

Children's radio programmes in Catalonia: a chronological examination of the type of radio programmes for children

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the limited prevalence of children's radio programmes in Catalonia. In a context of recession, where radio broadcasting needs to reinvent itself and search for new models to renew its audience, it seems unusual to pay no attention to this kind of audience. Most children's programmes are hosted on municipal radio stations that choose a classic concept in order to reach their public—a public not included in audience measurement studies. This article explains the findings of exhaustive fieldwork (2013) describing how and where children's radio programmes can be heard, broadcast by both public and private general interest radio stations in Catalonia.

Keywords

Children's radio, programming, Catalonia.

Resum

Aquest article vol evidenciar la poca significació que tenen les programacions infantils de ràdio a Catalunya en el marc d'una conjuntura econòmica complicada i en un sector industrial que paradoxalment necessita reinventar-se i buscar nous models per rejuvenir la seva antena. Majoritàriament són programes patrimoni de les emissores municipals que aposten per una concepció clàssica per acostar-se a un públic apartat dels estudis d'audiència. En aquestes pàgines es revelaran les conclusions d'un exhaustiu treball de camp (2013) que descriu com són i on s'emeten els programes infantils que es poden escoltar, per aire, a les emissores generalistes públiques i privades de Catalunya.

Paraules clau

Ràdio infantil, programació, Catalunya.

1. Introduction

A study carried out in 2010 by the Observatori de la Ràdio a Catalunya (Radio Observatory of Catalonia) showed that radio's young audience had been decreasing for two years.¹ Nevertheless, it stated that young people consumed radio sporadically in the morning or evening at home, habits that were quite similar to other European consumption patterns. Music was their programming of choice but, as they were multitasking listeners, the time dedicated to active listening was increasingly limited. This profile of young listeners described by the Observatory is the one investigated by audience surveys: young people aged over fourteen. The general media survey for Catalonia (Estudi General de Mitjans (EGM)-Baròmetre Catalunya) does not include audiences younger than 14 in its fieldwork, something which is quite illogical from a consumption point of view, as criticised via Publliradio by the authors of an interesting article entitled "The Hidden Radio Audience in

Spain: Study on Children's Relationship with the Radio" (2011). In fact, it's normal to find publications in the advertising field that focus on children as prescribers for family consumption. In this respect, Julia Coronas, on the economics portal *emprendedores.es*, states that children completely decide the family's leisure activity. In spite of such warnings, children under fourteen continue to be ignored in radio audience surveys and remain invisible for programmers present in audience studies, proving they don't take this listener profile into account when inventing, renewing or rescheduling their programmes season after season.

"Nowadays it seems advisable to admit that radio discarded children as an audience decades ago. For reasons halfway between child protection and rising costs of surveying children, audience studies only rate listeners aged over fourteen". (Cadena SER 2013).²

It's not true that young children don't listen to the radio. Primary age children listen to music and sports radio and programmes heard at home while the radio accompanies their parents in their domestic chores (Balsebre *et al.* 2011, 226).

This study therefore examines the radio offered to children in Catalonia on general interest channels. The aim is to present and categorise the kind of programmes for children and the stations that broadcast them based on an observation of the radio programmes supplied and broadcast over the airwaves in Catalonia aimed at listeners aged between three and twelve. Via exhaustive fieldwork, completed in December 2013,³ which turned out to be very laborious as the economic crisis has brought about structural changes to the Catalan radio broadcasting industry (Martí & Espinosa 2014, 486), the current situation of radio for children in Catalonia has now been mapped out.

2. Children's radio programmes, a historical overview

In its early days radio did cater for children in its limited programming. Children were present to some extent on the first channels to broadcast in Catalonia in the 20th century. Although he didn't actually make programmes aimed at children, Toresky on Ràdio Barcelona did choose a young boy, Míliu, as his *alter ego* to do his lessons and collect money for charity (Espinosa 2008, 149), earning him numerous institutional distinctions. And this was no isolated case. Faus (2007, 217) relates other, even earlier experiences of programmes or talks aimed at the target of children, such as the creation of the programme *Charlas para niños* (Talks for children) on Radio España in Madrid. According to Balsebre (2001, 158), in the 1920s on Unión Radio there were "children's programmes" run by Manuel Abril and, later on, with Luis Medina, there appeared *Quisicosas infantiles* and the stories of Pitúsín. During the Second Republic radio presenters would read stories, fables and poems for children on most Catalan stations, both from the network of Ràdio Associació and also Unión Radio, Ràdio Barcelona. Once a week Ràdio Lleida broadcast its "Emissió dedicada als Infants" (Programme dedicated to children). There were also singing competitions for small children, such as the one held by Núria Fraire on Ràdio Vilanova "the programme she liked the most was the one on Saturday afternoons, dedicated to children. It lasted two hours and the presenters would introduce young children who wanted to recite a poem or sing a song. Once they'd finished, as a prize, they were given sweets" (Espinosa 2014, 147). The informative programme *La Palabra* by Unión Radio had a section for small children, *Antoniorrobles* (the stage name of Antonio Robles) which consisted mainly of him reading his children's stories such as *El perro, el ratón y el gato* (1930-1931) (Borrero & Espinosa 2014, 12). "In the 1930s, on Ràdio Manresa's programmes were made for children: *Les Emissions infantils* (Children's Broadcasting), in which musical and literary compositions, stories and poems were read out, the readers

being the children themselves, directed by one of the channel's presenters" (Espinosa 2008, 376). Ràdio Terrassa broadcast *l'Hora dels infants* (Children's Hour) and on Ràdio Tarragona Josep Maria Tarrasa broadcast for the whole family with his Maginet. The legacy of this early programming are the stories that are still read or performed today on radio programmes for children, as we will see in this article.

