

Sonica Spanish

3T Productions Limited

**A report of an evaluation carried out by a team based at
The University of Warwick
September – December, 2004**

Final Report

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Introduction

This report arises from an evaluation, commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills, of the Sonica Spanish language teaching materials produced by 3T Productions. The evaluation was carried out by a team based at the University of Warwick over a period beginning in September, 2004 and concluding in December, 2004.

The current document contains the final report arising from the evaluation, and builds upon the material included in the interim report submitted in January, 2005.

This report is structured as follows:

Section 1 contains details of the aims of the evaluation and a brief account of the context within which it was carried out. We also discuss briefly here some of the limitations of the evaluation, in the light of which its findings should be interpreted.

Section 2 gives some information about the members of the team involved in carrying out the evaluation.

Section 3 details the main characteristics of the schools and classes involved in the evaluation, and the extent of their involvement.

Section 4 describes the main data-collection methods used in the evaluation.

Section 5 begins our account of the evaluation findings by presenting the responses of teachers and other school personnel to the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages, and Spanish in particular, in primary schools, and to their experience of using the Sonica Spanish materials.

In Section 6 we present our findings regarding the ways in which the Sonica materials were used in the schools and classrooms we visited.

Section 7 presents an analysis of the reactions of pupils to the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages, and Spanish in particular, in primary schools, and to their experience of using the Sonica Spanish materials.

In Section 8 we present the evidence we have (necessarily limited because of the short time scale of the evaluation) of the impact of use of the Sonica materials on pupils' knowledge and awareness of Spanish.

Section 9 reports the results of a small scale 'desk' evaluation of the Sonica materials by experts in the field (advisers/inspectors responsible for the oversight of primary MFL teaching in their authorities). Given the very short timescale in which this part of the evaluation was carried out, the findings here are, inevitably, more concerned with technical and linguistic issues in the materials. We include the full list of our analysis of these issues, which has already been circulated to both the Department and 3T. We assume that the issues identified will not apply when the Sonica materials are formally launched.

Section 10 contains the major elements of our conclusions arising from this evaluation about both the quality and the impact of the Sonica materials.

Section 1: Aims and context

The aim of this project was to evaluate the Sonica Spanish Digital Education Service from 3T in terms of, among other things, its effectiveness in raising achievement in Spanish in the target pupils and engendering enhanced engagement with language learning among these pupils, its manageability in both the school and the classroom, and its technological appropriateness to users and learners.

Particular focus points for the evaluation were:

- the technologies used, their ease of use and accessibility, their levels of interactivity and their reliability;
- patterns of usage of the teaching materials;
- the quality and range of resources offered, in particular their fitness for the full range of learners;
- the quality and range of user support services
- the impact of the materials on classroom practice and pupils' learning;
- the ease of which the materials can be adapted, both in terms of teacher competencies and pupils' individual needs.

This evaluation was planned to draw upon data gathered through interviews of head teachers, teachers and pupils, and through observations of teaching sessions.

As evaluators we were aware that this project had to be seen within a wider overall context. Firstly there was the government's intention to ensure that by 2012 every pupil at primary school has the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language (Language Learning: DfES, 2002), later refined as a commitment to an entitlement to language learning for all at Key Stage 2 by 2010 (Languages for All: Languages for Life: DfES, 2002). We were also aware of the practical constraints upon this ambition in terms of the availability of qualified language teachers in most schools and the associated training issues indicated by the QCA report on the feasibility of introducing MFL into the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 2 (2001) and reported upon by HMI (Primary Modern Languages in Initial Teacher Training, 2002).

Secondly we were conscious that this project, which involved the commissioning and development of new digital learning materials, needed to be seen within the context of the emerging e-learning strategy from the DfES. Many of the current action points behind that process mapped onto this project, but in particular we were aware of the need to develop innovation in teaching and learning, to support learners and to build a better e-learning market for suppliers.

Section 2: Personnel involved in the evaluation

Professor David Wray is Professor of Literacy Education in the Institute of Education at the University of Warwick. He has wide experience of research with primary schools and teachers and has carried out a number of funded projects involving extensive use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. His most recent major projects have been:

- Effective teachers of literacy - funded by the Teacher Training Agency, 1995-97 (with J. Medwell). This involved a large-scale study of primary teachers identified as effective in the teaching of literacy. The data collection methods for this included statistical analysis of an extensive questionnaire, interviews with selected teachers and classroom observation of these teachers at work.
- Analysis and evaluation of the current situation relating to the teaching of modern foreign languages at key stage 2 in England – funded by QCA, 2000. (with B. Powell, S. Rixon, J. Medwell, A. Barnes, M. Hunt). This involved a national survey of the views about and practices in modern foreign language teaching of primary school head teachers and teachers, and LEA personnel.

David Wray's first degree was in French and Spanish and he has experience of teaching French at primary school level. He has also been involved in the creation of digital learning materials in collaboration with a number of educational publishers.

Dr Bob Powell has been Director of the Language Centre at Warwick University since 1993. Prior to that he was Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Bath where, in addition to his teaching on the PGCE course, he directed a number of funded projects in curriculum development and produced multi-media materials for teaching French and Italian in schools and adult education. He was President of the Association for Language Learning 1992-95. In recent years, he has directed several more projects including:

- Using the target language to test modern foreign language skills, SCAA, 1996. (with A. Barnes, M. Hunt)
- Testing speaking skills in GCSE modern foreign languages, SCAA, 1997. (with A. Barnes, M. Hunt, S. Graham)
- Analysis and evaluation of the current situation relating to the teaching of modern foreign languages at key stage 2 in England, QCA, 2000. (with D. Wray, S. Rixon, J. Medwell, A. Barnes, M. Hunt)
- Evaluation of the KS2 MFL Pathfinders project, DfEE, current. (with D. Muijs, G. Lindsay, M. Hunt, A. Barnes)

Jeff Morgan was, until 1998, one of the directors of Becta and before that of the NCET. His responsibilities were for communications technologies and Europe. He is a graduate in Spanish and French, an ex-modern languages teacher and at Becta regularly commissioned major external evaluation projects funded directly by the Department. Since 1998 through J@M Associates and LMA Ltd he has carried out consultancy assignments for both suppliers and end-users in the ICT education market. Clients have included: Becta, Coventry LEA, Microsoft Europe, 3Com, HP, Procurve Networking, XMA Ltd, SAM Learning.

Marilyn Hunt taught French and Spanish in secondary schools from 1973 to 1995. Her final post was Head of Languages Faculty in a large comprehensive school. She took up her current post as Lecturer in Modern Foreign Languages (Teacher Education) at Warwick in 1996. She has run several INSET activities for primary teachers. She has been a member of research teams in work for SCAA, QCA and DfEE (see Powell above) and is a consultant to the Coventry LEA Languages Project 'Thinking through languages at key stage 2'.

Dr Jane Medwell lectures in primary literacy education at the University of Warwick where she was, until September, 2003, Director of the Primary PGCE course. She is a Russian graduate and has taught in a number of primary schools. Her research interests are in the teaching of literacy and the use of ICT in teaching and learning. She has completed a number of projects, including an evaluation of the effects of electronic, 'talking' books on the literacy learning of young children, and a study of effective teachers of literacy (see Wray above). She was a member of the research team for the QCA MFL project (see Wray and Powell above) and is currently involved in a project with funding from the Best Practice research scholarship scheme to assess the use of electronic whiteboards in developing pupils' literacy.

Section 3: Schools and classes involved

3.1 Target schools

Our original aim was to base this evaluation on the work of 12 primary schools, in various parts of the country. We worked with the developers and the Department to identify a number of schools that either already taught some Spanish at KS2, or would like the opportunity to begin such teaching. In the event, 13 such schools were suggested to us and we made initial contact with each of these. Details of the original 13 schools are given in the following table. In accordance with the University of Warwick ethical guidelines for conducting research with schools, teachers and pupils, the evaluation team assured participants of anonymity in reports arising from this evaluation. No details, therefore, of the true names of participating teachers and pupils are contained in this report.

