched out here, we put forward the hypothesis that communication-literacy-citizenship are more than just the acquired competences. They are, first and above all, states of nature and, as such, are liable to either grow or atrophy. Television in general is a powerful medium that can enrich this growth. A channel that is entirely focused on children's / youth programming has added responsibilities in this domain.

The research project into SIC K, begun in October 2010, is part of the Master's course in Multimedia Communication offered by the University of Aveiro. Its research proposal is to seek out the X factor: to find out how this theme channel, only 16 months old, is part of the solution, in the promotion and development of communication-literacy-citizenship amongst audiences of children and young people.

From all that we have said, we believe and argue that television is an enriching source of training for these audiences and has a significant role to play in sustaining active citizenship.

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