Apart from stories on the radio, the history of the medium also shows us that although the government of the Second Republic was very keen on indoctrination, children's radio programmes did not give up entertainment entirely but did try to be more educational and a lot of formats linking radio and school were created. This format started out on radio with educational aims, something which had become widespread in some countries since the medium's birth in order to combat illiteracy. In the 1920s in the United States there were already a hundred and twenty educational radio stations related to universities while in Germany in 1928 almost all regional stations had educational programmes. "In 1924 and in 1928 congresses were held on the educational uses of radio in Germany and in 1931 and 1936 in the United States (the latter being international)" (Roldán Vera 2009, 14). They offered a range of programmes segmented by target and some were for children to encourage individual learning and self-sufficiency.

Children's education-related programming in Spain continued after the Civil War. In the 1940s on Ràdio Barcelona the pedagogue Arturo Martorell broadcast a radio programme aimed at children from Barcelona's schools which, in the form of a competition, encouraged youngsters to take part. This programme is seen as the embryo for school radio broadcasts, these being radio programmes that were (and still are) made by licensed broadcasters (private or public) and took the form of learning carried out via a school's workshop. Later on the other type of programme appeared that linked radio and school, namely school radio: extralegal stations broadcasting programmes that integrated radio into school work, as was the case of Ràdio Ràpia (Ventosa & Villalba 1996) which is still operational today and owned by the Sant Domènec de la Ràpia Infant and Primary School (Santa Margarida i els Monjos, Alt Penedès).

We can therefore see that young children's relationship with radio has changed throughout history. In Girona, after the Civil War, children would have guided tours of Ràdio Girona (Gil & Minobis 2003, 60) while on Radio Salamanca Fernández de Córdoba, the legendary presenter of Franco's last "war communiqué" to announce the end of the Spanish Civil War, also used to present a kind of war communiqué aimed at young children entitled *Cartas del Tío Fernández* (Letters from Uncle Fernández), while Radio Madrid broadcast its famous *Ondas animadas* (Animated Waves), a programme that was capable of combining clowning with "Vidas ilustres" (Illustrious lives) from the Nationalist party (Gómez García 2011, 140). In addition to the public shows of Soler Serrano were plays for children, such as the one directed by Bobby Deglané, *Teatro infantil Maravillas*,

on Radio Nacional and *El hada madrina* on Radio Madrid, the latter broadcast on Saturdays in front of a live audience at the Monumental Cinema (Faus 2007,217). Radio Madrid used to broadcast *Empanadillo y Pirulo* and *Pototo y Boliche* with Luis Sánchez Polack, popularly known on television as the character "Tip" from "Tip y Coll". Ángel de Echenique also stood out for voicing the character "Esparadrappo", while charity programmes also became increasingly popular. Although these weren't aimed at children *per se* they did create children's fictional characters loved by the youngest audiences. Enric Casademont and Pilar Montero, including Toresky and his character Míliu, made their programmes with Pau Pi "the children's friend", first broadcast by Ràdio Barcelona and afterwards by Radio España de Barcelona with Paulinet during the 1950s and 60s.

Most of these programmes had to deal with the pro-Franco propaganda apparatus that took advantage of radio to teach children the new predominant ideas of the time. A document was drawn up entitled "Project to reorganise children's broadcasts to serve Spanish youth" (1942) that provided ideas for designing new children's programmes. It recommended talking about little heroes "from our war" or passages from Spanish or universal history, and preferred instrumental music or opera whenever the music compositions chosen by the programmes were foreign. (Gómez García 2011, 143-145).

Two programmes are particularly of note among important children's programming. A series that was broadcast for 17 years, namely *Tambor*, and also *Diego Valor*, the adventures of an intrepid astronaut who delighted all children in the 1950s on the Cadena Ser radio stations. This is another format that no longer exists, as will be seen in this article.

This chronological overview should note that, as the years progressed, the majority of children's programming consisted of two types of programme: those broadcasts for children as the target audience and others that, although they were also broadcast for children, also involved children in producing their content. As we've already mentioned, children took part by making radio programmes, first as contestants, readers, singers and reciters and afterwards via schools collaborating in different versions of school radio (Martí 2014, 2), and these were widespread and very popular throughout the country. The Girona provincial council promoted *Radio Escolar* from 1955 to 1979 and its content was typical of all such programmes: "Curiosities from the world, looking at the usual discoveries, inventions, cultures, etc. (...) *This is our province*, a journey around the towns and counties of Girona province; *The world of vegetables*, spaces related to natural sciences (...), *School competition* (...), *Ràdio Escolar* was undoubtedly a voice for young children via the radio and, for several years, filled a void in educational spheres" (Gil & Minobis 2003, 161).