<i>School</i>	<i>Local Education Authority</i>	<i>School type</i>	<i>Pupil year group(s) involved</i>
1	Liverpool	Primary	6
2	Liverpool	Primary	6
3	Liverpool	Primary	4
4	North Tyneside	Primary	1
5	North Tyneside	Primary	4
6	North Tyneside	Primary	4
7	Norfolk	Junior	4
8	Norfolk	Middle	5
9	Norfolk	Junior	4 and 6
10	Norfolk	Special (EBD)	3 to 6
11	Dudley	Primary	5
12	Dudley	Primary	3 and 4
13	Dudley	Primary	4

The schools in Liverpool had each had previous experience of teaching Spanish to their primary pupils, and 2 of the schools in North Tyneside had been involved in some Spanish teaching in the previous year. None of the schools in the other authorities had taught Spanish before.

It is worth pointing out that a further two schools had volunteered (via the software developers) to take part in the evaluation, and had been given a set of the teaching materials. When contacted at the beginning of the project, however, both schools reported that they had not had sufficient time to begin to plan for the use of these materials and consequently were not included in the evaluation sample. This is an important point to note because it indicates that, even the provision of free, exciting materials to schools does not, in itself, guarantee that these materials will be used. Other factors clearly need to be in place.

3.2 Visits to schools

Each of these schools received a copy of the Sonica materials at the end of September, 2004 and we visited each of them for the first time in the first two weeks of October. During this first visit, we carried out the following activities (for more details of these, see Section 4 below).

- We administered the initial questionnaire to a teaching group of pupils (a complete class, except in the case of the Special School, where a different selection of pupils was made).
- We interviewed the teacher who would be responsible for the teaching of Spanish using Sonica.
- Where possible we interviewed the head teacher of the school. In 3 schools this was not possible. One head teacher was absent on the day of the visit, in one school the interview was delegated to the deputy head teacher who had a special interest in primary level MFL teaching, and in one school the modern foreign language co-ordinator was put forward by the head teacher for interview.

Further visits were made to most of these schools in order to:

- a) observe a teaching session using the Sonica materials;
- b) re-administer the teacher interview and collect completed questionnaires from these teachers;
- c) re-administer the pupil questionnaire.

These visits were made during the period from early November to early December. During these second and third visits, it became apparent that 3 of the original 13 schools had not found it possible to use the Sonica materials in the way they had originally intended, and it was necessary to drop these schools from the evaluation.

3.3 Schools dropping out of the evaluation

The reasons given for each school dropping out were different in each case.

- One school claimed that they had agreed to be involved in the Sonica project in order to make their own assessment of the likely impact of the materials on their pupils. In the short time they had had the materials (7-8 weeks) they had not had time to make this initial assessment and therefore had not yet begun to use the materials with pupils.
- Another school also claimed pressure of time as a reason for not yet beginning to use the materials. The teacher in this school did participate in an extensive second interview, and her responses have been used to contribute to our evaluation, even though she had not actually taught with Sonica yet.
- In a third school there had been a problem with loading the Sonica materials onto the LEA network, which all schools in that particular authority used extensively. It was not possible to ascertain in the time available exactly where the problem lay in this case so, reluctantly, this school was dropped from the evaluation. The two other schools in the sample from this education authority also had problems with running the Sonica materials from the LEA network. In both cases, however, they were able to overcome the problem to a degree by the use of school collections of laptops from which Sonica was run.

In the event, then, we have full data sets from 10 schools, from four LEAs.

Section 4: Data collection

The evaluation had four aspects, each involving the collection of a different type of evidence.

4.1 The views of those responsible for the teaching of Spanish.

Detailed interviews were carried out with a range of interested parties in the target schools to explore their feelings about the teaching of Spanish, and the use of Sonica. Interviewees included head teachers, teachers and any support staff involved in teaching Spanish. A copy of the interview questions used with teachers at the beginning of the evaluation period can be found as Appendix 1 of this report and a copy of the interview questions used with head teachers forms Appendix 2.

Teachers and some head teachers were interviewed again at the end of the evaluation period and a copy of the questions used on this occasion can be found as Appendix 3.

Teachers and head teachers were also asked to complete a questionnaire enquiring into their attitudes towards the Sonica materials at the end of the evaluation period. A copy of this questionnaire is given as appendix 4 of this report.

4.2 The views of pupils experiencing the teaching of Spanish.

The pupils in a teaching group, usually but not always a complete class, were asked to complete a questionnaire, part of which was designed to ascertain their attitudes towards language learning, and the learning of Spanish in particular. This questionnaire was administered twice, once at the beginning of the evaluation period and again at the end. A copy of the questionnaire can be found as Appendix 5 of this report. There were only slight tense differences between the two questionnaires, which are indicated on the Appendix version.

Given the age of some of the pupils participating in this evaluation (several year 3 and 4 pupils, and even one class of Year 1 pupils), it was necessary on occasions to read the questions aloud to those pupils involved before asking them to tick the relevant boxes.

We were also able to observe in each school a lesson /session involving the use of the Sonica materials. The schedule used to record these observations is given in Appendix 6. Judgements about pupils' responses to the material covered were a key feature of our observations.

4.3 The impact on pupils' knowledge and awareness of Spanish and Spain.

A part of the questionnaire given in Appendix 5 was also an attempt to gain insights into how pupils' knowledge and awareness of Spanish might have changed over the course of their experiences with the Sonica materials. We were fully cognisant of the problematic nature of what we were trying to do here. The period of pupil exposure to the materials was very brief, for most no longer than two months, and for some a rather shorter period. As an example, in one school, the participating pupils experienced six sessions of 30 minutes each of Spanish work, during which Sonica occupied perhaps 10 minutes of each of these sessions. Our measurements therefore were limited to a check on whether or not pupils knew some common Spanish words or phrases, and on whether they could recognise some places in the world where Spanish was spoken.

4.4 The views of experts in the teaching of Spanish.

As representatives of the wider community of language teaching specialists, we invited 6 LEA advisers/inspectors, each of whom had some local responsibility for overseeing the teaching of MFL in primary schools, to inspect the Sonica materials. Events meant that we had to allow these people only 14 days in which to examine the materials and make any comments they could about quality and technical accuracy. Five of them responded within the allotted time.

Section 5: Teachers' responses to the Sonica materials

5.1 Questionnaire responses from teachers

As explained above, class teachers from the ten schools who completed the evaluation process were asked to respond to a final questionnaire regarding their use of and attitudes towards the Sonica materials. Two further teachers also completed this questionnaire, both of whom were visiting specialist language teachers employed by the local education authority to assist teachers in their MFL teaching. The responses of these twelve teachers to the questionnaire are detailed below.

Two teachers said Sonica Spanish currently represented the only MFL teaching used in their schools. For the vast majority of this group, however (ten out of twelve), Sonica was only part of the range of MFL approaches being used in their schools. In the case of seven of these teachers, Spanish was already being taught in a variety of ways, using a variety of materials, to pupils in their schools. For five of these, this teaching began with Year 3 pupils, although two teachers said that this language was introduced in Reception or Year 1. The remaining three teachers reported that the pupils in their schools were currently taught French in Year 6, while in two cases French was being taught alongside Spanish, from Year 1 or Year 3.

These figures most probably suggest that the schools involved in this evaluation were not really typical of all schools, in that MFL teaching was generally already an established part of their curriculum provision. This is reinforced by the response of these teachers to a question about the pattern of use of the Sonica materials in their schools. For ten of the twelve this was as separate lessons given during normal teaching hours. Four of these ten also reported using the materials as part of everyday routines (e.g. taking the register). These results conflict with our expectations when beginning this evaluation, based on previous research into primary MFL teaching, that extra-curricular sessions (clubs, etc) would form a major part of the use of the Sonica materials. Our experience in the evaluation suggests that this was not the case with these schools. They appeared, on the contrary, to be sufficiently committed to MFL work at primary level to have provided dedicated regularly timetabled sessions within which it could happen.

In response to a question about what they judged the use of Sonica had achieved in their schools, eleven of the twelve teachers responding claimed that it had developed their pupils' competence in Spanish. Ten teachers agreed that it had developed pupils' motivation for future foreign language learning, while eight agreed that it had broadened the scope of the curriculum. A further four said that using Sonica had developed pupils' general foreign language learning skills.

