

Languages

The Spanish Version

In [The One Suggestion for Improvement](#) section of [Chapter 3](#), I said that the only suggestion we received for improving the Program during our 2,048 kit ten-year study was from English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. Their suggestion was for the Center to make a Spanish version of the Program that they could then use alongside the English version with their ESL students.

Regardless of the language to be learned, children learn it in the same way – putting sounds together to make words. The kindergarten child in Iceland did not have to learn a whole new set of sounds for each language that she spoke. The different languages spoken all over the world have many sounds in common. All she had to do was put the sounds together differently for each language, just as she already had to put them together differently to form each word.

With the help of several ESL teachers, we created a Spanish version of the Program. Both languages could now be taught side-by-side to everyone in class, regardless of any child's native language.

In [Chapter 3](#), it was noted that the Spanish language uses 23 sounds, not 44. 21 of the 23 are sounds also used in English. Adding just 2 new sounds meant that all the sounds of Spanish were now available for every child to put together to make words.

1-2-3-4 in Three Languages

	English	Spanish	Hindi
1 =			
2 =			
3 =			
4 =			

Above is an example of the Reading Program sounds put together to make words in three languages. I picked these three languages because they are the three I have spent time learning. If you happen to know the Dekodiphukan sounds, you can now count to four in three different languages. Actually, there is a sound in the Spanish word for four that

is not one of Dekodiphukan's 44. The fourth sound from the left is one of the two sounds we added to create the Spanish version of the program.

Spanish Stamping Tray and Decoding Chart

The Spanish version of the program uses the same stations format as the English version: Picture Packets, Worksheets, Books, Handwriting and Decoding, and Stamping and Creative Writing. Pictured below are the Spanish Stamping Tray and Decoding Chart:



The Sounds of Language

The Reading Program teaches children to read and write in English because that is the language I learned growing up, and because it is the language I know best. The reason we were able to make a Spanish version of the Program was because the ESL teachers who wanted the Program, helped us create it.

Two additional sounds were needed for Spanish. How many sounds are unique to Hindi, or Japanese, or Russian, or Chinese, or Arabic? The different languages I have heard in the thirty-six countries to which my travels have taken me give me the impression that there are more sounds in common in all the languages on earth than there are sounds that are unique.

Infants are born with the capability of making every sound of every language. They learn to imitate the sounds they hear around them. As they age, the capability of making the language sounds they have not heard gradually fades away. It is my understanding that children who learn a language before they are seven will speak it like a native speaker without an accent. Languages learned later are the ones spoken with the accent that gives the speaker what we call a foreign accent.

The kindergarten child who spoke three languages had not yet learned to read the written words in each of those languages. The Icelandic

alphabet contains 32 letters, most of which are also in the English alphabet. Hindi uses a completely different alphabet. What made it possible for her to learn all three languages was because she was learning the sounds of words and not the letters used to spell them. Imagine a set of sound-pictures available to learners everywhere that encompass every language. If it can be imagined, then someday in the future, an imaginer might make it happen.