These programmes have become well established and reproduce, for children, the typical structures of adult radio. However, according to Quintana Garzón (2001) they should take more risks in their production, "(...) it's necessary to go a bit further and propose new formulas for using and taking

advantage of our radio station (...). The aim is to restore radio as a magnificent instrument for awakening the imagination, encouraging creativity and consolidating musical and aesthetic talents" (Quintana Garzón 2001, 100-101).

Other historical radio programme formats did not continue. Spaces such as *A la rueda rueda* by Manolo Bermúdez, which won the Ondas prize as the best children's programme, *La incubadora* directed by Mariano de la Banda on Radio Peninsular and the competition *Operación Plus Ultra* by Joaquín Peláez, which rewarded children demonstrating their human value and was inspired by the film of the same name from 1966 (Borrero & Espinosa 2014, 16) have now totally disappeared from programming. But not the more typically magazine format shows which started to be broadcast in Catalan in the 1970s, such as *Jovenívol* and *Mainada* on Ràdio 4 directed by Joan Lluch, Enric Frigola, Jordi Roura and Pere Ribera. However, in the 1950s on Ràdio Berga, children's programming had already started using this language (Franquet 2001, 193).

In the 1980s, with the proliferation of municipal channels, children's programming became very important in the local sphere (Ràdio Lleida produced *La ràdio a l'escola* (School Radio) which was broadcast for eleven years) and radio returned to the supra-municipal level; i.e. while there were numerous radio broadcasting experiences in the more local sphere, with Catalunya Ràdio broadcasting *Ui avui!!* (1983-1986), a children's programme in the afternoon aimed at young children, and subsequently *Micro obert a l'escola* and *Eduqueu les criatures* (2006-2010), they started to lose importance on state-wide channels. For example, in the evening on Radio Nacional, Elvira Lindo used his character Manolito Gafotas to observe life from a different perspective. This wasn't a programme for children but a fictional child was the star, while on the SER channel Gemma Nierga had a talk programme with children analysing issues of the day on *La ventana*. This situation was not restricted to Spain. In the 1980s children's radio programmes were almost non-existent in Latin America beyond adapted traditional stories, "most of them full of counter-messages and anti-values and the 'Novels' from the Transcription Service of Radio Nederland" (Rosario 1985, 31). In the summer of 2012, the legendary Spanish broadcasts of Radio Nederland disappeared and thereby the most creative programmes for children also disappeared, produced by Radionederland's Latin American Department and mentioned by Rosario (1985), sixty-five years after they had first been broadcast. The situation is different today although quantitatively there are still few programmes. Almost the only children's radio programme in South America is *Colorín Colorradio* on Prisa Radio (which in Spain has no children's programming), broadcasting children's music, stories and Latin pop from Bogotá.

This slump in the historically rich children's programming spread like an oil slick towards local broadcasters. Some radio stations that had programmed spaces for children in the 1980s or 90s stopped producing them. It's also true that this coincided, in the 1990s, with a deceleration in municipal radio stations

compared with the preceding decade as shown by Corominas *et al.* (1999, 53) in *Quaderns del CAC*. "It can be said that, in the mid-1990s, a new phase began which could be characterised as the fragmentation of the municipal broadcasting movement. The EMUC, although not formally dissolved, lost importance as a body bringing together many different experiences" (Corominas *et al.*, 1999, 52). Another study also published in *Quaderns del CAC* in 2005 noted the few children's programmes on Catalunya Ràdio, R4 and COM Ràdio. "From an analysis of the supply of children's programmes it can be inferred that this is an audience that has truly been ignored. Only one example has been found: the 'Dies de nens' section in the weekend magazine programme by COMRàdio entitled *Dies de ràdio*. Lasting thirty minutes, it essentially focuses on literature" (Gutiérrez & Huertas 2005, 105).

Niqui (2011, 9) warns in *l'Informe sobre la ràdio a Catalunya* that the public sector was more variable and that, since 2009, Catalonia had lost 10 municipal radio channels and their children's programmes. This is the case, for example, of Ràdio Molins de Rei with *La sopa de pedres* by the storyteller Oriol Toro (from 2009 to 2012) and the programme *lupi-ià* on Ràdio Pineda; until 2011 Ràdio Tàrrrega broadcast a programme called *Container*, a daily space of five minutes with stories and puzzles that included the magician Mag Lari. From September 2009 to June 2010 Vilassar Ràdio broadcast the programme *Dissabte articulat*, aimed at children aged 4 to 10 (Borrero & Espinosa 2014, 18).

With the appearance of the Internet, children's radio programmes are enjoying a resurgence and, although this does

not fall within the scope of this article, we should note some innovative initiatives such as Babyradio (Spain), Fun Kids (UK) and Radio Junior (France), all cut from the same cloth, as well as the elegant and also French Radio Barbouillots.