The picture emerging from these responses, then, is a very positive one. This is reinforced by the response from eleven of these twelve teachers that they intended to carry on using Sonica in their schools. Only one teacher was uncertain about this, citing pressure on the timetable as a reason for this uncertainty.

Some members of the group agreed with all the reasons suggested in the questionnaire for continuing to use Sonica. Interestingly, the reason agreed with by the most teachers (ten out of twelve) was that the Sonica materials had enabled them to integrate ICT into their teaching. Given the fact that research into ICT use in primary schools has consistently pointed to the difficulties teachers often find in integrating this into their teaching, this result is potentially very important as an indicator of the effects of the Sonica materials.

Nine of these teachers agreed that the Sonica materials had motivated their pupils to engage with Spanish learning, a result which fits with the general pattern which will emerge from this evaluation. Pupil motivation and enthusiasm for learning Spanish and for using Sonica were constantly recurring themes in the evidence we gathered. As one teacher put it, 'it was a real pleasure to use some teaching materials which were such good fun for the children'.

Perhaps inevitably, such positive responses were tempered slightly by some of the comments made by teachers in the space they were given in the questionnaire for open comments about the Sonica materials. Every one of the twelve teachers made some comment here, the majority being again very positive (six mentioned the enthusiasm of their pupils for the Sonica experience). Three teachers did, however, comment that the "spelling mistakes" in the materials did let them down somewhat (see Section 9 below), while three also mentioned that they would appreciate a more detailed instruction manual to accompany the materials. One teacher wrote, "I would like a comprehensive teacher's manual with an overview and description of the units".

5.2 Interview responses from teachers

The ten class teachers were also interviewed about their experiences so far with the Sonica materials. The same themes were apparent in their interview responses as had emerged from their questionnaires. Most significantly, every teacher said that they were impressed with the sheer scale of the Sonica materials, even though they had had time so far only to scratch the surface of what was available. All of them also commented on the enthusiastic responses they had had from their pupils when using Sonica. The dance mat activities had been a particular favourite, with one teacher commenting that she had had to almost physically eject her pupils from the classroom at playtime because they wanted to play on the dance mat so much. “They’d play on it all the time if I let them.”

Several teachers commented on the sense of challenge that had been generated by the timed exercises in Sonica and their responses overall suggest that as a learning experience the use of Sonica had been positive for their pupils. Five of the group (four of whom had no previous knowledge of Spanish at all) commented on how useful they found the pronunciation aspect of the materials. As one teacher put it, “I’m not really certain if they’ve got it right, as I don’t speak much Spanish, but the kids certainly sound Spanish to me. They’ve picked up the accents really quickly.” One teacher, however, was very disappointed with the Easiteach element of the materials, where its synthesised speech is “just poor, phonetic English”. This was seen as undoing some of the good work of the rest of the materials in establishing a good spoken Spanish model.

Although generally complimentary about the materials, all ten teachers did find some aspects at which to level criticism. Five of them made mention of the frequent “spelling errors” in the materials (see Section 9) and four bemoaned the lack of a “really detailed teacher’s guide” and an overview of the activities involved in each unit. Four commented on some of the technical problems they had experienced in using the materials, particularly in installing them on the school network. None of this group were sufficiently technically knowledgeable to be certain where the fault for this lay, with the materials or with the equipment setup on which they wanted to install these.

Section 6: Classroom use of the Sonica materials

Ten lessons / teaching sessions were observed in which the Sonica materials were used with a group of pupils.

6.1 Subject background of teachers

Only two of the observed lessons were taken by teachers who described themselves as MFL specialists. Indeed, seven of the teachers involved had very little knowledge of Spanish at all, with the result that much of the language they used in the lesson was English, or very imperfect attempts at Spanish (one teacher spent the whole lesson asking her class about their ‘cumpleanos’ – a compete mispronunciation of ‘cumpleaños’!) This point should be read in conjunction with that made earlier – that these were schools and teachers with a very strong commitment to MFL teaching at primary level. Even such commitment was no guarantee of strong subject knowledge and for teachers with less commitment and, probably, even less subject knowledge, it is likely that such materials as Sonica have an even greater potential contribution to make.

6.2 Teaching groups

Of the lessons we observed only two involved pupils not working in their normal class groups. In one case a group of twelve mixed age pupils were attending a lunchtime club session, and in another a group of six pupils identified as specially talented at languages were taught separately from the rest of their class. The remaining eight sessions involved whole class groups ranging in size from 15 to 30 pupils, and in age range from Year 1 to Year 6. Given that these were normal class groups, they each contained pupils representing the normal range of ability. It was noticeable, however, that in the lunchtime club session a deliberate attempt had been made to integrate a physically disabled pupil, who was present with his regular adult helper. Another class group contained one pupil with learning difficulties and one non-English speaker, each of whom had an adult teaching assistant working alongside them. The indicators are that in most of these schools MFL teaching was perceived as an inclusive activity.

6.3 Length of teaching sessions

There was some variation in the length of the teaching sessions observed. Five of the ten sessions were of 30 minutes duration, with one being 25 minutes long, two 45 minutes and two a full hour. Although there were exceptions to this, the general pattern was that the older the pupils being taught the longer the session that was planned for them, which is what we would have expected.

6.4 Teaching resources used

There was some variation in the resources available to, and used by, the teachers in the lessons observed. Six sessions involved the use of a computer attached to an interactive whiteboard: that is, they were largely conducted as whole class teaching sessions. In four sessions, pupils had access to a number of laptops and were able to engage in more individualised teaching/learning. It is a perceived strength of the Sonica materials that they can be used effectively in either of these situations. Some teachers had, naturally, supplemented the resources offered by Sonica. Two classrooms contained lots of examples (labels etc.) of text in Spanish, and in one the teacher was using small stickers containing Spanish text (¡Excelente!) to reward her pupils.

6.5 The range of pupils’ experiences

In terms of the pupils’ experiences in these lessons, there was actually only a small variation. Nine of the ten lessons involved a large amount of repetition by pupils of words and phrases they had heard on the computer. The provision in the software of perfect models of Spanish pronunciation should be one of the strengths of the Sonica materials. Unfortunately half of the teachers observed did not take advantage of this, relying instead on asking pupils to repeat the teacher’s (often less than perfect) pronunciation of a Spanish phrase heard originally on the computer. There was a sense sometimes of teachers with poor subject knowledge undoing the benefits they had derived from the software’s perfect models by their insistence on trying to mediate the lesson material. One teacher said several times during her lesson that “If I knew how to say ‘Well done’ in Spanish, I would.” Learning to say ‘¡Bien!’ to a pupil should be a fairly easy task and in not making the effort to do this it may well be that this teacher is unconsciously signalling to her pupils that they do not need to make an effort to learn Spanish either!

All the lessons observed involved pupils in listening to Spanish and speaking it. Seven of the ten involved some pupil reading of Spanish (another would have done had the computer monitor not been far too small for the pupils to read from!) but only one lesson involved pupils writing any Spanish.

In commenting on the homogeneity of pupil experience in the lessons we observed, we run the risk of implying that sameness in these lessons meant dullness for the pupils. In fact nothing could be further from the truth. In the vast majority of these lessons (nine out of the ten observed) the pupils involved were intensely and enthusiastically engaged with the material. They clearly understood what they were doing and what the point of it was. They were also clearly looking forward to the lesson and were disappointed when it ended. This physical expression of the pupil enthusiasms we were told about by the teachers involved was gratifying to witness and presents further evidence of the engaging appeal of the Sonica materials.

Section 7: Pupils' reactions to the Sonica materials

Our strategy for gauging pupils' reactions to the Sonica materials was to get, through two administrations of a questionnaire, their reactions to a number of attitude statements concerning the teaching and learning of foreign languages and of Spanish in particular.

7.1 Pupils' views about learning Spanish

There were two sections of the questionnaire which asked for pupils' views about aspects of language teaching. In one section they were asked for their reactions to a number of statements about language and Spanish learning, and to indicate these by ticking under symbols representing their agreement (☺), disagreement (☹) or undecidedness (☺). The results from the initial questionnaire can be seen in Table 1 below, and the results from the second questionnaire in Table 2. After presenting these results we will go on to pull out what appear to us to be the major differences between pupil views before they had used the Sonica materials and after this use.

Table 1: Pupil views about learning Spanish – initial questionnaire (completed by 214 pupils)

Statement	Number ticking ☺ (%)	Number ticking ☹ (%)	Number ticking ☺ (%)
I think we should learn a foreign language in primary school.	187 (87.4%)	19 (8.9%)	4 (1.9%)
I think we should have started learning a foreign language when we were younger.	67 (31.3%)	52 (24.3%)	80 (37.4%)
I think we should not start learning a foreign language until we are older.	27 (12.6%)	42 (19.6%)	141 (65.9%)
I am glad we have the chance to learn some Spanish.	200 (93.5%)	9 (4.2%)	2 (0.9%)
I think learning Spanish will be fun.	197 (92.1%)	11 (5.1%)	4 (1.9%)
I think learning Spanish will be easy.	62 (29.0%)	97 (45.3%)	49 (22.9%)
I think learning Spanish will be hard.	65 (30.4%)	70 (32.7%)	73 (34.1%)
I think learning Spanish will be boring.	15 (7.0%)	18 (8.4%)	178 (83.2%)
I like using computers to learn in school.	201 (93.9%)	5 (2.3%)	4 (1.9%)
I am excited about using computers to learn Spanish.	187 (87.4%)	16 (7.5%)	8 (3.7%)
I wish we could learn a different language instead of Spanish.	37 (17.3%)	57 (26.6%)	117 (54.7%)
I wish we could learn another language as well as Spanish.	146 (68.2%)	35 (16.4%)	24 (11.2%)

Table 2: Pupil views about learning Spanish – final questionnaire (completed by 158 pupils)

Statement	Number ticking ☺ (%)	Number ticking ☹ (%)	Number ticking ☺ (%)
I think we should learn a foreign language in primary school.	150 (94.9%)	6 (3.8%)	2 (1.3%)
I think we should have started learning a foreign language when we were younger.	74 (46.8%)	52 (32.9%)	32 (20.3%)
I think we should not start learning a foreign language until we are older.	18 (11.4%)	18 (11.4%)	122 (77.2%)
I am glad we have the chance to learn some Spanish.	154 (97.5%)	2 (1.3%)	2 (1.3%)
I think learning Spanish is fun.	155 (98.1%)	3 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)
I think learning Spanish is easy.	78 (49.4%)	70 (44.3%)	10 (6.3%)
I think learning Spanish is hard.	14 (8.9%)	54 (34.2%)	90 (57.0%)
I think learning Spanish is boring.	0 (0.0%)	9 (5.7%)	147 (93.0%)
I like using computers to learn in school.	146 (92.4%)	12 (7.6%)	0 (0.0%)
I am excited about using computers to learn Spanish.	146 (92.4%)	12 (7.6%)	0 (0.0%)
I wish we could learn a different language instead of Spanish.	16 (10.1%)	36 (22.8%)	106 (67.1%)
I wish we could learn another language as well as Spanish.	100 (63.3%)	38 (24.1%)	20 (12.7%)

7.2 Comparing pupils' views about learning Spanish

In comparing pupil views as expressed in the initial and final questionnaires, it should be noted that the numbers of pupils involved were slightly different on each occasion. Although the second questionnaire was completed by only 158 pupils, as opposed to 214 who completed the initial questionnaire, it was the case that all the pupils completing the second questionnaire had originally completed the first.

A comparison of the % of pupils responding in various ways to the questions about learning Spanish can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Pupil views about learning Spanish – a comparison between the initial and final questionnaires

Statement	% ticking 😊		% ticking 😐		% ticking ☹️	
	initial	final	initial	final	initial	final
I think we should learn a foreign language in primary school.	87.4	94.9	8.9	3.8	1.9	1.3
I think we should have started learning a foreign language when we were younger.	31.3	46.8	24.3	32.9	37.4	20.3
I think we should not start learning a foreign language until we are older.	12.6	11.4	19.6	11.4	65.9	77.2
I am glad we have the chance to learn some Spanish.	93.5	97.5	4.2	1.3	0.9	1.3
I think learning Spanish will be/is fun.	92.1	98.1	5.1	1.9	1.9	0.0
I think learning Spanish will be/is easy.	29.0	49.4	45.3	44.3	22.9	6.3
I think learning Spanish will be/is hard.	30.4	8.9	32.7	34.2	34.1	57.0
I think learning Spanish will be/is boring.	7.0	0.0	8.4	5.7	83.2	93.0
I like using computers to learn in school.	93.9	92.4	2.3	7.6	1.9	0.0
I am excited about using computers to learn Spanish.	87.4	92.4	7.5	7.6	3.7	0.0
I wish we could learn a different language instead of Spanish.	17.3	10.1	26.6	22.8	54.7	67.1
I wish we could learn another language as well as Spanish.	68.2	63.3	16.4	24.1	11.2	12.7
	(n=214)	(n=158)	(n=214)	(n=158)	(n=214)	(n=158)

This comparison suggests that pupils' views about learning a foreign language and about learning Spanish had become more positive in the period between these iterations of the questionnaire. A greater proportion of pupils agreed that they should learn a foreign language in primary school (95% in the final questionnaire, increased from 87% in the initial questionnaire), thought learning Spanish was fun (98% from 92%), were glad to have the chance to learn Spanish (98% from 94%), and were excited about using computers to learn Spanish (92% from 87%). More pupils disagreed that learning Spanish was hard (57% from 34%) or that it was boring (93% from 83%).

It is, of course, the case that these pupils were already very positive towards the learning of a language, and of Spanish, at the time of completing the initial questionnaire, but it is clear that their experience with the Sonica materials had done nothing to dampen this enthusiasm and had, apparently, had the opposite effect.

7.3 Pupils' views about reasons for learning Spanish

In a further section of the questionnaire pupils were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a number of suggested reasons for learning Spanish in primary school. The results from the initial questionnaire can be seen in Table 4 below, and the results from the second questionnaire in Table 5. Again, after presenting these results, we will go on to pull out the major differences between pupil views on these two occasions.

Table 4: Pupil views about reasons for learning Spanish – initial questionnaire (completed by 214 pupils)

Statement	Number ticking ☺ (%)	Number ticking ☹ (%)	Number ticking ⊕ (%)
I think learning Spanish will help me when I learn languages at secondary school.	194 (90.7%)	12 (5.6%)	6 (2.8%)
I think learning Spanish will help me if I go on holiday to Spain.	203 (94.9%)	8 (3.7%)	1 (0.5%)
I think learning Spanish will make me better at English.	19 (8.9%)	56 (26.2%)	139 (65.0%)
I think learning Spanish will make me better at Mathematics.	18 (8.4%)	48 (22.4%)	147 (68.7%)
I think learning Spanish will help me understand life in Spain.	167 (78.0%)	35 (16.4%)	8 (3.7%)

Table 5: Pupil views about reasons for learning Spanish – final questionnaire (completed by 158 pupils)

Statement	Number ticking ☺ (%)	Number ticking ☹ (%)	Number ticking ⊕ (%)
I think learning Spanish will help me when I learn languages at secondary school.	132 (83.5%)	15 (9.5%)	11 (7.0%)
I think learning Spanish will help me if I go on holiday to Spain.	154 (97.5%)	3 (1.9%)	1 (0.6%)
I think learning Spanish makes me better at English.	20 (12.7%)	61 (38.6%)	77 (48.7%)
I think learning Spanish makes me better at Mathematics.	20 (12.7%)	46 (29.1%)	92 (58.2%)
I think learning Spanish will help me understand life in Spain.	130 (82.3%)	20 (12.7%)	8 (5.1%)

7.4 Comparing pupils’ views about reasons for learning Spanish

A comparison of the % of pupils responding to the questions about the purposes of learning Spanish is given in Table 6.