3. Methodology

This is basic, sectional research that obtains up-to-date data from two sources. Firstly, the programming grids were exhaustively examined to detect children's radio programmes from all those on offer, published on the network map-census made by La Xarxa and approved by the Catalan government. Personal interviews were then held with those in charge of general radio stations which broadcast on air children's content in Catalonia in order to obtain details on the programmes.

The sample consisted of 59 radio stations broadcasting in 2013 programmes aimed at the target in question; i.e. children in infant or primary education and therefore aged between three and twelve. Eight radio stations had to be omitted either because they were manifestly inaccessible or refused to take part in the study.

Below is a table with details of the sample analysed (Fig. 1). These are general interest radio stations divided into type: municipal, third sector, specialist and finally public stations from the RNE group.

In order to study the characteristics of all children's programmes a monitor sheet was established adapting the model by García Muñoz (1997, 72) for children's TV consumption habits. The

Figure 1. Children's radio programmes in Catalonia, 2013. Sample analysed (figure continues on next page)

MUNICIPAL STATIONS		
<i>Aula dial</i>	Ràdio Sant Vicenç	Sant Vicenç dels Horts (Baix Llobregat)
<i>Barrufets</i>	Ràdio Sant Vicenç	Sant Vicenç dels Horts (Baix Llobregat)
<i>Bon dia menuts</i>	Ràdio Tordera	Tordera (Maresme)
<i>Les escoles a Ràdio Tordera</i>	Ràdio Tordera	Tordera (Maresme)
<i>L'escriptura del poeta</i>	Ràdio Tordera	Tordera (Maresme)
<i>Colla matinera</i>	Ràdio Canet	Canet de Mar (Maresme)
<i>Els brams del drac</i>	Ràdio Canet	Canet de Mar (Maresme)
<i>Contes pel bon rotllo</i>	Ràdio Abrera	Abrera (Baix Llobregat)
<i>Contes per somiar</i>	Punt 7 Ràdio Sant Celoni	Sant Celoni (Vallès Or.)
<i>El club dels matiners</i>	Ràdio Berga	Berga (Berguedà)
<i>El conte</i>	Ràdio Igualada	Igualada (Anoia)
<i>El gat petit</i>	Ràdio Voltregà	Sant Hipòlit de Voltregà (Osona)
<i>El gronxador</i>	Ràdio Santpedor	Santpedor (Bages)
<i>Pep Tort a cau d'orella</i>	Ràdio Santpedor	Santpedor (Bages)
<i>El laboratori</i>	Ràdio Sant Boi	Sant Boi de Llobregat (Baix Llobregat)
<i>El rebost dels contes</i>	Solsona FM	Solsona (Solsonès)
<i>El món dels petits</i>	Ràdio Banyeres	Banyeres del Penedès (Baix Penedès)
<i>Els menuts</i>	La veu de Navàs	Navàs (Bages)

Source: author.

Figure 1. Children's radio programmes in Catalonia, 2013. Sample analysed (continuation)

EMISSORES MUNICIPALS (continues)		
<i>Microfons a l'aula</i>	La veu de Navàs	Navàs (Bages)
<i>Entrevistem els polítics</i>	Ràdio Platja d'Aro	Platja d'Aro (Baix Empordà)
<i>Estevestiu</i>	Ràdio Sant Esteve RTV10	Sant Esteve Sesrovires (Baix Llobregat)
<i>La cantera</i>	Ràdio Sallent	Sallent (Bages)
<i>La tertúlia</i>	Ràdio Sallent	Sallent (Bages)
<i>Punt i coma</i>	Ràdio Sallent	Sallent (Bages)
<i>La capsula del contes</i>	Ràdio Nova	Vilanova del Camí (Anoia)
<i>Matinal amb el patge Makalí</i>	Ràdio Nova	Vilanova del Camí (Anoia)
<i>La llum del dia</i>	Bas Ràdio	La Vall d'en Bas (La Garrotxa)
<i>La moixiganga</i>	Ràdio Sant Quirze	Sant Quirze del Vallès (Vallès Oc.)
<i>La ràdio a l'escola</i>	Ràdio Balaguer	Balaguer (Noguera)
<i>La veu dels quatre vents</i>	Ràdio Domenys	Sant Jaume dels Domenys (Baix Penedès)
<i>L'arca</i>	Ràdio Begur	Begur (Baix Empordà)
<i>Les escoles a la ràdio</i>	Ràdio Cornellà	Cornellà de Llobregat (Baix Llobregat)
<i>Nit de Reis</i>	Ràdio Cornellà	Cornellà de Llobregat (Baix Llobregat)
<i>Les escoles a la ràdio</i>	Punt 7 Ràdio Sant Celoni	Sant Celoni (Vallès Or.)
<i>L'escola a la ràdio</i>	Ràdio Caldes	Caldes de Montbui (Vallès Or.)
<i>L'escola a la ràdio</i>	Ràdio Sant Andreu	Sant Andreu de la Barca (Baix Llobregat)
<i>L'escola a la ràdio</i>	Ràdio Les Planes	Les Planes d'Hostoles (La Garrotxa)
<i>L'hora del conte</i>	Mataró Ràdio	Mataró (Maresme)
<i>L'univers</i>	Ràdio Cap de Creus	Cap de Creus (Alt Empordà)
<i>Més content que un gínjol</i>	Canal Blau	Vilanova i la Geltrú (Garraf)
<i>M'expliques un conte?</i>	Olesa Ràdio	Olesa de Montserrat (Baix Llobregat)
<i>Picnicpins</i>	Ràdio Silenci	La Garriga (Vallès Or.)
<i>QKK!</i>	Ràdio Castellar	Castellar del Vallès (Vallès Oc.)
<i>Ràdio i escola</i>	Ràdio Castelldefels	Castelldefels (Baix Llobregat)
<i>Ràdio pati</i>	Ràdio Almacelles	Almacelles (Segrià)
<i>Radiofònics</i>	Ràdio Arenys de Munt	Arenys de Munt (Maresme)
<i>Ralet ralet</i>	Ona Codinenca	Sant Feliu de Codines (Vallès Or.)
<i>Rap 107.edu</i>	Rap 107	Parets del Vallès (Vallès or.)
<i>Sisè parla</i>	Ràdio Arenys	Arenys de Mar (Maresme)
<i>Tertúlies educatives</i>	Ràdio Cubelles	Cubelles (Garraf)
<i>Tic, tac, ring</i>	Ràdio Palafolls	Palafolls (Maresme)
THIRD SECTOR STATIONS		
<i>Ràdio Ràpia</i> Modalitat: ràdio escolar	Ràdio Ràpia	Santa Margarida i els Monjos (Alt Penedès)
<i>L'hora infantil</i> Modalitat: ràdio lliure	Ràdio Pinsania	Berga (Berguedà)
<i>Llegeix-me un conte</i> Modalitat: ràdio de barri	Ràdio Sant Pere i Sant Pau	Tarragona
<i>Radioescola</i> Modalitat: ràdio de barri	Sants 3 Ràdio	Barcelona
SPECIALIST STATIONS: RELIGIOUS (without administrative license)		
<i>Cinco panes y dos peces</i>	Onda Paz	Barcelona
STATIONS FROM THE RNE GROUP		
<i>El rincón de los niños</i>	Radio Clásica	RNE-Estatal
<i>Contando cuentos en R5</i>	R5	RNE-Estatal
<i>La estación azul de los niños</i>	R5	RNE-Estatal

Source: author.

initial focus was on identifying aspects: name, location and type of radio in terms of its administrative management and then categories classifying children's radio programmes in terms of the aim of the programme, the language it's broadcast in, the duration and transmission or retransmission details, the number of presenters for the programme and their ages, the target aimed at (in this case only differentiating whether the target is 100% children or children and adults), the format used, the type of content broadcast and how the programme interacts with the audience, if applicable.

Some of these categories were also used for questions in the questionnaire for the interviews with those in charge of the stations in the sample. Questionnaires were used to obtain more details regarding the information obtained via listening but also to discover programme details which would otherwise be impossible to obtain. It should be noted that most of the programmes are broadcast on municipal radio stations but we did not base our study on a census of existing children's programmes; rather we contacted, by email or telephone, 259 stations from different municipalities, the third sector and the RNE group to be able to determine, from this universe, those stations actually broadcasting and/or producing children's programmes in 2013. In total, data from 59 of the stations studied were amplified using qualitative information based on conversations with their managers.

4. Findings

Of the fifty-nine stations in the sample, only those belonging to the Radio Nacional de España (RNE) network are both public and non-local. There are three different programmes broadcast by two of the RNE channels. On Radio Clásica they have *El rincón de los niños* and on Radio 5 *Contando cuentos en R5* and *La estación azul de los niños*. These programmes, which

are produced in Madrid and can be heard throughout Spain, represent 3.9% of all programmes for children that could be heard in Catalonia in 2013.

The most programmes are produced by municipal stations. 84.3% of the programmes are produced by "proximity radio" stations and especially by stations in counties with a high population density such as Barcelona and its metropolitan area, towns in the Maresme and the two Vallès counties. While some of these locations broadcast more than one children's programme, Lleida and Girona are the two cities with no children's programming.

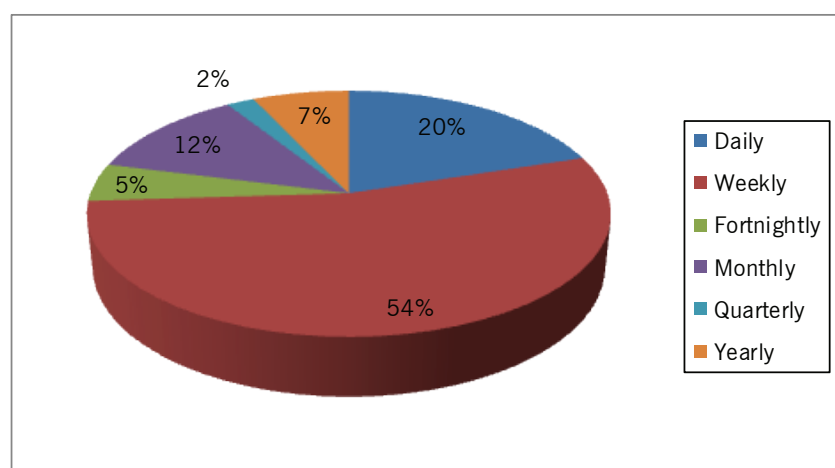
There's also children's programming on ten stations considered to be by the Third Sector with structures and programmes as different as school radio, neighbourhood radio, one free radio station with children's programmes and a district station (La Marina FM in Barcelona is excluded as it was impossible to contact the station).