Table 6: Pupil views about the purpose of learning Spanish – a comparison between the initial and final questionnaires

Statement	% ticking ☺		% ticking ☹		% ticking ⊕	
	initial	final	initial	final	initial	final
I think learning Spanish will help me when I learn languages at secondary school.	90.7	83.5	5.6	9.5	2.8	7.0
I think learning Spanish will help me if I go on holiday to Spain.	94.9	97.5	3.7	1.9	0.5	0.6
I think learning Spanish will make me better at English.	8.9	12.7	26.2	38.6	65.0	48.7
I think learning Spanish will make me better at Mathematics.	8.4	12.7	22.4	29.1	68.7	58.2
I think learning Spanish will help me understand life in Spain.	78.0	82.3	16.4	12.7	3.7	5.1
	(n=214)	(n=158)	(n=214)	(n=158)	(n=214)	(n=158)

Again these pupils began their experience with Sonica already fairly positive about the usefulness to them of learning Spanish. There were nevertheless some interesting changes in the views of the group as expressed in the second questionnaire. A slightly greater proportion expected learning Spanish to help them when on holiday in Spain (98% from 95%) and to understand life in Spain (82% from 78%). A slightly lower proportion thought that learning Spanish would help them at secondary school (84% from 91%) which is somewhat surprising and rather at odds with the rest of our findings.

A more intriguing situation can be seen in the case of the ideas that learning Spanish might help make them better at English or Mathematics. A theoretical case could be made for both these propositions, on the grounds of

transferability of linguistic skills, or of increased motivation for learning in general. We anticipated that this case would be rather beyond the appreciation of primary pupils and their responses to these questions in the initial questionnaire seem to bear this out, with only around 8-9% agreeing with each statement and a clear majority (65-69%) disagreeing. By the time of the second questionnaire, however, the views of some pupils seemed to have changed. Now 13% agreed with both statements and the certainty of disagreement in the group had weakened considerably, especially in the case of the benefits for English work. It would be very interesting to follow these pupils further through their schooling to see if this broadening of view about the purpose of learning a language was maintained.

Section 8: The impact of the Sonica materials on pupils' knowledge of Spanish

As mentioned earlier, for a variety of reasons our assessment of the impact of using the Sonica Spanish materials on pupils' knowledge and awareness of Spanish was the most difficult element of our evaluation. The schools involved did not receive the materials until the end of September. We made our final visits to schools and evaluations of pupil learning at the beginning of December. In the two month period intervening, we expected schools and teachers to develop an understanding of the scope and operation of the Sonica materials, to teach with them and to have an impact upon their pupils' knowledge of Spanish, a problematic time scale. We were also cognizant of the fact that there are no extant measures available for assessing language knowledge in children so young. We were forced to develop our own procedures for this.

In an attempt to make assessments of pupil knowledge, we included in the questionnaire some questions designed to allow pupils to show something of what they knew of the language and its cultural background. Firstly we asked pupils to select from a list some names of countries where they thought Spanish was spoken. We also asked them to write in the names of any places they knew of in Spain.

For a linguistic assessment we asked them to indicate which words in a list were Spanish. This list consisted of the words: fútbol, pequeño, toro, buono, macaroni, ciao, garçon, and grand. When asking pupils to respond to this question, a member of the evaluation team was always on hand to read each of these words aloud in the appropriate accent. The question was therefore more than just a test of reading but also of the recognition of some of the phonological characteristics of the language.

We also presented them with a common Spanish sentence, ¿Cómo te llamas?. Pupils were asked to choose from a list of possible meanings for this sentence.

A comparison of the responses made in the initial and final questionnaires to the question, 'Where do they speak Spanish?' is given in Table 7.

8.1 Pupils' identification of Spanish-speaking places

Table 7: Pupil responses to the question 'Where do they speak Spanish?' – a comparison between the initial and final questionnaires

	Country					
	Italy	France	Brazil	Argentina	Spain	Scotland
% of pupils choosing this in the initial questionnaire (n=214)	7.0	8.9	15.9	13.1	98.1	2.8
% of pupils choosing this in the final questionnaire (n=158)	7.6	4.4	24.7	25.3	99.4	5.1

The vast majority of pupils knew that Spanish was spoken in Spain at their completion of the initial questionnaire and this proportion was not significantly altered in the second completion. Substantially more pupils did, however, indicate in their second questionnaire that Spanish was spoken in Argentina. A similar proportion also identified Brazil as Spanish-speaking country. This question thus provided little evidence of any increase in pupil awareness of Hispanophone countries.

8.2 Pupils' identification of places in Spain

Table 8 shows a comparison of the places that pupils suggested were in Spain both during the initial and the final questionnaire.

Table 8: Pupil responses to the question ‘Can you name any places in Spain?’ – a comparison between the initial and final questionnaires

Place (suggested by more than one pupil)	% of pupils suggesting this in the initial questionnaire (n=214)	% of pupils suggesting this in the final questionnaire (n=158)
None	30.8	21.5
Madrid	23.4	62.0
Majorca	14.5	6.3
Benidorm	9.8	5.1
Barcelona	7.5	25.9
Minorca	7.0	1.3
Malaga	5.1	4.4
Tenerife	5.1	0
Ibiza	4.7	5.7
Brazil	2.8	1.3
Valencia	2.8	0
Lanzarote	2.3	10.8
Portugal	2.3	4.4
Costa Brava	1.9	2.5
Gran Canaria	1.4	7.6
Alicante	1.4	0
Bilbao	0.9	19.6
Seville	0	13.3

The table does suggest a consolidation of pupil knowledge of places in Spain. In the initial questionnaire many non-Spanish places were suggested by individuals or by two pupils (such as Australia, Greece, New York, Barbados, Orlando, Lisbon, Prague, France, Miami, Mexico and Italy), whereas in the final questionnaire these places had all but disappeared from mention (Brazil and Portugal being the exceptions). A greater proportion of pupils were able to make a response in the final questionnaire (78.5% compared to 69.2% in the initial questionnaire) and there was also a noticeable swing towards important Spanish cities (Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Bilbao) and away from the familiar holiday resorts (Majorca, Benidorm, Minorca, Tenerife).

There is, therefore, some evidence, albeit fairly weak, of improving cultural knowledge among these pupils.

8.3 Pupil identifications of Spanish words and phrases

Table 9 shows the results of the pupils’ attempts to identify Spanish words from a suggested list.

Table 9: Pupil identifications of Spanish words – a comparison between the initial and final questionnaires

Word	% of pupils identifying this as a Spanish word in the initial questionnaire (n=214)	% of pupils identifying this as a Spanish word in the final questionnaire (n=158)
Fútbol	52.3	79.7
Pequeño	39.3	53.8
Toro	37.9	40.5
Buono	41.6	35.4
Macaroni	25.2	25.3
Ciao	20.1	19.0
Garçon	18.7	9.5
Grand	11.7	4.4

In the case of the three genuine Spanish words *fútbol*, *pequeño* and *toro*, the final questionnaire saw increased proportions of pupils correctly identifying these as Spanish, in the first two cases substantially increased proportions.

The other, false, words were generally (with the exception of *macaroni*) less likely to be identified by pupils as Spanish in the final questionnaire.

Table 10 shows the meanings attributed to ¿Cómo te llamas? by pupils in both questionnaires.

Table 10: Pupil identifications of the meaning of ¿Cómo te llamas? – a comparison between the initial and final questionnaires

Suggested meaning	% of pupils choosing this in the initial questionnaire (n=214)	% of pupils choosing this in the final questionnaire (n=158)
How are you?	25.2	3.2
Where do you live?	5.1	0.6
What is your name?	53.3	89.9
Do you like llamas?	18.2	0.6

These figures suggest a remarkable convergence of pupil understanding in the period between their completion of the two questionnaires. Whereas in the initial questionnaire over 46% of pupils could not identify the correct meaning of the sentence ¿Cómo te llamas?, by the time of the final administration of this questionnaire, this number had dwindled to a mere handful. Most pupils had now learnt the meaning of this sentence (although we would not be so bold as to suggest that this had occurred entirely through their experience of Sonica.).