Finally, there was also children's programming on three specialist radio stations that, curiously, all correspond to religious programming formulas and had no administrative licence at the time of the fieldwork. These are RKM, Radio María and Onda Paz, which emits *Cinco panes y dos peces*.

Based on the classifications made in the observation and the information obtained in the interviews, we also discovered that most programmes are broadcast once a week (Fig. 2), normally Saturday mornings between 9 and 12. Their content is particularly musical or with storytellers and, in third place, they cover various subjects related to didactic and educational experiences, often focusing on literary genres such as poetry. Interviews are the most widely used form of communication in the programmes made by or aimed at children and the most usual structure is either the magazine or storytelling format.

The programmes studied use Catalan in 83% of the cases as the language for communication, although 7% of the programmes made entirely in Spanish correspond to those broadcast by

Figure 2. Broadcasting frequency of programmes transmitted for children in Catalonia in 2013



Source: Borrero & Espinosa, 2014, 103.

RNE Group stations due to them being state-wide, as well as to religious stations. The same percentage of broadcast time is seen for Catalan and English in programmes, irrespective of the relative presence of English in the actual programme. In this case these are school radio formats such as, on the Les Planes d'Hostoles station, *L'escola a la ràdio*, the same name as the programme for Caldes de Montbui. English is also present in the form of music exclusively sung in this language in the programme *Llegeixem un conte*, on Ràdio Sant Pere i Sant Pau (Tarragona) and Ràdio Ràpia, explaining the time occupied by this language. The children's programmes with most broadcast time in English are *La Cantera*, by Ràdio Sallent and *Rap 107.edu*, by Parets del Vallès, which have English sections.

It should be noted that the aim of each programme is different (Fig. 3) and therefore not quantifiable but three broad principles have been observed in the aims of all of them: entertainment, didactic objectives using radio language to work on basic transversal skills (oral expression) and finally to attract young children to radio, familiarising them with the media through first-hand experience. Of course it's easy to find other reasons for creating programmes with a sample of fifty-nine stations. In this case we should note that there are children's programmes made with aims such as to encourage culture or an interest in knowledge and learning, promoting the imagination, educating or getting children interested in current affairs, such as *Colla matinera* by Ràdio Canet, made by a teenager in 2nd year secondary school from the town and aimed at young children, producing news items tailored to them. This unusual programme is the only one in the whole sample that offers listeners the chance to participate, providing a mobile unit to record the opinions of people in the street.

Among the findings obtained, of particular note is the disparity in the duration of children's programmes and their number of presenters (Fig. 4). Although 59% of the programmes are co-

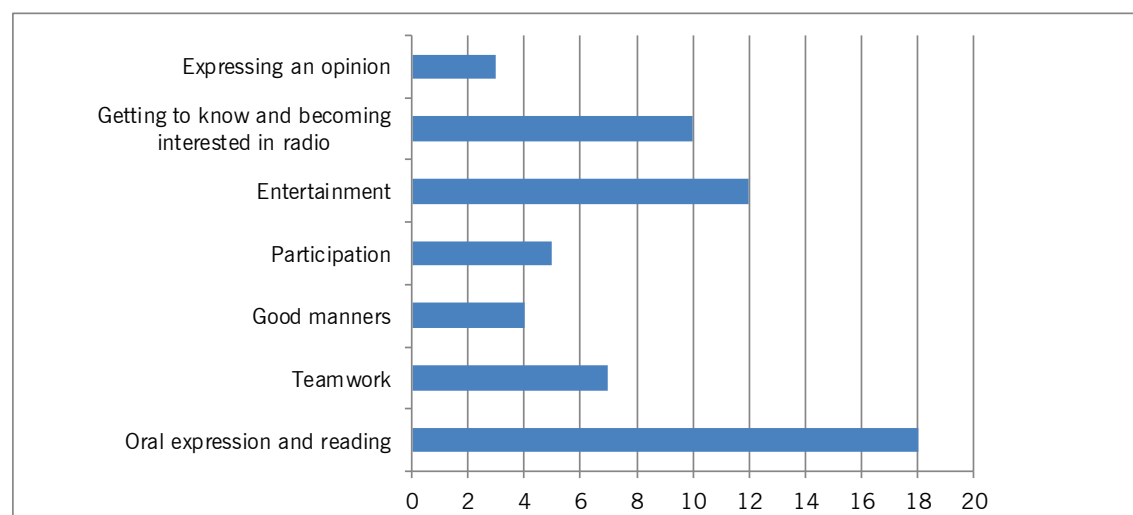
presented by a boy and a girl, the number of speakers can vary depending on the subject of the day or whether the programme is longer for any reason, as revealed in the interviews carried out. On Ràdio Les Planes, for example, the duration of *L'escola a la ràdio* differs with each broadcast depending on the content presented. Some programmes last 10 minutes but others, 8% of them, last more than 120 minutes, although the general trend is for programmes for young children to last between an hour and an hour and a half (60% of the sample). The shortest programmes, between 10 and 20 minutes, are usually based on storytelling while the longest correspond to special events such as *Nit de reis* on Ràdio Cornellà (a live broadcast of the Epiphany procession), the Ràdio Nova programme *Matinal amb el patge Makalí* (calls from listeners) and *Les escoles a la ràdio* by Ràdio Cornellà. These spaces are annual. This category of long programmes also includes the poetry space on Ràdio Tordera: *L'escriptura el poeta* and the competition by Ràdio Castellar, *QKK!*.