Section 9: An expert, desk evaluation of the Sonica materials

Comments from our panel of experts, from teachers and head teachers using Sonica and from our own detailed perusal of the Sonica materials allowed us to compile what we hope is an exhaustive analysis of the technical problems within the materials as they currently stand. Some of these problems are linguistic, some technical, and some may, of course, only appear when the Sonica software is used in a particular hardware/software setup. All the problems listed in the table below have been identified by at least two analysers each using a different set of equipment.

Unit number	Topic	Resource	Comment
1 ¡Hablo español!	1.1 ¡Hola!	¿Qué tal?	Top toggling audio/text icon doesn't allow text to be switched off.
	1.2 Me llamo	Las vocales	In the instructions, <i>practice</i> should be spelled <i>practise</i>
	1.3 En la clase	¿Cómo se escribe?	How do you insert text into the boxes with Easiteach? Instructions do not make things clearer.
	1.4 En una tienda	En una tienda	Bottom left cartoon has shopkeeper asking to buy the rubber instead of Isabel. Deliberate? Seems odd.
2. Me presento	2.1 ¿Cuántos años tienes?	¿Qué número es?	Very imaginative but very hard intellectually. This is a big jump.
		Repaso números 1-21	Not a good exercise. Too ambiguous. The alternatives are difficult to understand and are not good discriminators. 16 <i>dieciseis</i> has a ce sound, but that gives a <i>no es correcto</i> answer. 17 <i>diecisiete</i> has no c (hard c) but that's not the right answer which is given as ce-ci.
	2.2 ¿Cuál es tu nacionalidad?	¿Qué país es?	Clicking on the country tabs at the bottom does not trigger the audio. You have to click <i>Empieza</i> and go straight into the game and then the audio doesn't work.
		¿Cuál es tu nacionalidad?	Text for masculine form of adjectives has all of the accented vowels missing eg <i>ingls</i> instead of <i>inglés</i> , <i>fracs</i> instead of <i>francés</i> , <i>alemn</i> instead of <i>alemán</i> . Programming error?
	2.3 ¿Dónde vives?	Su dirección	There are two houses with the same address, Calle Picasso 21, Barcelona. One is blue and one is purple, so the game works. Seems odd however.....
	2.4 El tiempo	El tiempo	Bottom left cartoon, male voice says <i>hace mal tiempo</i> but text says just <i>hace mal</i>
		Evaluación de la unidad 2	If the objective is to check whether pupils have learned to recognise Spanish words and match them to Spanish sounds then this exercise is fine.....if the objective is to see if they have learned how the Spanish for days of the week translate to English, then the exercise doesn't do that.
3. La familia	3.1 Mi familia	¿Cuántos hermanos tienes?	All four cartoon windows have same mistake: <i>tienes</i> is missing from the text...¿ <i>Cuántos hermanos.....?</i>
	3.3 Los colores	Me gusta/No me gusta	There are two Aa icons on this screen. Top one hides top text, bottom one is greyed out and reversed in mirror image and doesn't function. Instructions are misleading since they say you should click <i>Bien</i> buttons to see if correct, but on screen the buttons are labelled <i>Vale</i> .
4. Los animales	4.1 Los animales	Los animales	All the accented vowels missing eg <i>hmster</i> , <i>ratn</i> , <i>pjaro</i>
		¿Cómo se escribe? Los animales	Clicking on the labels of the animals does not trigger audio
		¿Tienes animales en	Á missing in <i>pájaro</i>

		casa?	
	4.2 ¿Qué animales te gustan?	La pronunciación	Ambiguous: <i>ratón</i> , although spelled with one r is pronounced rr, but that choice gives <i>no es correcto</i> also <i>Amarillo</i> has a rolled r which if chosen gives a <i>no es correcto</i>
		Los plurales	<i>Me gustan los</i> <i>peces/gatos</i> etc but only one animal shown in the cartoon. This is an exercise on plurals!
5. Mi cumpleaños	5.1 Mi cumpleaños y las fechas	Repaso-las fechas	Top toggling icon audio/text doesn't seem to do anything. Bottom one works OK.
		Mi cumpleaños	On demo first page child says birthday is <i>5 marzo</i> , but text shows 5th of 5th month " <i>mayo</i> "
	5.2 Los números	¿Más o menos?	Accented vowels missed eg <i>veintids</i> instead of <i>veintidós</i>
		Diecinueve de marzo	Ó missed off in <i>¿Cmo te llamas?</i> Also how do you input the text for a reply?
	5.3 ¿Qué hora es?	¿Qué hora es?	In the instructions " <i>practice</i> " should be " <i>practise</i> " (it's a verb not a noun.....)
6 El Mundo	6.1 Los países y los continentes	Los continentes y los océanos	Dubious whether <i>Centro América</i> is a continent. Not according to the National Curriculum. Children will be confused.
		Los países y los continentes	There are no countries shown so the title is misleading. There are only six continents shown this time, where has Antarctica gone? The 'A' is missing from 'Africa'. <i>Oceana</i> is misspelled, it should be <i>Oceanía</i> . Also, having invented <i>Centro América</i> as a continent in the previous exercise and showing is coloured in this one, it is not named.
	6.2 Las ciudades y los continentes	¿Qué es la capital?	Red buttons to show the capital cities (promised in the instructions) are missing.
		Repaso –ciudades y países	<i>Irlanda</i> is misspelled as <i>Irelanda</i> .
	6.4 La geografía	Evaluación de la unidad seis	In the 'Cross the Bridge' activity under the table and down the stairs (unlike all the other 'bridge' activities), there is no sound when you click on the part-words.
7. Mi escuela	7.1 Las asignaturas	Las asignaturas 2	Clicking on the pictures of the objects does not trigger the audio so kids can't hear the sound of the words before playing the game.
	7.3 ¿Te gusta el español?	El horario	Interesting exercise, but I wonder if the kids and teachers will be confused by having the definite article in front of the noun in the list on l of screen, but the noun spoken without the article on the audio?
	7.4 En la escuela	Los instrumentos	Clicking the diagrams of the objects does not trigger audio so kids can't hear words spoken before starting the game.
		En la escuela	Audio says <i>secretaria</i> , but text says <i>secretaría</i> , (different pronunciation)
8. En una cafetería	8.3 En la cafetería	¿Qué comida te gusta?	How do you enter correct and incorrect answer? Hard to input text in right space....
9. Los deportes	9.1 El cuerpo	El cuerpo	Some confusion between singulars and plurals. <i>Las rodillas</i> (pl) but <i>la pierna</i> (sing) even when both move. <i>El dedo</i> , but they all move.....
		La poción mágica	Difficulty inputting the correct text in the spaces. It would not accept <i>conejo</i> (rabbit).

			Does the witch only ask 2 or 3 questions?
	9.2 Los deportes	¿Quién soy yo?	Instructions don't tell you that if you click the text box at bottom of screen you hear the audio.
	9.3 Me gustan los deportes	Me gustan los deportes	Accented letters missing <i>fcil, fantstico</i> , etc. Doesn't seem to be a way of cueing the correct responses which is a pity.
		La conversación video	Good exercise but you have to be careful where you input text and use tab not space for following words.
		Evaluación de la unidad nueve	Top right door, word given to shoot is plural..... <i>pies, piernas, manos</i> but hanging object is only singular....as opposed to <i>ojos</i> where two eyes are shown. Inconsistent.
10. La ropa	10.1 La ropa	La ropa 2	Can't hear the words being spoken on intro page as per instructions. Can hear during game. Same for all the exercises using this template.
		¿Cuánto cuestan?	Accented letters missing from text <i>Buenos das, seor.....</i> Usual programming error?
	10.3 El uniforme	La persona nueva	N in <i>años</i> has tilde missing. This affects pronunciation
	11.3 Las direcciones	Las direcciones	First exercise difficult to get <i>aquí?</i> On to the shelf at the end of the sentence. Similarly second exercise, <i>derecha</i> won't go on the shelf at the end of the sentence.
	11.4 El turismo	¿Qué país es?	Can't see how the correct answers are indicated and can't find <i>enseñame</i> or <i>otra vez</i> for help
		La oficina del turista	I've always understood it to be <i>la oficina de turismo</i> not <i>la oficina del turista.....</i> (check with a native speaker....)
12 Un país hispanohablante	12.1 El viaje de fin de curso	¿Adónde vamos?	Accent missing off <i>¿adónde?</i> in text on screen.
		El viaje de fin de curso	<i>Nivel 1 San Sebastián</i> , third statement has <i>En</i> missing from Start of sentence
		El correo electrónico	The girl and the text both state that <i>Valencia</i> is <i>en el oeste</i> , but it's <i>en el este</i> East not West!
	12.2 ¡Buen viaje!	En el autobús	Very confusing. Normally one would ask <i>¿a qué hora sale el autobus?</i> not <i>llega</i> since the bottom line is you need to catch it before it leaves.....
	12.3 ¿Dónde vamos?	¿Dónde vamos esta semana?	Most of the text tabs at bottom of screen do not trigger the audio except <i>vamos</i> . Similarly most of the tabs fail to trigger audio in subsequent exercises in this piece.