The longest programme, *Barrufets*, is cultural and broadcast by Ràdio Sant Vicenç. It usually lasts between 90 and 120 minutes.

95% of these programmes are broadcast once while 5% can be heard more than once or on more than one station, in some cases because they form part of the stations belonging to La Xarxa,⁴ which is the case of *La moixiganga*, produced by Ràdio Sant Quirze and *Més content que un gínjol*, by Canal Blau. The other programme broadcast more than once is *Tic, tac, ring* by Ràdio Palafolls.

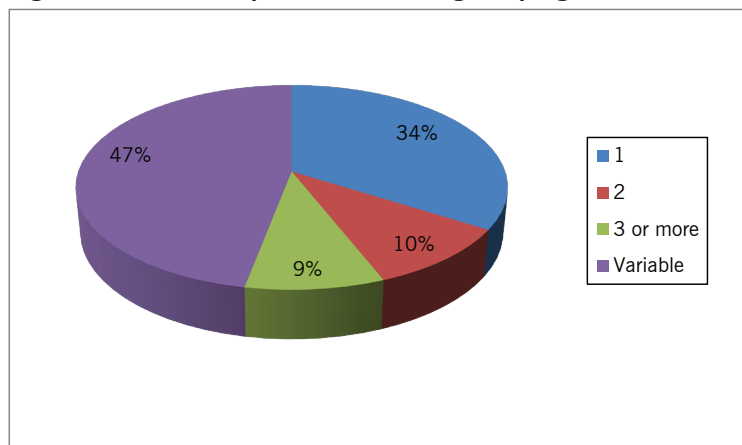
La moixiganga is the programme that can be heard on the most municipal radio stations in Catalonia as it is broadcast on seven: Ona Codinenca, 7 de Ràdio, La Veu de Navàs, Ràdio La Vall, Ràdio Sant Fruitós, Ràdio Bonmatí and Ràdio Balsareny. *Més content que un gínjol*, for its part, is repeated on La Xarxa but also on La Marina FM and Ràdio Cubelles. And lastly there

Figure 3. Aims shared by the different programmes analysed. Data obtained from personal interviews



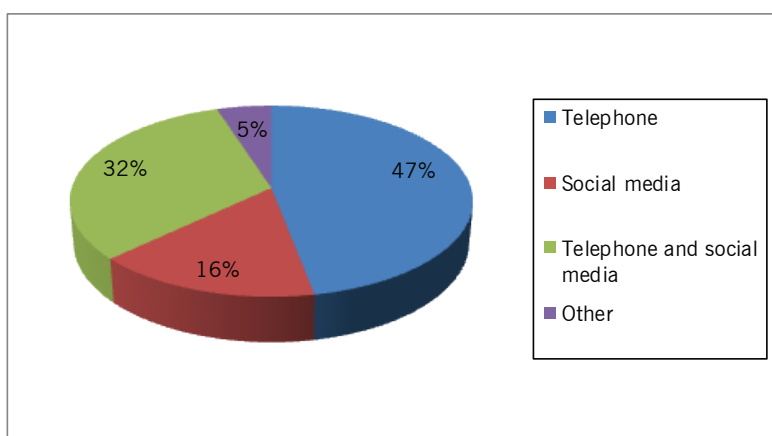
Source: Borrero & Espinosa 2014, 111.

Figure 4. Number of presenters running the programme



Source: Borrero & Espinosa, 2014, 114.

Figure 5. Audience participation formulas



Note: Listeners can only participate in a minority of children's programmes (32%)

Source: Borrero & Espinosa, 2014, 117.

is *Tic, tac, ring* which, as it is co-produced by Ràdio Palafolls and Ràdio Blanes, can be heard on both stations.

68% of the programmes are designed for an audience including adults and children since, as we have already explained, they are school radio type formats but it has been observed that 32% of the projects are designed only for a young audience, especially for children aged 10, according to the opinions expressed by the programmers consulted. Both as producers of the programme, presenting everything or only a section, and also as listeners and participants in the programme, we have seen that most children's formats recorded involve primary school children, 5% secondary school children and 17% are radio programmes made both by primary and secondary school children. Although involvement in the production of programmes is very high, these programmes rarely give the audience the opportunity to interact with the producers. Only 32% of the programmes analysed provide channels for listener participation, as shown by the following graph (Fig. 5). The finding that 68% of the programmes made and designed for children refuse to allow

audience participation can only be explained by the fact that most programmes are recorded before they are transmitted.