Some general comments

1. There is no printable guide to the units as above. This would be an assistance to non-specialist teachers who need lots of easy help and a quick overview.
2. It is confusing to have the units and topics numbered 3.2.3 but then activities e.g. 086.
3. The search facility only responds to English and even then does not find "city" or "town" despite there being activities with those words in the title in Spanish.

A more overarching comment made by two members of this expert group, and discussed extensively in meetings of the evaluation project team, concerns the culturally embedded nature of the Sonica materials – or lack of it. Many studies of foreign language learning have pointed out that a language is always tightly embedded in the culture from which it springs, so learning a language also involves learning the culture.

Clearly there is a great deal of cultural material within Sonica and it is a laudable aim of the materials that they try to immerse pupils in Spanish culture as well as language. There is some doubt, however, about the nature of

the illustrative part of the materials, that is the cartoon characters, etc. These are not obviously Spanish in nature, and thus the opportunity to embed the culture more firmly into the linguistic content has been missed.

We are somewhat hesitant in making this point, given that we ourselves find it difficult to suggest what more 'Spanish' illustrative material might have looked like. Our concern here stems from a worry that the publishers of Sonica Spanish might, at some point in the future, simply take the same illustrative material and dub onto it a different language, with the outcome that Sonica French, or Sonica Chinese, ends up looking very similar to Sonica Spanish. This, in our view, would be a mistake, although a mistake with a pedigree in the production of foreign language learning materials.

Section 10: Conclusions

The main conclusions of our evaluation are as follows:

- The use of the Sonica Spanish materials has undoubtedly excited and stimulated the pupils in the classes/groups we visited.
- Participating pupils have improved their knowledge of Spanish, and their awareness of some aspects of the culture of Spain.
- Using the Sonica materials seems to have increased pupils' engagement with language learning and to have enhanced an already fairly high level of motivation to learn a language.
- A key component of this enhanced motivation has been the ways in which Sonica uses computers and linked technology.
- Most teachers using the Sonica materials have as yet barely scratched the surface of their potential. In particular, some teachers have yet to appreciate the major advantage provided by the materials in terms of modelling correct Spanish pronunciation.
- The Sonica materials are capable of being used in many and diverse ways. As yet, in the schools we visited, they tend to have been used in a fairly homogeneous way with a great deal of pupil repetition of spoken words and phrases.
- Teachers who have used the Sonica materials were very complimentary about their design and the effects they had had upon their pupils.
- Many teachers would appreciate a more detailed teacher manual to accompany the materials. This is especially necessary for non-Spanish speakers (the majority of teachers who will use the materials).
- There are a number of technical errors currently in the materials. In our view it would be a real shame if materials of such potential were not received as well as they might be by teachers at large because of these errors.

Appendix 1

SONICA SPANISH Initial teacher interview

School Questions (answers from Head or Teacher)

Name of School

No. on roll, no. of classes, description of intake and panda level if available etc

Teacher Questions (Visit 1)

Warm ups

- Name and year group of teacher?
- Have you been at the school/ teaching long?
- What is your area of responsibility?

Attitude to MFL

- What do you think of the idea of teaching MFL at primary Level?
- Why is it desirable? What are the constraints?
- At what age should MFL teaching begin? Why?
- Have you seen the QCA scheme of work at KS2? What do you know about the framework for language learning?
- Have you been involved in any MFL initiatives/ inservice/ training/LEA projects on teaching MFL at primary level?

Attitude to Spanish

- What do you think about choosing Spanish (as opposed to, say, French) as the language for Primary MFL teaching?
- If the school already does Spanish, why? Who chose?
- If school is new to Spanish – why Spanish?
- What do you want the children to learn from your Spanish teaching?

Attitudes to ICT for teaching

- Do you use ICT much for teaching your class? Why?
- What are the advantages of ICT for teaching?

Attitudes to ICT for MFL teaching

- What do you think about using ICT to teach MFL at primary level?
- Advantages/disadvantages?

Relevant background knowledge (or qualification)

- Do you speak Spanish? What qualifications in Spanish do you have? What is your background in other languages?
- Have you ever taught MFL before? (When etc)
- Have you had any MFL training? (when, what age group etc)

Level of confidence in teaching Spanish

- How confident do you feel about teaching Spanish to your class?

Level of confidence when teaching with ICT

- How confident do you feel about using ICT to teach your class?

Use of the digital materials

- How did you learn about the digital materials? How did you get involved?
- What are your expectations of the Sonica materials?
- Have you had any training or done in-service about the Sonica materials?
- Who is managing to Sonica teaching in your school? Why?
- How do you use the digital materials with your class OR How do you expect to use the digital materials with the class?
- Which year group(s)? How often? How long? One child per computer? Using an electronic whiteboard? Tablets? Suite? PDA? Etc
- Do you think the digital materials have advantages over non-digital materials? What?

Supplement the digital materials

- Do you plan to use other things to supplement the digital materials? What/ how often? Who prepares?
- Do you plan to adapt existing literacy or numeracy materials for MFL teaching?

Evaluate the Spanish materials

- How will you evaluate the Sonica materials?
- Will you assess the children's Spanish learning? How/ When?

Appendix 2

SONICA SPANISH Initial headteacher interview

Warm ups

- Position: Head, deputy, year co-ordinator
- Have you been at the school/ teaching long?
- Do you have other MFL in school?
- Why are you introducing Spanish now?
- What management issues are involved in adding Spanish to the curriculum?

Attitude to MFL

- What do you think of the idea of teaching MFL at primary Level?
- At what age should MFL teaching begin?
- Why is it desirable? What are the constraints?
- Have you seen the QCA scheme of work at KS2? What do you know about the framework for language learning?
- Have you been involved with inservice/ training/LEA projects on teaching MFL at primary level?
- Is your school involved in any initiative such as: a Language College/ part of pathfinder/ using the languages ladder?
- What other languages are taught in your school? At what ages?

Attitude to Spanish

- What do you think about choosing Spanish (as opposed to, say, French) and the language for KS2?
- If the school already does Spanish, why? Who chose?
- If school is new to Spanish – why Spanish?

Attitudes to ICT for teaching

- Do you use ICT much for teaching your school? Why?
- What are the advantages of ICT for teaching?

Attitudes to ICT for MFL teaching

- What do you think about using ICT to teach MFL at KS2?
- Advantages/disadvantages?
- What do you want the children to learn from this Spanish teaching?

Relevant background knowledge (or qualification)

- Do you/your staff speak Spanish? What qualifications in Spanish do you have? What is your background in other languages?
- What languages are taught in school?
- By whom? Are they full/part time or voluntary?
- What staff with MFL experience do you have in school?

Level of confidence in teaching Spanish

- How confident do your teachers feel about teaching Spanish?

Level of confidence when teaching with ICT

- How confident do your teachers feel about using ICT to teach?

Use of the digital materials

- How did you learn about the digital materials? How did you get involved?
- What are your expectations of the Sonica materials?
- Have you had any training or done in-service about the Sonica materials?
- Who is managing to Sonica teaching in your school? Why?
- How do you expect teachers to use the digital materials with the class(es)?
- Which year group(s)? How often? How long? One child per computer? Using an electronic whiteboard? Tablets? Suite? PDA? Etc
- Do you think the digital materials have advantages over non-digital materials? What?

Supplement the digital materials

- Do you plan to use other things to supplement the digital materials? What/ how often?
Who prepares?
- Do you plan to adapt existing literacy or numeracy materials for MFL teaching?

Evaluating the Spanish materials

How will you evaluate the Sonica materials?

Will you assess the children's Spanish learning? How/ When?

Appendix 3

SONICA SPANISH

Final teacher interview

Teacher Questions (Visit 2)

When did you start using the Sonica materials?

How do you use the digital materials with your class?

Which year group(s)? How often? How long? One child per computer? Using an electronic whiteboard? Tablets? Suite? PDA? Etc

What aspects of the Sonica materials have you found good?

What aspects of the Sonica materials have you found poor?

Have you experienced any practical problems during your involvement with the Sonica materials?

How confident do you feel about teaching Spanish to your class using these materials?

Do you think the digital materials have advantages over non-digital materials? What?

Do you use other things to supplement the digital materials? What/ how often? Who prepares?

Have you assessed/Will you assess the children's Spanish learning? How/ When?

Appendix 4

SONICA SPANISH Final teacher questionnaire



We have been commissioned by the DfES to carry out an independent evaluation of the Sonica Spanish materials. You are very important people in this evaluation as you will be the first teachers to actually use the materials in your schools. We would very much appreciate getting some information from you regarding your experiences of using Sonica. We would be very grateful if you could spare a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. It has been designed to take up no more than about 15 to 20 minutes of your time and can largely be completed by ticking boxes. We have asked you to give us your name and school, which we need for comparison purposes, but we can assure you that in any report arising from this evaluation complete confidentiality will be maintained and neither you or your school will be identified by name.

Many thanks in advance for your help.

Professor David Wray, Evaluation Team Leader, University of Warwick

Your name	
Your school	
Your contact telephone number (school)	
Your email (if available)	

1. What is your role within the primary school where you have used the Sonica Spanish materials? Please tick the appropriate box.

- Class teacher
- Specialist language teacher (permanent member of school staff)
- Visiting specialist language teacher (LEA advisory staff)
- Visiting specialist language teacher (from secondary school)
- Visiting specialist language teacher (from Higher Education)
- Visiting specialist language teacher (peripatetic primary teacher)
- Teaching assistant
- Voluntary assistant
- Trainee teacher
- Other (please write in) _____

2. Is the use of Sonica the only current Foreign Language Teaching in the primary school in which you work? Remember to include language clubs or other extra-curricular language work.

- Yes, we only use Sonica Spanish
- No, we have other Language teaching

If your school provides other Language teaching, please briefly describe that provision?

3. What would you judge that the use of Sonica has achieved in your school? Please tick any of the following which apply.

- it has developed pupils' competence in the language
- it has developed pupils' general foreign language learning skills
- it has developed pupils' cultural awareness
- it has broadened the scope of the curriculum
- it has developed pupils' motivation for future foreign language learning
- it has enhanced and extended pupils' competence in the English Language
- it has facilitated links with schools abroad

Other outcomes (please write in) _____

4. Do you intend to carry on using Sonica in your school?

- Yes
- No

5. If your answer to the question 4 was YES, please tick any of the following which describe your reasons for continuing to use these teaching materials.

- The Sonica Spanish materials are exciting and different.
- The Sonica materials have enabled me to integrate ICT into my teaching.
- The Sonica materials are easy to use.
- The Sonica materials have motivated my pupils to engage with Spanish learning.
- The Sonica materials have definitely helped my pupils to learn some Spanish.

Are there any other reasons for continuing to use Sonica (please write in):

6. If your answer to question 4 was NO, please tick any of the following which describe your reasons for not continuing to use these teaching materials.

- The Sonica materials have not motivated my pupils to engage with Spanish learning.
- The Sonica materials have not helped my pupils to learn any Spanish.
- The Sonica materials are difficult to use.

Are there any other reasons for not continuing to use Sonica (please write in):

7. Which of the following comes closest to describing the way in which you have organised the use of the Sonica Spanish materials in your school? Please tick whichever apply.

- As separate lessons given during normal teaching hours
- As part of general literacy teaching
- Integrated within curricular topics (e.g. as part of PE or Geography)
- As part of everyday routines (e.g. taking the register)
- Short 'taster' course in one foreign language
- Short 'taster' courses involving several languages
- As extra lessons given outside of taught time at no cost to pupils
- As extra lessons offered outside of taught time for which pupils pay
- Other forms of provision (please give details)

8. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the Sonica Spanish materials and your experience of using them in your school? Please write in.

Many thanks for your help.

Appendix 5

SONICA SPANISH Initial and final pupil questionnaire



LEARNING SPANISH

Some people at the University of Warwick want to find out what children think about learning Spanish. You are very important people and have been chosen to help. Your teachers know about this and are happy for us to ask you a few questions.

The questions are written on the next pages. To answer some of the questions, you will need to write a tick [✓] under the face which best shows the way you feel. There are 3 faces:



tells us that you agree






tells us that you are not sure or you cannot make up your mind



tells us that you don't agree

You don't have to tell us your name.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

<p>What do you think?</p>			
<p>I think we should learn a foreign language in primary school.</p>			
<p>I think we should have started learning a foreign language when we were younger.</p>			
<p>I think we should not start learning a foreign language until we are older.</p>			
<p>I am glad we have the chance to learn some Spanish.</p>			
<p>I think learning Spanish will be fun (<i>is fun</i>).</p>			
<p>I think learning Spanish will be easy (<i>is easy</i>).</p>			
<p>I think learning Spanish will be hard (<i>is hard</i>).</p>			
<p>I like using computers to learn in school.</p>			
<p>I am excited about using computers to learn Spanish.</p>			
<p>I wish we could learn a different language instead of Spanish.</p>			
<p>I wish we could learn another language as well as Spanish.</p>			

What do you already know about Spanish?

Can you answer this quiz? Don't worry if you don't know the answers.

1. Where do they speak Spanish? Put a ring around any country in the list where you think the people speak Spanish.

Italy	France	Brazil	Argentina	Spain	Scotland
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2. Can you name any places in Spain?

3. What do you think is the most popular sport in Spain?

4. Look at the list of words. Put a ring around the words that you think are Spanish.




ciao	toro	garçon	buono
fútbol	macaroni	pequeño	grand

5. If you met someone in Spain, she might say this to you:

¿Cómo te llamas?

Put a tick against what you think this means.

How are you?	
Where do you live?	
What is your name?	
Do you like llamas?	

What do you think?			
I think learning Spanish will help me when I learn languages at secondary school.			
I think learning Spanish will help me if I go on holiday to Spain.			
I think learning Spanish will make me (makes me) better at English.			
I think learning Spanish will be (is) boring.			
I think learning Spanish will make me (makes me) better at Mathematics.			
I think learning Spanish will help me understand life in Spain.			

Appendix 6

SONICA SPANISH Observation checklist

Background information	
School:	
Teacher:	MFL specialist?
Year group(s)	No. of pupils:
Time/length of lesson:	
Lesson plan	Available? Attached to observation? Evidence of scheme of work?
Any other relevant details:	
Resources used (and how)	
(For example: audio, visual, ICT, books, realia, toys, OHP)	
Language issues	
Spanish used by teacher (e.g. for classroom instructions/comments, for 'content' only, for praise ...)	
Spanish used by pupils (e.g. responding to questions, 'drills', spontaneous ...)	
Other comments re language use	

Lesson content (linguistic and other)			
(Any comments on content, e.g. language competence, sensitisation, cross-curricular, language awareness)			
How was the language sequenced?			
Listening?	Speaking?	Reading?	Writing?
Evidence of <i>formative</i> assessment		Evidence of <i>summative</i> assessment	
Activity types (e.g. repetition, song, pair work, whole class, drama, grammar ...)			
Pupils			
Involvement of pupils			
Pupils aware of lesson content/purpose?			
Evidence of special needs provision			
Evidence of G&T provision			
Equal opportunities issues?			