5. Conclusions

This article began by asking where children's programmes are on the radio. According to the findings of this study, the answer is mostly on "proximity radio" stations. 84.3% of programmes for children are broadcast by municipal radio stations, 9.8% belong to third sector stations, i.e. broadcasts for schools, neighbourhoods, districts or a free radio station, 3.9% are produced by two stations within the RNE group and the remaining 2% are programmes corresponding to religious radio stations without an administrative licence.

According to the findings explained above, we can conclude that the children's programmes studied have a twofold objective: to entertain their audience and to familiarise children with radio as a means of communication. Nevertheless we can

clearly see that 68% of the programmes broadcast for children, whether they are made by adults or teenagers or primary school children, offer no means of audience participation as they are recorded before they are broadcast.

A significant proportion of these programmes, as has been explained in detail, belongs to the school radio format and, as part of the learning process, it's logical that they need to ensure a "good broadcast" and it's therefore more important for them to post-produce content than risk a live broadcast given their young target unfamiliar with radio broadcasting techniques. The audience therefore does not have the option of collaborating in the programmes. In the 32% of programmes that do include audience participation, this is mostly by telephone, a technology that may seem rather out-of-date for young children given the technologies available online, especially when they very often use laptops and tablets at school as learning tools for classroom work. This seems contradictory if we remember that both the programme's producers and especially all their target audience have very good technology skills from a generational point of view. The only programmes to use social media for their audiences to express their opinions are as follows: three on Ràdio Sallent, namely *La cantera*, *La tertúlia* and *Punt i coma*, *Radiofònics* on Arenys de Mar radio, *Radioescola* or school radio by the Barcelona neighbourhood station Sants 3 Ràdio, *El gat petit* by Ràdio Voltregà, *Rap 107.edu* by Parets del Vallès and *Contando cuentos en R5* by RNE.

Apart from the little interaction with listeners, 45% of the programmes for children aged between three and twelve have a magazine format and are broadcast as the result of a radio workshop at the school in question, promoted to work on basic skills in the curriculum such as improve children's oral expression and reading. An analysis of the programmes shows that these are also normally broadcast in Catalan, last an hour on average, are transmitted once a week and normally on Saturday mornings and are aimed at both parents and children. They are equally presented by boys and girls and only *El rebost dels contes*, on Solsona FM, is jointly made by children and adults. On the rest of the stations the presenters are either children of a similar age to their audience or adolescent or pre-adolescent producers.

There is a great diversity of content and genre. Nevertheless the most frequent are music, stories and didactic content, much more than competitions or religious content. In this respect it's worth noting that other subjects are also dealt with by children in their programmes but these do not appear on more than one station; for example there are comedy programmes, programmes about politics or the environment and others dedicated to solidarity or reviewing the lives of famous people.

Although there was a wide range of programmes for children in 2013, many of these did not last long. According to the historical data covered by this article, it's clear that it's difficult for municipal stations to maintain stability and this is the context within which most children's programmes are broadcast. This means the continuation of programmes depends on such diverse

factors as budget cuts and whether the programme's producers/promoters are professionals, as these are often enthusiastic volunteers. The oldest children's programme in Catalonia is *Nit de Reis* by Ràdio Cornellà, broadcast uninterruptedly since 1982.

The study's findings also suggest that the public broadcasters with the largest audiences, Catalunya Ràdio and Ràdio Nacional RNE, behave very differently towards this target audience ignored by audience surveys. While Catalunya Ràdio has spent the last 4 years without any children's programme, *Clica't* (2014) is now being broadcast on RNE, a space for infants and primary schoolchildren, continuing the programming of Radio Clásica and Radio 5, as has already been explained. On the other hand the private broadcasters creating general interest content in Catalonia, such as RAC1, Cadena SER-Catalunya, Onda Cero and COPE-Catalunya, no longer broadcast programmes for this age group although the history of radio shows that many of the pioneering programmes aimed at young children were precisely on these stations, and also in spite of the fact that some of these private broadcasters were the catalyst for the school radio formats that have, for many years, have attracted and turned young listeners into radio producers, a legacy which, thanks to municipal radio stations, still survives today.

Notes

1. This study was published in *Quaderns del CAC*, no. 34, vol. XIII (1), page 69, under the relevant title of "The crisis in youth radio consumption in Catalonia", highlighting the state of this issue right from the start.
2. <http://cadenaser.com/ser/2013/11/11/audios/1384139609_660215.html> [Consulted: 9-4-2015]
3. This fieldwork forms the basis of a very complete Final Dissertation, tutored by the author and produced by Lúcia Borrero at Universitat de Girona, 2014.
4. La Xarxa is a multimedia audiovisual platform which, in 2013, had 161 stations as members. Nevertheless, not all of them re-broadcast all the programmes as they select from the content available on the platform (Xarxa 2013).

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